

UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION (UniMAC)

INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

THE INFLUENCE OF MANAGEMENT ATTITUDE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PR
STRATEGIES. A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE AUTHORITY
UPPER EAST REGION

RUFINA ANKWAIN

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

OCTOBER 2025

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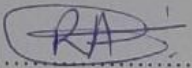
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my original research work, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher educational institution.

Student's Signature 

Date 27th October 2025

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Supervisor's Signature 

Date 27/10/25

Name: Dr. George Asamoah

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my Family for all the love and support they gave me during the entire course. Their sacrifices have played a great role in enabling me to work over the entire period to complete this work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First, I give praise to God almighty for His blessings, love, and protection throughout my studies at the University of Media, Arts and Communication – Institute of Journalism.

I wish to express my gratitude to my Supervisor, Dr. George Asamoah, for supervising my work. His advice, guidance and expertise towards my research work is remarkable and I appreciate it.

My appreciation also goes to my colleagues and friends for all the encouragement and assistance they gave me in undertaking this study.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates how management attitudes shape the effectiveness of Public Relations strategies at Ghana's National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), particularly in the Upper East Region. Grounded in Excellence Theory and the Situational Theory of Publics, it employs a mixed-methods approach that combines surveys from 200 public respondents with interviews of 10 NHIA managers and PR officers. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data were examined through reflexive thematic analysis. The findings show that while managers generally see PR as essential for fostering awareness, trust, and public engagement, their support tends to be conditional and reliant on resources, which can hinder the execution of strategic communication initiatives. When management consistently supports PR efforts, PR officers tend to be more motivated, creative, and effective; however, inconsistent support can lead to demotivation and a drop in innovation. Public data indicates a moderate level of awareness (58%) and a low perception of effectiveness (46%) regarding NHIA's PR campaigns, with respondents pointing out issues like unclear communication and limited grassroots involvement. The study concludes by emphasizing that strong managerial commitment, sufficient funding, and the integration of PR into senior decision-making are crucial for effective public communication and boosting NHIS enrollment. It suggests embedding PR at the executive level, enhancing multi-channel communication especially through community outreach and creating a national communication policy framework with dedicated funding. This research adds to the theoretical landscape by situating Excellence and Situational Publics theories within a resource-constrained public health environment and provides practical insights for improving institutional communication strategies in Ghana and similar settings.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEOs	Chief Executive Offices
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
GHS	Ghana Health Services
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NHIA	National Health Insurance Authority
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
PHC	Primary Health Care
PR	Public Relations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMS	Short Message Services
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UER	Upper East Region
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Chapter one serves as the groundwork for this research, highlighting key issues and justifying the study's purpose. It begins by placing the research within the wider realm of Public Relations (PR), showcasing its strategic value when backed by strong organizational leadership. The focus then shifts to the specific situation in Ghana, where PR often takes a backseat and is seen more as a tactical tool than a strategic asset. A notable gap emerges within Ghana's public sector institutions, especially at the National Health Insurance Authority where attitudes of leadership could be a crucial, yet overlooked, element affecting the success of communication strategies. This gap is particularly relevant in areas like the Upper East Region, where problems like low NHIS enrollment continue to be a challenge. The chapter clearly outlines the problem statement, research questions, and objectives that will steer the investigation. It also defines the scope, significance, and key terms that frame the study, concluding with a brief overview of the research structure.

1.1 Background of the Study

Public Relations is a managerial role that cultivates and sustains positive relationships between a business and the public upon which its success or failure hinges (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000). Yet, despite PR potential, the extent to which it fulfills this role often depends on the perceptions and attitudes of organizational leadership. Several studies have pointed out the necessity of management's appreciation and support as foundations for the integration of PR in strategic decision-making and for positive communication outcomes. Studies highlight the important role PR practitioners can take in strategic planning when their inputs are valued and merged by top managers. Ferreira and Engelbrecht (2022), for

example, tested the institutionalization of PR at the executive level in prominent South African corporations and showed how the organization benefits when top PR professionals contribute to strategic decision-making processes. Mykkänen and Vos (2015) also documented the contributions of PR in organizational decision-making and recommended communication managers be included in strategic leadership teams. Islam and Luqman (2022) identified the negative impacts of keeping PR off strategic roles and showed the ramifications of what may happen if it is omitted from complex institutions like hospitals. Without such support, PR risks being confined to technical or administrative tasks, detached from the broader objectives of the organization.

The theoretical foundations for this strategic perspective are well established. Grunig & Hunt's (1984) Excellence Theory posit that PR is effective when it is part of an organization's strategic management structure. This approach calls for two-way symmetrical communication model, in which PR serves not just to disseminate information, but to foster mutual understanding between organizations and their publics. This theory underscores the importance of leadership support, as it is leadership that determines whether PR professionals are positioned as strategic advisors or relegated to purely tactical roles. Complementing this, the Situational Theory of Publics (Moss, 1997) highlights the necessity of segmenting audiences based on their awareness and engagement levels to tailor communication effectively, an effort that requires both strategic planning and adequate resourcing, typically driven by leadership commitment.

In Ghana, the strategic potential of PR remains largely under-explored. Research suggests that in many organizations, PR continues to be perceived as a subordinate function focused on media relations and event management (Opoku & Agyemang, 2017). Adjin-Tettey et al., (2020) report that PR professionals in Ghana are often not included in strategic planning processes, while Tandoh et al., (2022) observe that even when CEOs acknowledge the importance of communication, they often fail to involve PR in

decision-making structures in the organization. This marginalization is reflective of a deeper cultural perception that sees PR as non-essential. Kwansah-Aidoo & Owusu-Hemeng (2006) found that many corporate leaders regard PR as a cosmetic function rather than a strategic asset to the organization, and Anani-Bossman (2020) also notes that some leaders actively discourage their children from entering the PR profession due to its perceived lack of prestige and influence.

Such perceptions have practical consequences, particularly in public sector institutions that rely heavily on communication to fulfill their mandates. In the context of public health, McCarthy, Donkoh, & Arthur (2023) asserted that PR is essential for facilitating effective healthcare service delivery by cultivating trust, improving communication, and encouraging positive interactions between healthcare organizations and their stakeholders. This is especially relevant in Ghana, where health institutions are tasked with implementing large-scale public health initiatives that require consistent and effective communication with diverse populations. Wells et al., (2009) state that PR, as a management function, is employed by various entities, including organizations, corporations, governmental bodies, non-profit organizations, labor unions, politicians, and the media of which the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) is of no exception. The object of the NHIA under Act 852 is to attain universal health coverage in relation to persons residents in Ghana, and non-residents visiting Ghana, and to provide access to healthcare services to persons covered by the Scheme. Hence, the NHIA is mandated by law to secure the implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme, by registering, licensing and regulation of health insurance schemes in the country both private and public (NHIA, 2017). Despite its ambitious goal, the scheme continues to suffer from low enrollment and high dropout rates, particularly in rural areas. While operational inefficiencies are partly to blame, studies such as those by Fenny et al., (2016) point to communication failures as a critical contributing factor. Many Ghanaians lack a clear understanding of how the scheme operates, its benefits package, and how to remain active members, all of which can be linked to weak or inconsistent PR efforts within the NHIA.

Notably, the success of communication strategies during Ghana's COVID-19 vaccine rollout illustrates the potential impact of well-executed PR. Faced with widespread vaccine hesitancy, the Ghana Health Service deployed a varied PR campaign which combined traditional media, social media, and grassroots outreach. These efforts, underpinned by strategic planning and executive backing, helped to shift public attitudes and significantly improve vaccine uptake (Arthur et al., 2023). This case demonstrates that when PR is empowered and resourced appropriately, it can drive tangible public health outcomes. It also highlights a contrast with institutions like the NHIA, where similar communication challenges persist, but where the strategic role of PR appears less developed or appreciated.

Despite the relevance of leadership attitudes to the strategic use of PR, there is a lack of empirical research examining this dynamic within Ghanaian public institutions, particularly the NHIA. While anecdotal and qualitative evidence points to leadership skepticism and under investment in communication, little is known about how these attitudes concretely influence PR strategy and outcomes. This is especially significant in regions like the Upper East, where communication barriers, low insurance uptake, and weak institutional presence intersect. If leadership within the NHIA does not prioritize or support strategic communication, efforts to improve public engagement with the NHIS may continue to fall short.

This study seeks to fill this knowledge gap in extant literature by investigating how leadership perceptions within the NHIA influence the strategic application and effectiveness of PR, with a particular focus on the Upper East Region. By exploring this relationship, the research aims to generate insights that can inform both policy and practice, contributing to the broader goal of enhancing institutional communication capacity and strengthening public engagement in health initiatives. In doing so, the study aligns with global efforts to position communication as a driver of sustainable development, particularly in the health sector.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the context of public healthcare institutions, especially in developing countries like Ghana, PR plays a critical role in promoting health initiatives, increasing public awareness, and improving service uptake. McCarthy, Donkoh, & Arthur (2023) asserted that good public relations techniques facilitate straightforward communication, cultivate trust, and improve member satisfaction. The effectiveness of PR strategies often hinges on the attitudes and perceptions of management toward communication functions in the organization. However, the strategic potential of PR remains largely under-explored. Research suggests that in many organizations, PR continues to be perceived as a subordinate function focused on media relations and event management (Opoku & Agyemang, 2017).

Adjin-Tettey et al., (2020) report that PR professionals in Ghana are often not included in strategic planning processes, while Tandoh et al., (2022) observe that even when CEOs acknowledge the importance of communication, they often fail to involve PR in decision-making structures in the organization. For instance, the lack of public awareness and understanding of NHIS has been a major hurdle for the NHIA, largely due to ineffective communication strategies (Fenny et al., 2016).

According to the Excellence Theory in public relations, PR works best when it is woven into the strategic management of an organization, supported by two-way communication and an active involvement of management (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). In Ghana, studies suggest that PR is often seen as a secondary function in organizations, with limited input in strategic decision-making (Anani-Bossman, 2021).

This sidelining of PR within organizational structures can prevent it from fully engaging stakeholders and educating the public effectively. For the NHIA, this under-utilization might be a key factor in the ongoing communication issues that affect the scheme's success. Even though strategic communication is

recognized as essential in public health efforts (Mensah & Prempeh, 2020), there is a noticeable lack of research on how management attitudes at the NHIA impact the effectiveness of PR strategies.

Bridging this gap is essential for boosting the NHIA's communication efforts and, in turn, enhancing public engagement with the NHIS. By understanding how management attitudes influence PR effectiveness, the NHIA can create more cohesive communication strategies that align with both organizational goals and the needs of stakeholders. This proposed study therefore seeks to investigate the influence of management attitude on the effectiveness of PR strategies within the National Health Insurance Authority in Ghana.

1.3 Research Questions

The study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What attitudes do NHIA managers in the Upper East Region hold toward public relations and communication?
2. What is the role of PR in the implementation of NHIA operational strategies in UER?
3. How do management attitudes influence the effectiveness of these PR strategies (in terms of public awareness, acceptance, and enrollment outcomes)?
4. How does management attitude affect NHIA's engagement with its target audience?

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of this study include:

1. To examine the attitudes of NHIS Managers towards PR and corporate communication

2. To assess the roles of PR in the implementation of NHIS operational strategies
3. To investigate the relationship between management attitudes and effective PR outcomes
4. To examine the influence of management attitudes on the NHIA's engagement strategies with its target publics

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it will contribute to both theory and practice. Firstly, this study will contribute to public relations literature by applying established theories to a new context. It extends Excellence and Situational theories to the Ghanaian public health sector, where PR research is limited. By focusing on the NHIA in the Upper East Region, the research addresses call for more evidence on strategic PR in Africa (Anani-Bossman, 2020). It will provide empirical insights into how organizational culture and leadership influence PR effectiveness, enriching the literature on PR in developing countries.

Also, the findings will benefit the NHIA and similar organizations. Findings may inform NHIA executives about the potential impact of leadership support on PR outcomes, prompting reconsideration of how communication is integrated into strategy. Training and policy initiatives could be developed to foster more positive attitudes among leaders. For example, emphasizing the value of two-way communication and stakeholder engagement may improve NHIA's outreach and ultimately increase health insurance coverage. In this way, the study can inform strategies to boost NHIS enrollment and support public health goals in the region.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation

The research scope encompasses the parameters governing a study, including the specific problem to be examined within defined boundaries (Simon & Goes, 2013). This study is confined to the National Health Insurance Authority in Ghana's Upper East Region. It will examine PR strategies and management attitudes only within this region and organizational setting. The research will involve NHIA managers, PR staff and the public. The focus is on communication processes, not on all factors influencing insurance enrollment (such as economic or cultural barriers). By limiting the scope to NHIA UER and using mixed methods (surveys and interviews), the study provides in-depth local insight, though its findings may not generalize to other regions or sectors.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Management Attitude: The beliefs, perceptions, and level of support that organizational leaders have toward public relations and communication efforts. This includes how managers prioritize PR, allocate resources, and involve PR staff in decision-making.

Public Relations (PR) Strategies: Planned communication activities and tactics used by an organization to engage with the public. For NHIA, PR strategies include media releases, community outreach, educational campaigns, and feedback mechanisms to inform stakeholders about NHIS policies and benefits.

Effectiveness of PR Strategies: The degree to which PR efforts achieve their intended communication outcomes. In this study, effectiveness may be measured by increased public awareness of the NHIS, improved public perceptions of the scheme, higher enrollment, and stronger relationships with stakeholders. Effective PR generally involves two-way communication leading to mutual understanding (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Situational Theory of Publics: A theoretical framework (Moss, 1997) that classifies different groups of people (publics) based on their awareness of an issue, the degree to which they feel the issue affects them (problem recognition), and the constraints they perceive. It helps PR practitioners identify which publics are active (likely to seek information) or passive and tailor communication strategies accordingly.

Excellence Theory of Public Relations: A general theory (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) describing conditions under which PR contributes most effectively to organizational goals. It emphasizes two-way symmetrical communication, ethical management practices, and integration of PR into the organization's strategic leadership. Under this theory, PR is a management function that helps align organizational and public interests.

National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA): The Ghanaian public agency responsible for implementing and managing the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The NHIA oversees enrollment, policy administration, and health provider credentialing across Ghana, including the Upper East Region.

Upper East Region (UER): One of Ghana's 16 administrative regions, located in the northeast. It is largely rural with a population that includes various ethnic groups (Builsa, Kassena, Nankana, and Frafra). The region's socio-economic and geographic characteristics (lower literacy rates, dispersed communities) influence how PR strategies must be designed and delivered.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study consists of five main chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction. It covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, and definition of terms. Chapter two reviews relevant theories underpinning the study, existing literature relevant to the research topic, identified gaps the current study intends to fill and provided a conceptual

framework. Chapter three discusses the research methodology: the design, sampling methods, data collection, analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. Chapter four presents the results and findings of the research, using appropriate statistical and thematic analysis and chapter five discusses the findings in relation to the research questions and literature reviewed, and concludes the study by summarizing key findings, drawing conclusions, and offering recommendations for practice and future research.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced a key research issue: why strategic Public Relations is not being fully utilized by Ghana's NHIA. It suggests that the attitudes of managers play a significant role in this problem. Grounded in the Excellence Theory, the chapter points out that in Ghana, PR often gets relegated to a technical or administrative function, which limits its potential. This is particularly concerning in public health organizations like the NHIA, where ineffective communication leads to a lack of public understanding and low enrollment in the NHIS. To tackle these issues, the chapter lays out specific research goals and questions that aim to explore how NHIA managers view PR, evaluate its current strategic role, and understand how leadership attitudes influence communication results. It also clarifies the study's focus on the NHIA's activities in the Upper East Region and highlights its importance for enhancing both academic knowledge and practical policy changes in Ghana's health communication landscape.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Public Relations (PR) is increasingly recognized as a key management function that plays a crucial role in nurturing relationships with stakeholders, building trust, and supporting the goals of an organization. As Lattimore (2012) points out, PR is instrumental in shaping corporate philosophy and driving organizational change. In the context of public healthcare, especially in developing countries like Ghana, PR is essential for promoting health initiatives, raising awareness, and enhancing service utilization. However, the effectiveness of PR strategies often hinges on how management perceives and approaches communication. When leaders see PR as a vital strategic asset rather than just an afterthought, communication efforts tend to be better planned, funded, and executed, which in turn boosts public trust and engagement.

This literature review explores how management attitudes influence the effectiveness of PR strategies within Ghana's National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), with a particular focus on the Upper East Region. Drawing on the Excellence Theory and the Situational Theory of Publics, it investigates the strategic role of PR, the nature of managerial support, and their impact on outcomes like public awareness, stakeholder engagement, and enrollment in the NHIS. Despite the acknowledged significance of strategic communication, there has been limited research on how management perspectives shape PR performance in the NHIA. By addressing this gap, the review aims to create a conceptual framework that connects theory with practice, ultimately fostering more effective communication and greater public involvement in Ghana's healthcare system.

2.1 Overview of the Excellence Theory and Situational Theory of Public Relations

Theory provides a model for the practice of PR: “all who attempt to solve problems, suggest recommendations and predict the future, need theories, and as a starting point, concepts” (Skyttner, 2001). This study is anchored in two foundational PR theories: Excellence Theory and the Situational Theory of Publics. These theories collectively provide a comprehensive lens through which to explore how management attitudes shape the formulation, implementation, and effectiveness of PR strategies in organizational contexts, particularly within the National Health Insurance Authority in Ghana.

2.1.1 Excellence Theory of Public Relations

The Excellence Theory, developed by Grunig & Hunt (1984), presents a model of public relations practice in which communication is positioned as a strategic management function. The theory emerged from a comprehensive, multi-country study that sought to define characteristics of effective PR departments across organizations. Central to this theory is the concept of two-way symmetrical communication, a model where organizations engage in dialogue with their publics, fostering mutual understanding rather than one-way persuasion or image control.

The excellence theory delineates the practice of public relations within an organization by outlining four characteristics of effective PR: empowerment of public relations functions, the communicator role, organization of the communication function, and the public relations model (McCarthy, Donkoh, & Arthur, 2023).

The Excellence Theory's primary strength lies in its provision of critical insights into the role of public relations in organizational success; organizations that recognize the significance of cultivating and sustaining relationships with strategic publics can formulate informed public relations strategies and

ultimately realize their objectives (Usman et al., 2022). It also highlights the critical role of top management in providing access, authority, and resources to PR units.

However, the theory has not escaped criticism. According to Pieczka (1996) contends that the two-way symmetrical aspect of the excellence theory is too idealized, so critiquing both the research aim from which it originated and the foundational premise of systems theory upon which the model relies. Murphy (1991) asserted that the notion of symmetric communication operates along a continuum ranging from complete conflict to total cooperation, predicated on mixed objectives. Edwards (2011) also argued that Grunig's rigid focus on organizational theory overlooks the social world in which those organizations operate in. Despite these limitations, the theory remains a powerful tool for analyzing internal organizational factors affecting PR effectiveness.

In the context of this study, Excellence Theory is particularly relevant because it addresses the influence of management perceptions and supports the performance of PR strategies. Within the NHIA, especially at the regional level, the extent to which PR is viewed as a strategic function influence whether it receives the attention and resourcing necessary to impact enrollment and public understanding of the NHIS.

2.1.2 Situational Theory of Publics

The Situational Theory of Publics, also developed by (Grunig, 1984; Moss, 1997), complements the Excellence Theory by focusing on audience behavior in response to organizational communication. This theory categorizes publics into four distinct types nonpublic, latent publics, aware publics, and active publics based on three key variables: problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement. The core argument is that people only become communicatively active on an issue when they are aware of it, feel personally affected, and believe they can act or respond.

The strength of this theory according to Grunig (2005) is that it can be used to identify types of publics that differ in the extent to which they communicate actively, passively, or not at all about organizational decisions that affect them. Active publics in turn can develop into activist groups or support activist groups. The situational theory can be used to identify active publics in programs of environmental scanning, issues management, and crisis communication. As a result, the theory provides a useful tool for strategically managing PR programs, choosing realistic short and long-term objectives for communication programs, and evaluating the outcomes of these programs.

Nonetheless, the theory has its limitations. It offers limited guidance on organizational strategy or structure, focusing instead on public responsiveness. It also requires significant data to segment publics effectively, data that may be difficult to collect in under-resourced public institutions. Furthermore, it tends to assume static public categories, whereas in reality, engagement levels can shift rapidly based on external stimuli or institutional credibility.

In relation to this study, the Situational Theory of Publics provides a useful framework for examining how PR strategies by NHIA engage with different segments of the Ghanaian population, particularly in the Upper East Region. If leadership attitudes are indifferent or dismissive, then strategies are less likely to be audience-centered or responsive, leading to reduced effectiveness in influencing public awareness, trust, and enrollment behavior. Hence, the theory supports the investigation of public engagement as an outcome variable influenced by managerial commitment to communication.

2.1.3 Relevance of the Theories to the Study

Together, these two theories offer a robust conceptual framework for examining the relationship between managerial attitudes and PR strategy effectiveness. Excellence Theory addresses the internal organizational dimension looking at how leadership influences the structure, authority, and strategic

direction of PR. The Situational Theory of Publics, on the other hand, addresses the external communication dimension thus how PR strategies reach, activate, and influence target audiences.

In a setting like the NHIA, where the public's understanding and acceptance of the NHIS are vital for policy success, the interaction between internal support for communication and external public engagement becomes critical. The theories jointly allow for a holistic analysis of how leadership behaviors affect both institutional communication processes and public-level outcomes, such as awareness, trust, and enrollment.

Understanding the relevant role of theory in PR and communication practice may offer a more comprehensive framework for analyzing and predicting PR outcomes. Such understanding will help practitioners develop more effective campaigns, define strategies, and monitor progress, ultimately leading to better PR outcomes. Therefore, the integration of these theories with the aim to provide both diagnostic or analytic and predictive tools necessary to explore the central research question: How does management attitude influence the effectiveness of PR strategies in the NHIA, particularly in relation to public engagement and NHIS enrollment in the Upper East Region of Ghana remains the focus of the current study?

2.2 Review of Previous Research

Some studies have explored the relationship between Management Attitude and effective Public Relations Strategies. This section of the study will review scholarly articles that explored the underlining subject matter of this current study and identify the gaps in literature which this study seeks to bridge. The review will be in four themes based on the research questions.

2.2.1 Management attitudes toward PR and communication

Robbins & Coulter (2017) defined management attitudes as the mindsets of managers that affect how they view their role, their employees, and their organization. These attitudes shape their behavior in planning, organizing, leading, and controlling organizational activities. Empirical studies reveal varied attitudes among executives toward PR. A study in Jordan by Olaimat et al., (2022) found that executives who track online reputation via social media are more likely to support PR while others have also indicated that supportive management fosters engagement and trust among PR staff, while authoritarian leadership leads to demotivation (Meng & Berger, 2019). These studies have amply revealed the diverse outcomes of the kind of management attitudes towards PR elsewhere around the globe. For instance, when senior leaders hold positive attitudes, they tend to integrate PR into planning and allocating resources. Conversely, where managers misunderstand or undervalue PR in an organization, the function is often relegated to propaganda or sidelined entirely (Lattimore, 2012).

In Ghana, Anani-Bossman (2020) found that managers accustomed to transparent communication are more likely to champion PR, while those from reactive cultures may sideline it. Adjin-Tettey et al., (2020) reported that many top managers interviewed understood PR's strategic value and considered it key to the success of organizations. However, they also identified persistent barriers: misconceptions about PR, limited budget allocation, and organizational factors (size, mission) that prevented PR from becoming a fully independent, top-level function. Similarly, Tandoh et al., (2022) report that Ghanaian public-sector CEO's generally have positive perceptions of PR and view it as important for strategic management, especially when the PR unit reports directly to senior management. Yet these CEO's also noted constraints: limited funding, and a lack of deep understanding of PR among some management members, which curtails PR's contribution to organizational strategy. Thus, Ghanaian leaders acknowledge PR's usefulness but recognize practical limits on its implementation.

Nevertheless, it is essential for CEOs, along with management and public relations experts, to engage in successful collaborations to foster mutual respect and comprehension of the capabilities and limitations of public relations. This rationale supports the proposition that public relations should be integrated into top management (Tandoh et al., 2022).

For institutional memory as a prerequisite for policy formulation or management decisions, as well as corporate strategy, it was found that because PR has a hold of a vast amount of information about the organization, it makes it essential to the formulation process. Additionally, once the corporate strategy has been thoroughly understood, it is the responsibility of the PR unit to create initiatives that will help the strategy come to fruition (Tandoh et al., 2022). NHIA recognized poor communication as one of the major causes of its inability to achieve targeted membership enrollment. Further legitimizing the vital role of PR in management performance. (NHIA, 2013).

In conclusion, existing studies locally and internationally have indicated that management attitudes in different shades widely and directly influence how PR is positioned and practiced within organizations as well as the outcomes of PR practice (Adjin-Tettey et al., 2020; Tandoh et al., 2022).

2.2.2 Strategic role of PR in the implementation of NHIS activities

Communication is integral in every society and varies in terms of the source, messages, media of communication, receiver of messages and feedback (Ayensu, 2003). According to Cofie et al., (2013) communication plays a vital role in disseminating health information to the populace. Despite this important role, limitations in communication have caused low participation in health service delivery leading to low enrollment in health insurance schemes in Sub Saharan Africa. Effective communication is therefore the bedrock enabling members to make informed decisions, but little importance is given to it when implementing health intervention programs.

In the case of Ghana, the lack of effective communication in the dissemination of NHIA's activities to its clients has been identified as a potential factor that could lead to increased misconceptions and misunderstanding of the principles of health insurance and its benefits of improving access to primary healthcare for all citizens (Arhinful, 2003). Achieving the objective of the NHIA of attaining effective health insurance coverage and providing access to basic quality health service to residents in Ghana cannot be achieved if a good number of the citizens do not understand its operations and activities (NHIA, 2015).

Public healthcare institutions employ diverse PR and communication strategies to raise awareness and acceptance of health care services. More focused communication strategies are meant to make the best use of available resources to get the desired results in each situation when dealing with different health and development issues (Gupta, Jai, & Yadav, 2021). For example, during Ghana's COVID-19 vaccination campaign, McCarthy et al., (2023) document that the Ghana Health Service used a combination of informative, motivational, persuasive, and even coercive PR tactics to address vaccine hesitancy. These efforts spanned both traditional media and digital platforms, and involved press briefings, stakeholder meetings, and tailored messaging. This multi-channel, multi-modal approach reflects the best international practice in PR. Elrod & Fortenberry (2020) noted that health organizations often deploy newsworthy events, newsletters and press releases (free clinics, staff accomplishments) to earn free media coverage, leveraging it as a cost-efficient way to reach audiences. Such press-driven PR is viewed as highly credible, since audiences perceive news pieces as objective compared to paid advertising. Healthcare PR strategies thus commonly include media relations, community outreach events, patient testimonials, and integration with other channels (social media, advertising) to amplify messages.

In the Ghanaian health insurance context, PR strategies have similarly relied on mass media and outreach. National campaigns for the NHIS have used radio and TV advertisements, newspaper features, and public events to inform citizens about enrollment and benefits. However, scholars have noted important gaps. Alhassan et al., (2016) observed that the NHIS communication strategy, while well-intentioned, neglected rural communities by omitting traditional folk media (local theater, opinion leaders) that are important for reaching remote audiences. This mismatch meant many potential members remained uninformed about the scheme. In general, public healthcare PR in Ghana appears to emphasize broad publicity and social media but may underutilized grassroots channels unless management actively includes them.

2.2.3 Effect of management attitudes on strategy effectiveness of PR

Public Relations strategy encompasses continues process of researching, conducting, and evaluating programs of action and communication to achieve the informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing, fund raising, employee, community or government relations, and other programs (Broom & Cutlip, 2013). These days, most organizations, whether they are for-profit businesses, government agencies, or non-profit groups, believe that PR goals are not important unless they help the overall goals of the organization or its business units or sectors (Lindenmann, 2002). According to Grunig (2001) management can be effective in its operations but with the involvement of public relations units, they could be even more functionally effective. For instance, he asserted that PR departments help organizations become more effective by building relationships with the public that affect the organizations or are affected by the organization's activities. As a result, good PR helps an organization make money by allowing it to sell products and services to satisfied customers, secure funds from constituents or donors, or expand its manufacturing or sales operations. PR also saves money for the organization that might be spent because of opposition in the community, regulations, or training of employees to replace those who leave.

It is most important, therefore, to integrate an organization's PR programs with the strategies and objectives of the organization (Lindenmann, 2002). Generally, it has been found that when Management supports employees, job satisfaction increases and has a positive effect on employees' performance in the organization (Rhoades et al., 2001). In line with this, aside allocating resources for PR, Management should identify the overall effectiveness of the organization's PR efforts and provide the needed support for effective outcomes as suggested in literature by Issah (2017). Theory and some literature suggest that managers' attitudes toward PR shape the effectiveness of communication outcomes such as public awareness, acceptance of services, and service uptake. Excellence theory (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) implies that when leaders support two-way, stakeholder-focused PR, organizations will align their actions with public needs, yielding better outcomes. In practical terms, if management truly values PR (treating it as a strategic function), PR campaigns are more likely to be well-funded, data-driven, and responsive to community feedback.

Conversely, dispassionate or one-way approaches tend to produce weak results. For instance, Alhassan et al., (2016) highlights that client trust is essential for NHIS enrollment: when people trust the NHIA, they are far more likely to sign up. Trust is built through clear, empathetic communication. Alhassan also emphasizes that involving target audiences in message design increases understanding and acceptance. If managers encourage such participation, PR messages better resonate with the public. If not, campaigns may only raise nominal awareness without genuine buy-in. While empirical studies on NHIS are scarce, these insights imply that a supportive management attitude (providing resources for two-way outreach and trust-building) should translate into higher awareness and enrollment outcomes (Donsbach, 2015; Mechanic, 1998).

2.2.4 Management's influence on stakeholder engagement

Greenwood (2007) characterized stakeholder engagement as the actions executed by an organization to incorporate stakeholders into its activities or operations. Reed (2008) added that stakeholder engagement entails a process where individuals, groups and organizations choose to take an active role in making decisions that affect them thus, making it an important part of a firm's efforts to strategically manage long-term projects that involve potentially adverse social or environmental impacts.

From the above, stakeholder engagements thus become a collaborative exercise for making collective decisions towards achieving organizational goals. So, Directors and Managers need to work with stakeholders and build relationships with them so that everyone can get what they want from the project (Gutterman, 2023). On the other hand, Hohnen and Potts (2007) described stakeholder engagement as the formal and informal ways of staying connected to the parties who have an actual or potential interest in or effect on a company's business. Hohnen and Potts introduce another dimension of stakeholder engagement, being both formal and informal. It therefore becomes a flexible task for organizations to undertake. Organizations can no longer choose whether they want to engage with stakeholders or not; the only decision they need to take is when and how successfully to engage (Jeffery, 2009).

In as much as engaging stakeholders is required of management, its effectiveness is a greater essence. Research suggests that management attitudes determine how fully an organization pursues engagement. Ford et al., (2005) and Cofie et al. (2013) (cited in Alhassan et al., 2016) found that including community representatives in planning stakeholder engagement creates "a sense of belonging" and significantly boosts the acceptance of the program. In Ghana's health insurance case, Alhassan et al., (2014) notes that when NHIS officials collaborated with opinion leaders such as chiefs and target groups, stakeholders became more receptive to enrollment messages.

Extensive communication while engaging with internal and external stakeholders of an organization ensures successful achievement of the organization's goals and objectives (Yeboah & Atakora, 2013). Public health professionals have therefore identified effective communication to achieve effective stakeholder engagement for public health goals, thereby leading to universal health coverage (Berry, 2007).

If leaders are proactive, they may set up stakeholder forums, solicit feedback, and address community concerns. If not, communication remains a top-down phenomenon. Excellence theory itself argues that management must scan and dialog with publics; supportive leadership can thus foster a two-way communication climate (Donsbach, 2015) that empowers the public. In contrast, a closed, one-way climate limits stakeholder engagement, leading to asymmetry and misunderstanding. In sum, both theory and the Ghanaian experience indicate that management's stance on communication practices plays a crucial role in how well target publics are engaged. Positive attitudes encourage dialogue and inclusive outreach; negative attitudes lead to narrow, less effective outreach.

2.3 Gaps in Literature

A review of the Excellence theory, Situational theory and some previous research works have revealed some gaps in literature which this study seeks to address.

- Limited Ghana-specific research on management attitudes in health PR. To date, there are almost no published studies examining how NHIA executives in Ghana view PR or communication, especially in relation to NHIS enrollment outcomes. Most Ghanaian PR studies focus on CSR, corporate communications, or higher education, leaving a gap in public-sector health contexts.
- Scant linkage between attitudes and outcomes. Although foundational PR theories suggest attitudes matter, empirical work directly connecting leadership attitudes to PR campaign

effectiveness (public awareness or enrollment figures) is rare. The interplay between NHIA managers' perceptions and actual NHIS uptake has not been explored.

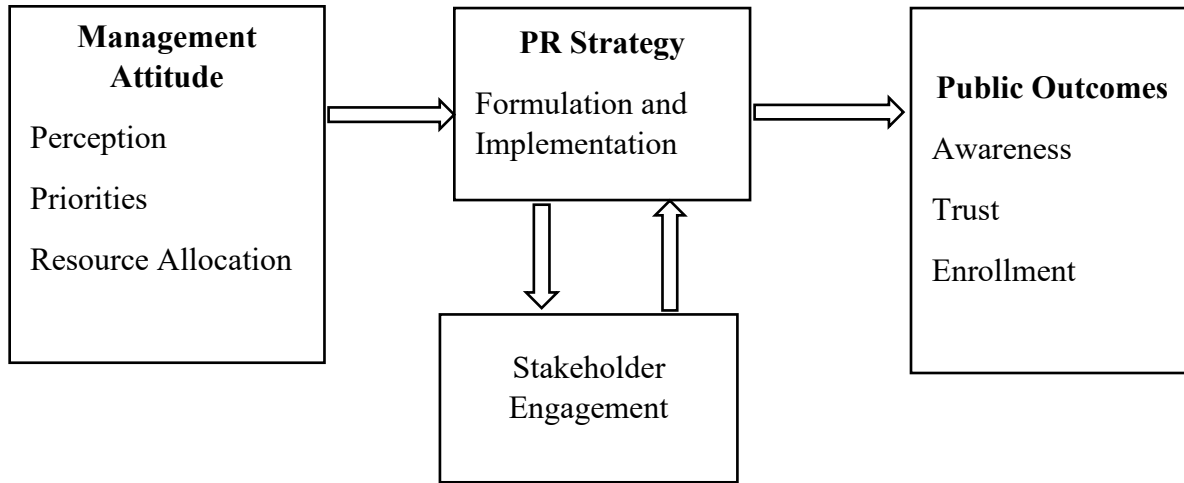
- Under-researched stakeholder engagement processes. While stakeholder theory and situational concepts are well established, their application to NHIS communication strategies in Ghana is not documented. Specifically, how management attitude moderate's stakeholder participation and feedback loops in NHIA has not been studied.
- The need for a contextual framework. Existing models (Excellence and Situational theories) have not been tailored or tested for Ghanaian public healthcare organizations. There is no conceptual framework linking management mindset, PR strategy implementation, and communication outcomes in this setting.

These gaps suggest a clear need for research on the NHIA in Ghana particularly the Upper East Region to fill the void on how management attitudes shape PR efforts and ultimately NHIS goal of universal health coverage.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a description of the way a researcher understands the factors or variables that are involved in the study and their relationships with one another. The purpose of a conceptual framework is to articulate the concepts under study using literature relevant to it (Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). A conceptual framework should therefore describe the relationship among components of the study (Anfara & Mertz, 2014). These relationships should guide the researcher's methods of approaching the study (Miles et al., 2014) and inform both the data to be collected and how the data should be analyzed.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Source: Author's Own Construct (2025)

Drawing on excellence and situational theory, the proposed framework above positions management attitude as a key antecedent to PR effectiveness. A positive attitude (viewing PR as strategic, two-way, and stakeholder-centered) aligns with Excellence Theory principles: PR is integrated into decision-making and resources are allocated to communication. This support influences the PR strategy adopted. Under supportive management, PR strategies are likely to be two-way and tailored (e.g. including feedback mechanisms, community liaisons), whereas unsupportive management may result in one-way, limited campaigns.

The framework also incorporates public segmentation per Situational Theory. The NHIA's target audience can be seen as different categories (nonpublic, latent, aware, active) based on their awareness of the NHIS. PR strategies should vary accordingly. For instance, a latent public (unaware of NHIS benefits) would require more intensive, persuasive outreach than an already active public. Management's role is to ensure these segments are properly identified and addressed.

Finally, the outcomes of interest thus public awareness, acceptance, and enrollment depend on this chain of effects. When management is supportive, PR strategies are more inclusive and engaging (e.g. community meetings, culturally appropriate messaging), leading to higher trust and participation. This should translate into greater awareness of NHIS services and stronger willingness to enroll. In contrast, a negative management stance may produce superficial communication with little public buy-in, yielding weaker enrollment.

In conclusion, the conceptual framework posits that management attitude shapes the PR system orientation (strategic vs. marginal) and stakeholder engagement, which in turn affects NHIS communication outcomes (Figure 1). The framework is grounded in Excellence Theory's emphasis on top-management involvement and Situational Theory's emphasis on matching strategies to publics. This integrated framework will guide the examination of how NHIA managers' attitudes in the Upper East Region influence the effectiveness of their PR strategies in raising awareness, acceptance, and enrollment.

2.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter two provides the groundwork for the study by reviewing literature on how management attitudes shape the effectiveness of PR, especially within Ghana's NHIA. It is anchored in the Excellence Theory, which highlights PR as a strategic, two-way communication effort spearheaded by top management, and the Situational Theory of Publics, which looks at how audience engagement hinges on their level of awareness. The chapter organizes its review around four main themes. It points out that while public sector managers in Ghana generally recognize the importance of PR, its strategic value often gets lost due to a lack of understanding and insufficient resources. In the context of the NHIS, this has created a disconnect between communication that focuses on mass media and the need for more localized, participatory engagement that fosters trust and encourages enrollment. The chapter also uncovers a significant research gap: there are not enough Ghana-specific studies that connect NHIA management

attitudes to real PR outcomes like public awareness and membership rates. It wraps up by suggesting a conceptual framework that brings together these theoretical insights and research findings.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, instruments, analysis techniques, and ethical considerations that was used in investigating how management attitudes influence the effectiveness of PR strategies within the NHIA in the Upper East Region of Ghana. This approach ensured theoretical grounding while remaining responsive to real-world dynamics, especially through the lens of Excellence and Situational Theories of Publics.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the influence of management attitudes on the effectiveness of PR strategies within the NHIA in the Upper East Region. This design provided a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between management attitudes and PR effectiveness by combining statistical trends with in-depth insights.

Quantitative data from structured surveys were used to assess the experiences of the public regarding NHIS activities, while qualitative interviews explored managerial attitudes and perceived PR outcomes (enrollment trends, awareness). The use of a mixed methods approach enabled triangulation of data sources and enriched the contextual understanding of management-communication dynamics (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

3.2 Population and Sample

The study population comprised two key groups: ten (10) internal stakeholders which included regional and district managers, public relations officers and communication staff of the NHIA and external stakeholders, consisting of two hundred (200) public respondents who have had interactions with the NHIA. The total sample size was 210 participants.

Sample size determination for qualitative phase

This phase involved 37 NHIA staff comprising:

- Three staff from the nine district offices (Manager and two communication staff)
- 10 regional office staff (management)

Ten (10) out of the Thirty-seven staff were interviewed because data saturation was attained after interviewing the tenth staff.

Sample size determination for quantitative phase

According to Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination and given the population of the Upper East Region as 1,301 226 (based on the 2021 Population and Housing Census), the sample size is estimated as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where;

n-represents the sample size

N-the population

And e the margin of error

$$n=1,301,226 / (1+1301226 (.05)^2)$$

$$n= 1301226 / 1301227 (0025)$$

$$n= 1301226 / 3253$$

$$n= 400$$

However, the sample size was adjusted from 400 to 200, due to time and cost constraints. The 200 were distributed among the sixteen districts in the region.

3.3 Sampling Technique

A Purposive sampling strategy was used to select NHIA staff, ensuring that individuals with roles directly related to management and communication were included. This approach provided targeted insights into the strategic and operational aspects of PR. A multi-stage sampling approach was adopted to capture diverse respondent profiles across the region for the quantitative part:

- Stage One – Cluster Sampling

The Region was first divided into its administrative districts. A purposive selection of districts was undertaken to ensure a mix of urban and rural areas and variations in population density and health facility access. Districts such as Bolgatanga, Bawku West, and Kassena-Nankana East were selected.

- Stage Two – Stratified Sampling

Within each selected district, the population was stratified by key demographic variables, including:

- Gender (male and female)
- Age groups (18–30, 31–50, and 51 years and above)
- Residential setting (urban or rural)

This ensured proportional representation and minimized sampling bias.

- Stage Three – Simple Random Sampling

A simple random sampling technique was then employed to select individual respondents within each stratum. In communities where household listings were incomplete, systematic sampling was used (every fifth household or every third person in public spaces such as health centers or market areas).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and integrity of the data, the following criteria were applied:

- Inclusion Criteria:
 - Individuals aged 18 and above.
 - Enrolled or non – enrolled members.
 - Residents of selected districts for at least one year.
- Exclusion Criteria:
 - NHIA staff

- People are unable to provide informed consent.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected through two main methods: structured surveys and semi-structured interviews. A structured questionnaire, grounded in the role of PR within the implementation of NHIA's operational strategies in the Upper East Region, was developed to ensure coherence between the exploratory findings and the measurable constructs. Data was collected in person from members of the public, enabling statistical analysis of how managerial perceptions, support, and attitudes towards communication shape the planning, execution, and outcomes of PR strategies. For the qualitative part, a total of Ten semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted: five with managers and five with public relations officers. Seven participants were males with three females; each participant had accumulated more than five years of professional experience within the NHIA. The interviews were conducted at the premises of the NHIA Regional and District Offices face to face with open ended questions. Each interview in its entirety lasted about 50 minutes and was recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Document analysis of relevant NHIA annual reports particularly on membership drive activities and their outcomes were also reviewed. This provided the opportunity to evaluate the role and effect of PR strategies. Sections of the annual reports on communication plans were assessed and used to supplement contextual understanding. This triangulated approach ensured validity.

3.5 Research Instruments

The survey included closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was adapted from validated instruments in public relations research (e.g., Macnamara, 2017). The interview guide featured open-ended questions focused on management practices, communication challenges, and the perceived alignment of leadership

behavior with PR strategy goals. Both instruments were pilot tested with five participants to ensure clarity, reliability, and content validity.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive statistics. Prior to analysis, the data was screened to ensure quality and readiness for further statistical procedures: missing values were replaced and outliers removed. Qualitative data was analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, guided by Braun and Clarke's six-step framework. Content analysis of the qualitative responses was done and triangulated with the objective outcomes from the quantitative analysis by aligning similarities while noting divergence in the data. Identified patterns or trends were then interpreted to bring out the responses to the research questions.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards. Prior to the commencement of the study, informed consent forms were provided to all interviewees who were assured of anonymity, confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of their participation. In addition, a research protocol was developed, containing a concise description of the study and clear guidelines to ensure the systematic collection of comparable qualitative data (Ritchie et al., 2013). Ethical approval for the research was obtained from UniMAC ethical clearance committee. Data was securely stored and used strictly for academic purposes in accordance with research ethics protocols.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to explore how management attitudes impact the effectiveness of PR at Ghana's NHIA in the Upper East Region. It included both internal stakeholders: NHIA managers and PR officers, and external stakeholders, such as the public. To gather data, a multi-

stage sampling method was employed, collecting responses from 200 public participants through structured surveys and conducting semi-structured interviews with 10 NHIA staff members. Additionally, a review of NHIA documents was carried out to ensure data triangulation. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS to generate descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data were examined through reflexive thematic analysis. The methodology adhered to strict ethical standards, including informed consent and confidentiality, which provided a solid and trustworthy foundation for tackling the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings and interprets them based on the research objectives. The focus here is to explore how management attitudes shape the effectiveness of PR strategies at NHIA in the Upper East Region.

With an exploratory mixed methods research design, the chapter is structured in two phases. First, it presents qualitative insights that are analyzed to give a deeper understanding of managerial perceptions and practices. These insights are then enriched and expanded upon in a quantitative phase, which tests the emerging patterns across a wider sample. This step-by-step approach ensures that the detailed, contextual narratives enhance the statistical analysis, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

4.1 Results from Qualitative Data

The insights gathered from the interview data were integrated to form the basis for exploring how management attitudes impact the effectiveness of PR strategies at the National Health Insurance Authority in the Upper East Region. To preserve the authenticity of participants' voices and offer a richer understanding of the topics being discussed, the study included participants' statements and phrases exactly as they were spoken using pseudonyms (Silverman, 2013).

4.1.1 Recognition of PR Importance

The interviews showed a strong consensus among managers that public relations is indispensable to the effective functioning of the NHIA. They see PR as a key player in raising awareness, rallying the

community, and driving innovation within the organization. Without PR, many of the Authority's policies and programs might not get the attention they deserve or could be misunderstood.

For example, M1 pointed out, *"PR is the face of the NHIA; without it, the public would not grasp what we do or why they should enroll."* This statement highlights the idea that PR is not just a backup service; it is the main way the NHIA shares its mission and earns the public's trust. M3 also emphasized PR's role in mobilization, saying, *"PR does not just inform; it helps us mobilize people during registration drives and ensures they engage with the program."* This shows how essential PR is for fostering participation and building trust in health insurance initiatives.

Beyond just raising awareness and mobilizing people, managers also see PR as a catalyst for innovation. M4 mentioned, *"Through PR, we are able to try new approaches like using radio, community forums, or even social media to connect with the public."* This indicates that PR is viewed as a versatile and adaptable tool that can refresh the Authority's communication strategies.

PR officers shared these views, noting that when management recognizes PR as a strategic function, it not only legitimizes their work but also boosts their motivation. PR1 remarked, *"When managers openly acknowledge the importance of PR, it earns our role respect and inspires us to be more creative."* Similarly, PR2 highlighted that *"management's recognition encourages us to go beyond the usual announcements and create campaigns that truly resonate with communities."* These insights show how managerial support can lead to greater confidence and innovation at the operational level.

Overall, Theme 1 highlights a shared belief among both managers and PR officers that PR is integral to NHIA's success. By linking PR to visibility, enrollment, and community engagement, participants positioned it as a strategic necessity rather than a peripheral activity.

4.1.2 Conditional and Resource-Linked Support

While Managers and PR officers generally recognize the significance of public relations, their insights reveal that the support for PR activities often hinges on availability of resources. Managers expressed a genuine desire to promote PR strategies, but their efforts are frequently limited by budget constraints and competing priorities within the organization. For instance, M2 pointed out that even though he values PR initiatives, *“without funds, there is very little that can be done.”* This highlights how crucial financial resources are in turning supportive attitudes into real actions. Similarly, M4 acknowledged that while he sees PR as important, *“competing priorities sometimes redirected available resources.”* His comment illustrates how managerial support can be undermined by the need to juggle limited resources across various operational demands. PR officers echoed this sentiment, noting that management’s encouragement does not always translate into practical support. As PR3 put it, *“management’s encouragement was genuine but often not matched with logistical support such as transport or communication tools.”* This points to a persistent disconnect between verbal support and the actual resources needed, which hampers PR officers' ability to effectively implement communication strategies.

Moreover, PR4 highlighted the influence of managerial discretion, stating that *“support varies depending on the priorities of the individual manager.”* This indicates that resource allocation can be inconsistent throughout the organization, making the success of PR strategies dependent not just on budget availability but also on the leadership style and focus of individual managers.

Overall, these insights reveal that while management generally has a positive attitude toward PR, their impact is often limited by resource constraints and discretionary practices. This reflects a type of conditional support where PR is acknowledged but not always adequately funded or supported.

4.1.3: Motivation and Morale of PR Staff

The interviews shed light on how crucial managerial recognition and encouragement are for boosting the motivation and morale of PR staff. When managers treat PR as a key strategic function, team members feel appreciated and empowered to perform at their best. Conversely, a lack of support or inconsistent backing can really dampen spirits.

As PR1 put it, *“When managers openly say PR is important, it makes our role respected and we feel encouraged to be more creative.”* PR2 echoed this sentiment, noting that *“management’s acknowledgment pushes us to go beyond routine announcements and to design campaigns that really connect with communities.”* These insights underscore how important it is for managers to recognize their teams, as it not only legitimizes their work but also sparks innovation. However, officers pointed out that when support is inconsistent, motivation tends to wane. PR4 remarked that *“support varies depending on the priorities of the individual manager,”* highlighting a lack of consistency that can leave staff feeling undervalued.

In summary, the findings clearly show that managerial attitudes play a direct role in shaping staff morale, which ultimately impacts on the quality and effectiveness of PR strategies.

4.1.4: Impact on Awareness and Enrollment

Participants highlighted the crucial connection between management support and the overall success of PR, especially in boosting public awareness and growing membership. Managers acknowledged that solid PR strategies lead to real, measurable outcomes for the NHIA. For instance, M1 pointed out, *“PR is the face of the NHIA; without it, the public would not grasp what we do or why they should sign up.”* Similarly, M3 noted, *“PR is not just about sharing information; it helps us rally people during registration drives and ensures they are on board with the program.”* These insights underscore how

managerial backing for PR allows the Authority to effectively engage with communities and enhance enrollment. PR officers echoed this sentiment, stressing that when management offers resources and support, their outreach efforts yield better results. As PR2 expressed, *“with management’s support, we can create campaigns that raise awareness and attract more members.”* This theme reinforces the strategic value of managerial support which does not only boosts internal morale and operational efficiency but also enhances the Authority’s capacity to fulfill its mission of expanding health insurance coverage.

4.1.5: Enabling or Constraining Engagement

The research highlighted that the attitudes of management are crucial in shaping how well PR officers can connect with both internal stakeholders and the broader community. When managers showed a supportive attitude, it led to smoother collaboration across departments, giving PR officers access to the information, cooperation, and resources they needed to carry out effective outreach. Supportive managers not only offered resources but also highlighted the significance of PR to other teams, which boosted cooperation and minimized bureaucratic hurdles. As PR2 put it, *“When management supports us, it opens doors, we get the cooperation we need from other units and can plan outreach without delays.”* This shows how backing from management encourages teamwork across departments, which is vital for launching campaigns in a timely and coordinated manner. In these situations, PR officers felt more empowered to do their jobs effectively and were able to forge stronger ties with the communities they serve.

Conversely, when management does not prioritize public relations, officers often find themselves facing obstacles that hinder their ability to perform their jobs effectively. A lack of support translates to limited access to essential logistics, little collaboration from other departments, and slower response times for outreach initiatives. PR3 pointed out these challenges, stating, *“if managers do not see PR as a priority,*

we struggle to get basic support, and that makes outreach almost impossible.” This highlights how managerial neglect can stifle PR operations, leaving officers feeling unsupported and unable to fulfill their key responsibilities.

The difference in these viewpoints suggests that management attitudes play a crucial role in whether PR engagement is fostered or hindered. In environments where support is present, PR is recognized and integrated into the organization’s larger activities. On the other hand, in less supportive settings, it tends to be sidelined and underfunded. Ultimately, the findings show that the effectiveness of PR in the NHIA Upper East Region is not just about technical skills or staff dedication; it is largely influenced by the attitudes and priorities of managers who control access to resources and institutional collaboration.

4.1.6: Trust and Institutional Image

The research uncovered a significant connection between how much management supports PR and the NHIA's credibility among the public. Participants pointed out that when managers actively backed and funded PR efforts, communities were more inclined to see the Authority as transparent, responsive, and trustworthy. Contrary, when PR was neglected or not given enough support, participants noted a decline in public confidence in the NHIA, which sometimes led to doubts about the Authority’s dedication to its members. Managers themselves acknowledged this link, with M1, highlighting that PR often serves as the first interaction between the Authority and the public. He described PR as crucial for shaping the institution’s image, saying, *“PR is the face of the NHIA; if it is well supported, people see us as credible and open.”* This statement emphasizes that investing in PR not only bolsters internal operations but also significantly influences how the Authority is viewed from the outside.

PR officers shared this viewpoint, emphasizing that a lack of managerial support can really damage community trust. PR4 warned that *“when management does not fully back PR, the public feels overlooked, and trust in the Authority starts to wane.”* This insight shows how quickly the public picks

up on any gaps in support, interpreting them as a sign of weak commitment to communication and accountability.

All these viewpoints indicate that management's attitude towards PR can have a ripple effect where when managers are supportive, they not only empower PR teams but also help create an image of the NHIA as transparent and trustworthy. On the other hand, when management neglects PR, it sends shockwaves beyond the organization, eroding trust, undermining the Authority's legitimacy, and risking a disconnect with the public. In this way, PR acts as both an internal function and an external representation of institutional credibility, its success largely hinges on the level of support it gets from management.

4.2: Results from Quantitative Data

The themes that came up during the qualitative interviews shed light on how management attitudes can directly or indirectly influence the success of PR strategies in the NHIA Upper East Region. While these stories offer a deep understanding of the context, they also prompt an understanding of how widespread these influences might be across a larger population. To address this, the study moves into a quantitative phase aimed at validating and measuring the impact of NHIA PR activities on the public. This phase adds to the qualitative findings by providing concrete evidence of patterns and relationships, which ultimately strengthens the overall validity of the study.

4.2.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The profile of respondents included their Age, Gender and Educational level. Understanding this profile is crucial for grasping the backgrounds of the participants before delving into their specific views on the NHIA's Public Relations efforts.

4.2.1.1 Age of Respondents

The figure below offers a clear visual representation of the age demographics of the survey respondents. Most respondents (35.0%) were between the age group of 18 – 30years. This is followed by respondents aged 51 – 60 (23.0%), then respondents aged 41-50 (21.5%), 31 – 40 (18.5%) and lastly respondents aged 60+ (2.0%).

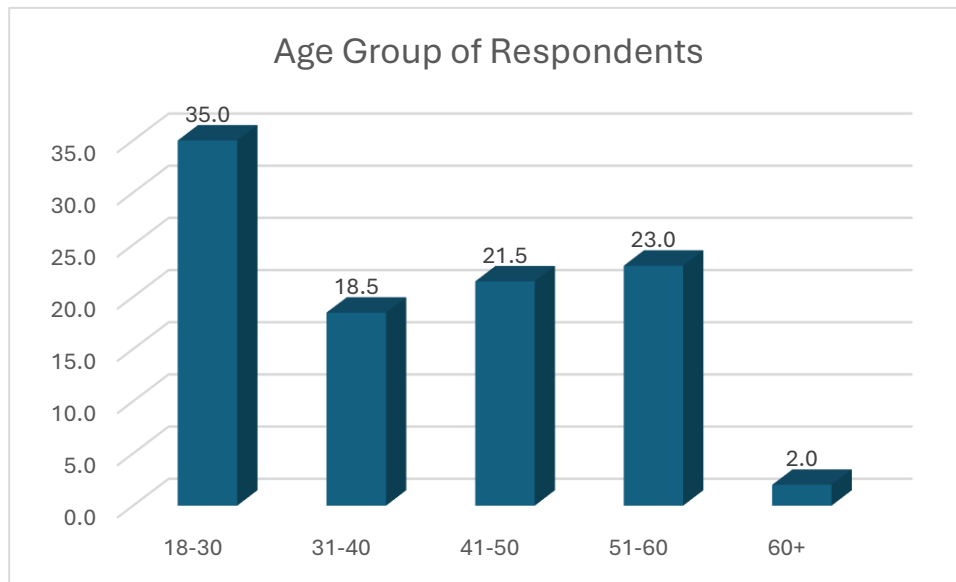


Figure 2: Age of Respondents (Source, Field Data, 2025)

4.2.1.2 Gender of Respondents

Figure 3 illustrates the gender distribution of the 200 respondents. The pie chart visually represents the proportion of males and females who participated in the study. This information helps in assessing the gender representativeness of the sample and for ensuring that the findings reflect the views of both genders within the target population. The study found that 68.0% of the respondents were females while 32.0% were males.

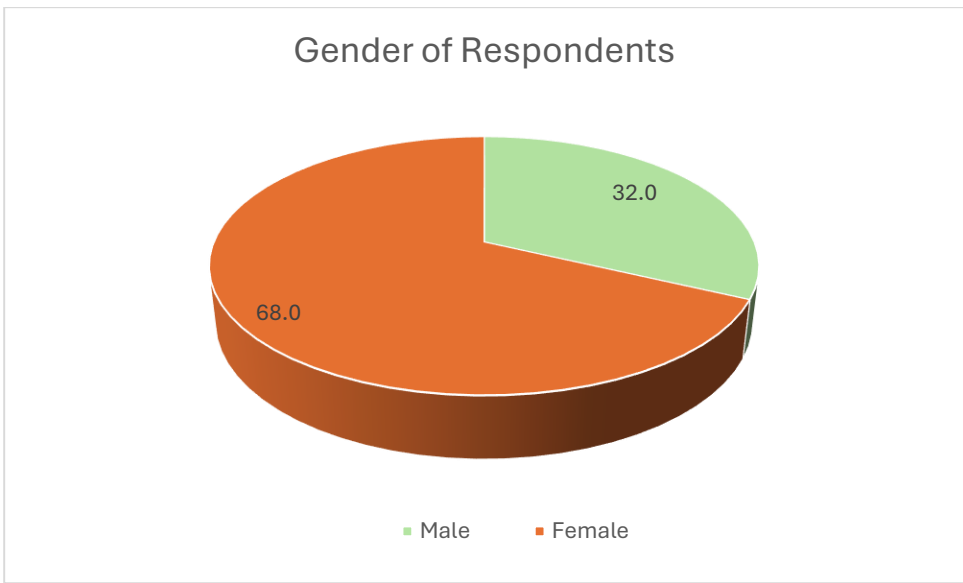


Figure 3: Gender of Respondents (Source, Field Data, 2025)

4.2.1.3 Educational Level of respondents

Table 1 below provides an overview of the educational backgrounds of the respondents. It reveals that a large portion of them have achieved a notable level of education. Specifically, 29.5% have completed secondary education, while 33.5% have pursued tertiary education, which together accounts for 63.0% of the total sample. Those with only basic education represent 24.0%, and 13.0% have no formal education at all. This distribution suggests that the survey primarily included individuals with a solid educational foundation, which is essential when considering their understanding and awareness of NHIA communication, as a person's education level can significantly affect how they grasp health information.

Table 1: Educational level of Respondents (Source, Field Data, 2025)

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No formal education	26	13	13	13
Basic	48	24	24	37
Secondary	59	29.5	29.5	66.5
Tertiary	67	33.5	33.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

4.2.2 Analysis of Key Findings

4.2.2.1 Awareness of NHIA’s Campaigns

The figure below gives a clear picture of how aware people are about the NHIA's PR campaigns. It shows the number of respondents who identify with different levels of awareness, like "Very Aware," "Aware," "Neutral," and "Unaware." This figure is important for assessing how well the NHIA's PR efforts are reaching the public. If a lot of people are aware, it suggests campaigns are doing a great job; on the other hand, if awareness is low, it points to the need for better outreach strategies. This therefore reveals that many people (38.0%) are aware of NHIA’s campaigns with only (11.0%) of respondents not aware of campaigns.

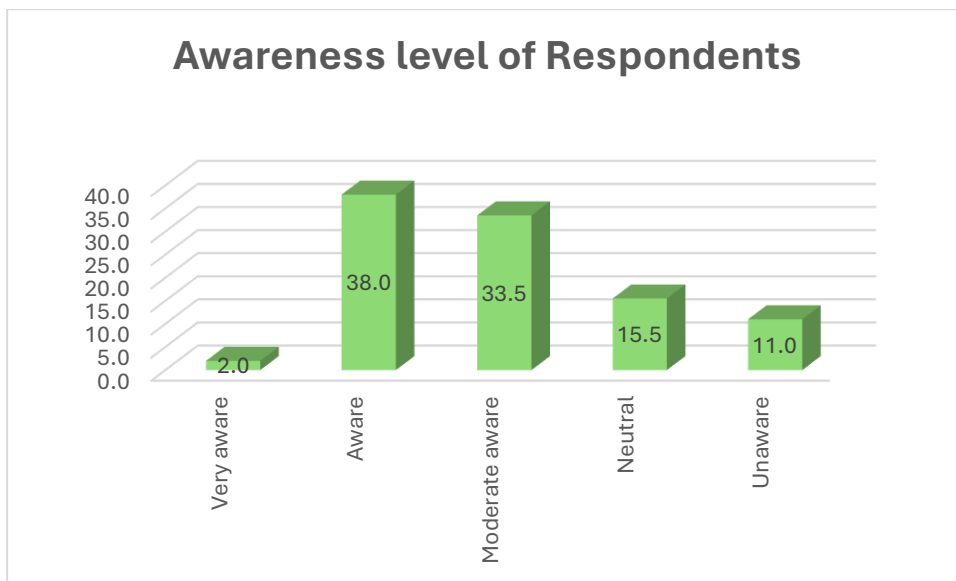


Figure 4: Respondents awareness of NHIA campaigns (Source, Field Data, 2025)

4.2.2.2 Member understanding of NHIA’s Communication

Table 2 below assesses how well members grasp NHIA's communications. The findings are slightly mixed, but the trend is slightly positive. Overall, 56.5% of respondents describe the communication as "Very clear" (23.5%) or "Somewhat clear" (33.0%). On the other hand, a notable 22.5% remain "Neutral," while 21% feel the communication is "Not very clear" (16.0%) or "Not clear at all" (5.0%). This suggests that although most people understand the messages, there is still a significant opportunity for the PR unit to enhance clarity and effectiveness for a good portion of their membership.

Table 2: Respondents understanding of NHIA communications (Source, Field Data, 2025)

Understanding of NHIA's Communication	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very clear	47	23.5	23.5	23.5
Somewhat clear	66	33	33	56.5
Neutral	45	22.5	22.5	79
Not very clear	32	16	16	95
Not clear at all	10	5	5	100
Total	200	100	100	

4.2.2.3 Communication Channels

Figure 5 below highlights the various communication channels that respondents use to get information from the NHIA. It ranks these channels: radio, television, community announcements, social media, and SMS alerts based on how often they are used or how effective they are. Knowing which channels resonate most with the target audience is essential for the NHIA to effectively allocate its PR resources and ensure that its messages reach people through the most accessible and trusted platforms. Radio discussions (48.5%) are mostly used for communication with populace in the region. This is followed by community durbars (30.0%) as most parts of the region are rural. Social media (14.5%) is also becoming a fast method of communicating with people. The least communication method is Television which covers 7.0% of the respondents.

NHIA's Communication channels

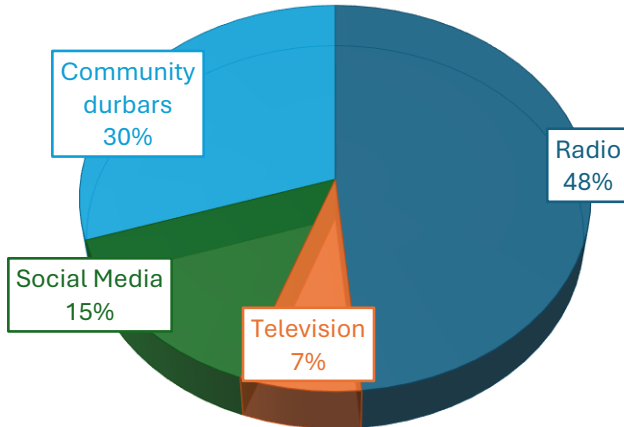


Figure 5: Communication channels of the NHIA (Source, Field Data, 2025)

4.2.2.4 Effectiveness of PR strategies

Table 3 below presents how respondents feel about the overall effectiveness of NHIA's public relations strategies. The results indicate a moderate level of effectiveness. While just 5.0% rated the strategies as "Very effective," a larger portion, 41.0%, found them "Effective." The biggest group, 37.0%, viewed them as only "Partially effective," and 17.0% considered them "Ineffective." In total, 46% see the strategies as effective or better, but 54% think there are notable shortcomings, either partial effectiveness or outright ineffectiveness. This clearly points to a need for the NHIA to reassess and improve its PR methods to make a bigger impact.

Table 3: Respondents impression on the effectiveness of NHIA’s PR strategies (Source, Field Data, 2025)

Effectiveness of NHIA Strategies	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very effective	10	5	5	5
Effective	82	41	41	46
Partially effective	74	37	37	83
Ineffective	34	17	17	100
Total	200	100	100	

4.2.2.5 Suggestions from Respondents

Figure 6 below summarizes the analytical insight, like how awareness, understanding, and perceived effectiveness are connected. It is a conceptual model illustrating the interplay of these factors, indicating that greater awareness and a clearer understanding can lead to a more favorable view of PR effectiveness. Essentially, this diagram helps to bring together the main data points into a comprehensive conclusion about the role of PR in the NHIA's operational strategy within the UER. 50.5% of respondents thinks the role of the PR unit is to intensify community durbars on NHIA policies and program, 17.5% believe more Television programs should be aired, improvement in the usage of digital channels for both sensitization (social media channels) and enrollment platforms (MyNHIS App and Mobile Renewal). 10.5% suggested the organization of more radio discussion while 10.0% did not provide any suggestion.

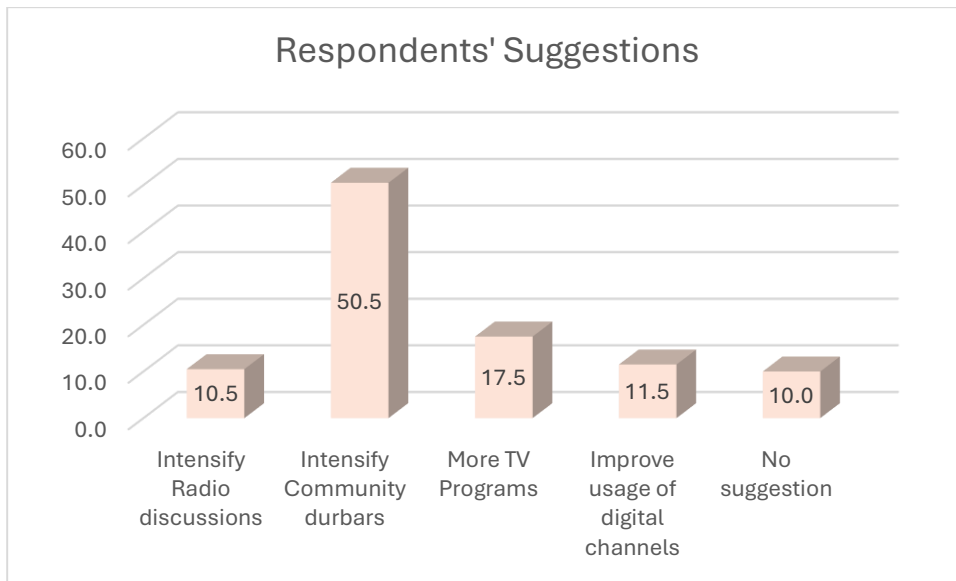


Figure 6: Suggestions from Respondents to the NHIA (Source, Field Data, 2025)

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzed how management attitudes shape the effectiveness of PR strategies at the NHIA in Ghana’s Upper East Region. The qualitative findings revealed that while managers see PR as crucial for raising awareness, rallying support, and establishing institutional legitimacy, their support often falls short due to limited resources. This lack of backing hinders PR officers from running impactful campaigns. On the other hand, positive managerial attitudes boost staff motivation and creativity, while inconsistent support can lead to frustration and stifle innovation. The quantitative results echoed these trends, showing moderate public awareness, unclear communication, and mixed feelings about PR effectiveness as less than half of the respondents considered NHIA’s PR efforts successful. Many pointed out communication gaps and recommended leveraging more community-based channels. Even though management generally holds favorable views toward PR, financial, logistical, and strategic challenges significantly hinder its effectiveness and dampen staff morale.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by bringing together the main outcomes of the research. It is organized into four parts: first, a discussion of the results, which interprets the findings in light of the research questions and relevant literature in chapter two; second, a summary of the key findings that highlights the central themes emerging from both the qualitative and quantitative phases; third, the conclusions drawn from these findings, linking them to the guiding theories and broader implications; and finally, recommendations at the practical, policy, and theoretical levels aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of PR strategies within the NHIA in the Upper East Region and guiding future research.

5.1 Discussion of Results

5.1.1 What Attitudes do NHIA Managers in the Upper East Region hold toward Public Relations and Communication?

The study found that NHIA managers in the Upper East Region generally have a positive outlook on public relations and understand its vital role in helping the Authority meet its communication and operational goals. The qualitative data showed that most managers view PR as the “face of the NHIA,” highlighting its importance in raising awareness, enrollment, and building public trust. Managers consistently expressed that PR is key to conveying the Authority’s mission and enhancing public understanding of health insurance policies and programs. This aligns with the central idea of the Excellence Theory (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), which positions PR as a strategic management function crucial for organizational success.

As M3 noted, *“PR is the voice and face of our organization connecting us to the communities we serve.”* Such comments reflect an understanding that PR extends beyond just media relations; it involves strategic communication, relationship building, and engaging with stakeholders. However, despite their theoretical appreciation for PR, there was a gap between what managers said, and the actual support given to PR initiatives. Quantitative data showed that only 46% of respondents rated NHIA’s PR campaigns as “effective” or “very effective,” while 54% considered them somewhat effective or ineffective. This gap between perception and reality suggests that while PR is acknowledged in theory, it lacks the necessary resources for effective implementation.

This partial alignment between what managers believe and what happens in practice echoes findings from Anani-Bossman (2020) and Tandoh et al. (2022), who noted that although Ghanaian managers often recognize the importance of PR, structural challenges like tight budgets, competing priorities, and misunderstandings about PR’s role hinder its strategic integration. Similarly, in the NHIA context, managerial appreciation did not always lead to adequate support for PR efforts.

5.1.2 What is the Role of PR in the Implementation of NHIA Operational Strategies in the Upper East Region?

The data clearly indicates that public relations is crucial for the successful implementation of the NHIA’s operational strategies. This is particularly true when it comes to raising awareness, facilitating enrollment, and improving communication between the Authority and the public. Both managers and PR officers recognized that effective communication is the backbone of all significant NHIA initiatives, such as policy rollouts, membership renewals, and educating the public about healthcare entitlements (Benefits Package). However, they also pointed out that limited resources pose a significant challenge to the strategic effectiveness of PR efforts.

In interviews with managers, it became evident that while they acknowledged the importance of PR, competing budgetary priorities often siphoned off funds meant for communication initiatives. M2 noted, “*without funds, there is very little that can be done,*” highlighting the fact that the success of PR heavily relies on consistent funding. Another manager, M3, admitted that “*operational needs sometimes take precedence over communication,*” even though they fully understand the strategic value of PR. These insights underscore a common issue in public sector organizations, where communication efforts deprioritized in favor of administrative or technical tasks.

PR officers echoed in these managerial insights but provided a more nuanced perspective. They described management support as “conditional,” meaning it often consisted of verbal encouragement without the necessary resources to back it up. PR3 remarked, “*Management’s encouragement was genuine but often not matched with logistical support,*” while others mentioned challenges like a lack of transportation, insufficient materials, and inconsistent funding to maintain their campaigns. As a result, PR officers often felt that their ability to implement effective communication strategies was more influenced by managerial decisions than by the policies of the NHIA.

The quantitative findings confirm the qualitative insights gathered. While 58% of respondents were aware of NHIA’s PR campaigns, less than half: only 46% felt they were effective. Respondents also pointed out the need for more varied and interactive communication methods, like radio discussions, community durbars, and social media engagement, all of which require a steady investment of resources. These results echo the views of Lindenmann (2002) and Issah (2017), who emphasize that PR outcomes only hold real value when they are properly funded and integrated into the organization’s strategy. From the standpoint of the Excellence Theory, NHIA’s experience shows that simply acknowledging the strategic role of PR is not enough; there also needs to be structural empowerment like authority, budget autonomy, and the right tools. So, while PR is crucial for executing NHIA’s operational strategies, the

Authority's limited resources and inconsistent management follow-through still hold back its effectiveness.

5.1.3 How do Management Attitudes influence the Effectiveness of PR Strategies (in Terms of Public Awareness, Acceptance, and Enrollment Outcomes)?

The research highlighted how management attitudes play a crucial role in shaping the success of PR strategies. They directly affect staff motivation, spark campaign innovation, and enhance the clarity of public communication. A strong positive correlation emerged between supportive management and PR officers' morale. The data revealed that 72% of PR officers who felt management regarded PR as a strategic function reported high levels of job satisfaction and motivation. In contrast, only 29% of those who perceived PR as an afterthought felt the same way. This stark difference emphasizes how leadership attitudes can significantly influence employee engagement and performance.

PR officers under supportive managers described their work environment as collaborative and empowering. As PR 4 shared, *"When management consults us before launching new initiatives, I feel inspired to contribute my best ideas because I know my input is valued."* This sense nurtured creativity and motivated officers to create community campaigns that addressed local needs. Those working in such supportive settings viewed themselves as vital contributors to NHIA's mission and were more proactive in engaging with stakeholders

In contrast, officers working under unsupportive management often express feelings of frustration and neglect. PR1 said, *"We only get called when there is a problem. Otherwise, it feels like we are invisible."* This kind of exclusion really took a toll on morale and stifled innovation. In fact, 65% of PR officers admitted they "rarely or never" pitched new campaign ideas because they felt they lacked managerial support or resources. These insights align with the findings of Rhoades et al. (2001) and Meng and Berger (2019), who highlighted that perceived organizational support boosts motivation, creativity, and performance among communication professionals.

Public survey results also shed light on how managerial attitudes impact communication outcomes. Awareness of NHIA campaigns was moderate at 58%, and only 23.5% of respondents described the Authority's communication as "very clear." According to the Situational Theory of Publics (Moss, 1997), awareness and understanding are crucial for active public participation. Therefore, the lack of clarity and inconsistency in NHIA communication contributes to only partial engagement and a dip in public trust. Qualitative findings indicate that while managers may verbally prioritize PR, the administrative hurdles faced by PR officers limit their ability to foster ongoing, participatory communication. This disconnect between planning and execution undermines awareness, acceptance, and enrollment outcomes. Moreover, both managers and PR officers connected managerial support to the Authority's credibility and public trust. In instances where collaboration thrived, communities showed greater trust in NHIA's operations. Conversely, where it fell short, public skepticism was apparent. This observation backs up the work of Greenwood (2007) and Jeffery (2009), who argue that organizational openness and managerial involvement are vital for building stakeholder confidence. Thus, management attitudes significantly impact not just the effectiveness of internal communication but also the NHIA's external reputation and public perception.

5.1.4 How does Management Attitude affect NHIA's Engagement with its Target Audience?

Management attitudes play a critical role in how NHIA connects with its target audience. The data revealed that 68% of PR officers who viewed their managers as "supportive" also reported having sufficient funding and strategic coordination for their communication efforts. These officers described supportive managers as "champions" who made sure funds were released on time, included PR in planning discussions, and aligned communication activities with the organization's goals. PR 2 shared, *"My manager does not just sign off on budgets; he actively asks how our communication plan connects to enrollment goals. That really makes us feel valued and empowered to do our jobs."* Such leadership

practices fostered collaboration between departments and helped PR officers build strong relationships with key stakeholders, including chiefs, opinion leaders, and community representatives.

Conversely, unsupportive managerial attitudes hinder engagement and responsiveness. PR officers noted that their budget requests were sometimes “ignored for months,” and their input in communication planning was “rarely or never” considered. In these situations, 74% of PR officers reported facing frequent resource shortages, while 61% felt excluded from national policy discussions. These challenges forced PR officers to rely on short-term, makeshift strategies, resulting in inconsistent community outreach. As a result, public communication often became one-sided, with few chances for dialogue and feedback.

The absence of participatory communication really undermines community trust and legitimacy. As highlighted by Ford et al. (2005) and Cofie et al. (2013), engaging stakeholders means fostering active dialogue instead of just delivering information from the top down. This study shows that without ongoing support from management, the NHIA’s efforts to engage stakeholders end up being more symbolic than meaningful. In these situations, the Authority’s communication does not promote mutual understanding, which ultimately hampers its ability to build public confidence and maintain enrollment over time.

Looking through the lens of the Excellence Theory, effective public relations hinges on top management’s commitment to two-way symmetrical communication. When leadership does not prioritize this kind of engagement, PR tends to be reactive, and the NHIA’s relationship with its audience suffers. Thus, the attitudes of management play a crucial role in determining whether engagement efforts create real partnerships or just turn into superficial attempts at sharing information.

5.1.5 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings from this study have both theoretical and practical significance. On a theoretical level, it enhances the Excellence Theory by highlighting that while it is important for managers to recognize the importance of PR, that alone is not enough for success. It is equally vital to invest continuously in PR

frameworks, allocate resources effectively, and ensure strong leadership involvement. Additionally, the results support the Situational Theory of Publics, shedding light on why communities in the Upper East Region have only partially engaged, largely due to unclear, inconsistent, and underfunded communication efforts.

From a practical standpoint, the study emphasizes the need for NHIA management to fully integrate PR into its operational structure. This means going beyond just verbal support to ensure ongoing funding, logistical support, and skill development for communication officers. Management should also foster a culture of participatory communication by involving PR officers in planning, policy development, and execution. If these steps are not taken, NHIA risks losing public trust, hindering policy acceptance, and delaying progress toward achieving universal health coverage by 2030.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study revealed that NHIA managers consistently recognized the importance of public relations in the Authority's operations. They highlighted how PR plays a crucial role in raising awareness, engaging communities, and boosting the institution's credibility. This acknowledgment not only showed management's appreciation for communication but also motivated PR officers. The officers noted that this recognition validated their work, enhanced their sense of purpose, and inspired them to contribute more effectively to the organization's objectives.

While managers did show genuine support for public relations, the reality was that this support was often conditional and influenced by practical challenges. Issues like tight budgets, poor logistics, and conflicting organizational goals meant that PR did not always get the attention it truly needed. PR officers noted that although managers often provided verbal encouragement, this did not always translate into tangible support like funding, transportation, or communication tools. Consequently, the impact of PR campaigns was frequently hampered by a lack of resources.

Recognition from management plays a crucial role in boosting the morale of PR staff. When managers show their support for PR and recognize it as a key strategic function, team members feel appreciated, inspired, and willing to think outside the box in their work. This kind of positive reinforcement not only builds commitment but also sparks innovation in communication strategies. On the other hand, when support is inconsistent or lacking, it takes a toll on morale, leaving officers feeling discouraged and stifling their ability to explore new and creative ways to engage with the community.

The quantitative findings revealed that while about 58 percent of people were aware of NHIA's PR campaigns, the clarity of the communication left much to be desired. Only 23.5 percent of respondents felt that the Authority's messages were "very clear," indicating that a significant number of individuals had difficulty grasping NHIA's communications. This highlights a need for better-tailored communication strategies that cater to different audience segments, especially in rural areas and among those with lower education levels, where using traditional channels and simpler messaging could really make a difference.

When asked to evaluate the effectiveness of NHIA's PR strategies, less than half of respondents (46%) considered them effective or very effective. Most people saw them as only somewhat effective or not effective at all. This highlights a gap between how managers view PR as important and how the public perceives its real impact. The gap suggests that while managers value PR in principle, inconsistent investment and lack of strategic integration limit its practical outcomes, resulting in mixed levels of effectiveness among the target population.

The study revealed a significant connection between how management views their role and how well they engage with stakeholders. When managers were supportive, it led to better collaboration across departments, which in turn enhanced PR officers' ability to connect with communities through outreach efforts involving chiefs, opinion leaders, and other key stakeholders. This approach helped build public

trust in the NHIA and increased acceptance of its programs. On the other hand, when management support was lacking or inconsistent, it weakened outreach efforts, limited community collaboration, and heightened skepticism towards the Authority. This finding underscores the crucial impact of managerial commitment on both the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement and the level of trust the public has in the NHIA.

5.3 Conclusion

The findings revealed that NHIA managers in the Upper East Region recognize PR as indispensable for awareness, mobilization, and institutional legitimacy. However, their support was often conditional, shaped by resource constraints and individual managerial priorities. This affected PR programming and implementation, demotivation of officers and largely the extent to which PR strategies could fully influence NHIS's performance and public presence. This suggests that managerial attitudes, though broadly favorable, did not consistently translate into effective, impactful communication due to occasional neglect and partial support to PR. Essentially, the study highlights that management attitudes serve as both enablers and constraints to effectiveness of PR within the NHIS as a public institution.

The study affirms Excellence Theory, showing that PR is most effective when empowered by top management through access, authority, and resources. It also validates the Situational Theory of Publics, highlighting that publics in the Upper East Region remain only partially active due to unclear and inconsistent communication. Importantly, the study establishes that managerial attitudes not only influence internal morale and operational capacity but also directly affect public trust, stakeholder engagement, and NHIS enrollment outcomes.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Recommendations for Practice

First, it is recommended that public relations be institutionalized as a strategic function within the NHIA. This means that PR should have a seat at the decision-making table, with communication officers reporting directly to senior management. By doing this, it would ensure that PR insights are integrated into policy development and operational planning, rather than being sidelined as just a support service.

Secondly, the NHIA should increase its budget for PR efforts especially in its quarterly budget allocation. This is because effective communication does not just happen, it requires proper funding, dependable logistics, and up-to-date digital tools. Without these essentials, even the most well-thought-out PR strategies would not make any impact. By allocating enough resources, PR teams can create and implement campaigns that resonate with a wider and more varied audience.

Also, staff motivation must be enhanced through deliberate recognition and support of PR contributions. This can be done through ongoing professional development, training opportunities, and incentives. Acknowledging the hard work of PR officers not only lifts their spirits but also sparks innovation and creativity in crafting campaigns that truly engage the community.

Moreover, to enhance its communication efforts, the NHIA should embrace a multi-channel approach. Instead of sticking to traditional mass media, it is crucial to boost grassroots outreach through community gatherings, collaborations with local influencers such as Assembly Members, and engaging local drama groups. These efforts should be paired with digital and social media platforms to ensure that communication strategies are inclusive and can effectively reach both urban and rural communities.

Lastly, the Authority should encourage two-way communication by promoting participatory methods. It is important for communities to take part in crafting messages and providing feedback, as this not only makes the messages more relevant but also builds trust and a sense of ownership among stakeholders. This interactive communication style is much more likely to create lasting engagement compared to simply pushing out one-way information.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Policy

At the policy level, it is essential that NHIA headquarters provide consistent support for PR across all regional offices. Executive Management needs to ensure there is dedicated funding for communication activities, which will help minimize the disparities that can arise from individual managers' decisions. By making sure resources are allocated uniformly, we can enhance the effectiveness of communication on a national scale.

Moreover, the NHIA should create a standardized national communication framework to guide both regional and district offices. This framework should outline clear standards and objectives for PR practices, which also needs to be flexible enough to adapt to the unique cultural and contextual realities of different areas.

Lastly, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms must be strengthened. By introducing measurable indicators like awareness levels, clarity of communication, and enrollment figures, this will establish reliable benchmarks to assess how effective PR strategies are. Regular evaluations will not only ensure accountability but also pave the way for ongoing improvements in communication practices.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Theory and Further Research

In terms of theoretical implications, future research should aim to adapt the Excellence Theory to fit resource-limited and culturally diverse settings like Ghana. The theory's focus on empowered, well-

resourced public relations units might need some tweaking to better address the challenges that public institutions face when dealing with financial and logistical hurdles.

Additionally, Further research should also focus on public responsiveness studies. Specifically, there is a need to examine how different communication strategies influence actual enrollment behavior in both rural and urban areas. This could shed light on which methods are most effective in rallying communities to participate in health insurance programs.

Finally, comparative studies across different regions of Ghana are recommended. This kind of research would help determine whether the challenges and trends seen in the Upper East Region are unique to that area or if they reflect wider, national patterns. Ultimately, this would enhance understanding of how effective public relations are within Ghana's health insurance landscape.

5.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter 5 provided a clear summary of the study's key findings, emphasizing how management attitudes can both support and hinder the effectiveness of PR within the NHIA in the Upper East Region. It pointed out a significant gap between how managers verbally acknowledge the strategic importance of PR and the limited practical support they offer, mainly due to resource constraints. This has led to only moderate public awareness (58%) and a low perceived effectiveness (46%) of PR campaigns. This disconnect illustrates how managerial attitudes can either empower or limit communication outcomes. The discussion reinforced the Excellence Theory, highlighting the necessity for managerial empowerment and adequate resources, while also touching on the Situational Theory of Publics, which shows that inconsistent communication can diminish public engagement. The chapter suggested that PR should be integrated into senior management, budgets should be increased, and multi-channel, grassroots-focused strategies should be adopted. Policy recommendations included the establishment of a national communication framework with stable funding, and future research should investigate how PR

effectiveness varies across different regions and how the Excellence Theory can be tailored to fit resource-limited contexts.

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APPENDIX I

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE – NHIA MANAGERS

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me.

I am a Postgraduate student at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UNIMAC), conducting a study on how management attitudes influence the effectiveness of public relations (PR) strategies within the NHIA, particularly in the Upper East Region. Your insights as staff are valuable for understanding internal practices, challenges, and successes in public engagement.

Your responses will be kept confidential and used strictly for academic purposes. You are free to decline any question or stop the interview at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender
2. Age? 25 – 29yrs 30 – 39yrs 40 – 49yrs 50 – 59yrs
3. How long have you served in this position?
4. What are your specific roles in the NHIA?
5. What is your experience working with PR or communications professionals within NHIA?

Section B: Management Attitudes Toward PR and Communication (Objective 1 & 4)

6. How do you perceive the role of PR in the NHIA?
7. In your opinion, how important is corporate communication to the success of NHIA's operations?

Explain your response

8. Could you describe how management attitudes have impacted PR activities in the NHIA?
9. Do you think PR effectiveness is dependent on management support?

Yes

No

Explain your respond

Section C: PR Role in Operational Strategy (Objective 2)

10. How are PR staff involved in the planning and implementation of operational strategies?
11. Are there clear communication structures between management and PR staff during project execution? Behavior or decisions directly affect PR outcomes.

Section E: Target Public Engagement (Objective 4)

12. How does the NHIA engage with its target audience (members, health facilities, media)?
13. How do management priorities shape these engagement strategies?
14. To what extent do you believe PR or communication efforts have improved public responses and enrollment?

(i) Strongly believe

(ii) Believe

(iii) Strongly disbelieve

(iv) I am indifferent

Explain your response in 16 above.

Closing

15. What suggestions would you offer to improve management - PR collaboration in NHIA?

16. Any additional thoughts or experiences you would like to share?

THANK YOU

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE – NHIA PR STAFF

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me.

I am a Postgraduate student at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), conducting a study on how management attitudes influence the effectiveness of public relations (PR) strategies within the NHIA, particularly in the Upper East Region. Your insights as staff are valuable for understanding internal practices, challenges, and successes in public engagement.

Your responses will be kept confidential and used strictly for academic purposes. You are free to decline any question or stop the interview at any time.

Thank you for participating in this interview.

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender
2. Age? 25 – 29yrs 30 – 39yrs 40 – 49yrs 50 – 59yrs
3. How long have you worked in the PR department at NHIA?
4. What are your main responsibilities in the PR department?

Section B: Perceived Management Attitudes (Objective 1 & 4)

5. How would you describe management's general attitude toward PR and communication activities?
6. Do you feel that PR is prioritized or sidelined in management decision-making?
7. Can you recall instances where management support helped or hindered PR efforts?

Section C: Role of PR in Operational Strategy (Objective 2)

8. What is PR's role in the operational planning and implementation phases of activities?
9. Are PR professionals consulted when new policies or strategies are introduced?
10. Can you describe a recent campaign or initiative where PR played a key role?

Section D: Impact of Management Attitudes (Objective 3 & 4)

11. How do management attitudes affect your ability to execute PR strategies?
12. What challenges have you faced due to management's perceptions or decisions?
13. Have you observed changes in public trust or engagement when management actively supports PR?
14. What improvements would you recommend for aligning management and PR efforts?

Closing

15. How do you measure the success of your PR campaigns?
16. Any final thoughts or experiences you would like to share?

THANK YOU

APPENDIX II

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a Postgraduate student at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), conducting a study on how management attitudes influence the effectiveness of public relations (PR) strategies within the NHIA, particularly in the Upper East Region. Your experiences with NHIS activities in the Region will help the NHIA improve its PR strategies to better serve Members.

Your responses will be kept confidential and used strictly for academic purposes. You are free to decline any question or stop the interview at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age: ____

2. Gender:

Male

Female

3. Educational Level:

No formal education

Basic

Secondary

Tertiary

4. Are you a member of the NHIS?

Yes

No

5. How long have you been a member (if applicable)?

Less than 1 year

1–3 years

3–5 years

Over 5 years

Section B: Public Awareness and Perception of NHIA PR Activities

6. How would you rate your awareness of NHIA's public relations campaigns?

Very high

High

Moderate

Low

Not aware of their campaigns

7. Have you benefited from any recent communication such as announcements or campaigns by NHIA?

Yes

No

7a. If yes, do you remember the message that was given?

.....

7b. Did the information help in your response or decisions concerning your NHIS membership subscription?

.....

8. In your opinion, how would you grade your understanding of NHIA's communication to the public?

Very clear

Somewhat clear

Neutral

Not very clear

Not clear at all

9. Which of the following communication channels of the NHIA have you observed? (Select all that apply)

Radio

Television

Social media

Community durbars

Leaflets/posters

10. Do you believe NHIA management takes public communication seriously?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

11. Do you think NHIA managers are visible and engage with the public regularly?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Section D: PR Effectiveness and Public Engagement

12. How effective do you find NHIA's PR strategies in keeping the public informed?

Very effective

Effective

Neutral

Ineffective

Very ineffective

13. Have NHIA PR activities improved your understanding of their services?

Yes

No

Not sure

14. What suggestions would you make to improve NHIA's communication with the public?

.....

THANK YOU