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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SoGSaR)



TOPIC:

**THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE:
A STUDY OF THE GHANA ARMED FORCES.**

BY:

VERONICA ASANTEWAA-YEBOAH

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Veronica Asantewaa-Yeboah, the author of this study, the use of social media in public relations practice in the Ghana Armed Forces Headquarters in Accra, do hereby declare that except for the reference to other people's work which has been duly acknowledged, the work presented here is the result of my own effort for the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations at the Ghana Institute of Journalism.



Veronica Asantewaa-Yeboah


(Student)



Date

SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the preparation of this dissertation was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines of the supervision of dissertation laid down by Ghana Institute of Journalism.



Dr. Modestus Fosu

(Supervisor)



Date

DEDICATION

To my beloved mother, the greatest woman in my life, who has shown me unconditional love and support each time of my life. Words cannot describe what you have done for me. Thank you for believing in me.

To my lovely Director, I am really honored to have you in my life, thank you for your love, help, patience, and support during this journey.

To my beloved father and sisters, thank you for your encouragement and support.
I dedicate this modest work to you.

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ABSTRACT

Social Media has brought significant changes to communication in Public Relations and the security agencies, especially the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) is not exception. Social media was not used in the practice of Public Relations in the Armed Forces in the past. However, in modern times, the Armed Forces have embraced social media more than ever which is serving them a good purpose when it comes to information sharing. One thing that is the most likely reason for this development is through the Public Relations function of the Armed Forces. As part of doing this, the Armed Forces is establishing social media handles that will keep its relations with internal and external stakeholders and informed them about what they do. The Ghana Armed forces has a Department for Public Relations, and social media has made issues of openness and practicing public relations in the core tenets of the Institute of Public Relations paramount.

The study seeks to assess the use of social media in Public Relations practice in the Ghana Armed Forces. A sample of 237 Personnel at the GAF were asked to fill questionnaires whilst six Officers, three of heads different sections of the GAF PR and the other three heads different units of GAF were interviewed.

The study revealed that GAF uses social media in its internal and external communications, but only engages in external communications as and when it is needed; GAF often employ open ways of practicing Public Relations with the use of social media and information has to go through a process of approval. It was recommended that, The Ghana Armed Forces should use social media platforms to develop and enhance the performance of the organization by creating new ways of innovation which lead will to more effectiveness and efficiency within the Armed Forces.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The world functions with Communication which is a key and integral part of human civilization. From time immemorial, mankind has communicated through several means including symbols, text, body language, gestures art, music and dance. Communication can be found in every facet of our daily lives. Central to the Public relations practice is communication since Public Relations essentially involves the engagement of the publics of an organization and this is achieved through communication. The study of communication in organisations is not new, but it has only recently achieved some degree of recognition as a field of academic study. The first communication programs were typically located in speech departments, but most schools now include communication as a key element of study. The study of communication recognizes that communication in organizations goes far beyond training workers to be effective speakers and to have good interpersonal communication skills. Moreover, it recognizes that all organizations, not just business organizations, have communication needs.

Communication can be defined as the exchange of an information, thought and emotion between individuals of groups; in other words, communication plays a fundamental role in balancing individual and organizational objectives (De Rider, 2004).

Organizations from government department and Institutions to small businesses are increasingly adopting social media for organizational communication and public relations. It is now a reality

that social media is changing the way companies and stakeholders communicate daily, providing opportunities for collaboration, participation, interactively and engagement.

Therefore, social media is convinced today in cooperate world as a strategic communication partner driving new and unique possibilities for an organization to engage stakeholders in conversation.

Social media is a term that we currently use around. Its meaning has widened considerably since its usage in language started to become popular. If we use the term to describe sites like Twitter and Facebook, and also Digg and Reddit, then its meaning starts becoming rather vague. As commonly happens when a term is overused, social media is beginning to have different meanings for different people. Some people see it as social networking – websites such as Twitter, Facebook, etc. Others will say that blogs are not included in its definition (Elise Moreau, writing in *webtrends.com*,).

Impact of Public Relations in Organizational Communication

Organizational communication becomes important and fundamental in relation to the interaction between individuals within the organization. Communication can create satisfaction for people who do it. Corporate, social and personal satisfaction depends on a person's ability to communicate clearly to others, from his work, from what he wants and from what he believes. Organizational communication becomes important in relations to interaction between individuals in an organization and also creates a common understanding of the information presented to each other (Pearson 2013). Public Relations in an organization is one of the most effective ways to build and create a solid online reputation. Companies that have caught onto that are investing a tremendous amount of time and effort into staying on top of their PR strategies. Public Relations is about

sending the right messages to the right place and the right people, creating a stronger brand reputation.

PR agencies work alongside their clients to help them achieve this and promote them within their clients industries. PR is an area that can transform organizational communication. PR can give a company the ability to overcome almost any obstacle it may face. This is some of what makes PR so essential. Public Relations has a great impact in organizational communication. Some of the impacts include a change in the way people think in an organization.

The online world allows people to say whatever they want about a business, true or not, with the business being able to do very little about it. A large number of businesses get a bad reputation without doing anything to deserve it, while other businesses are not within easy online reach of their intended markets. Both circumstances are hardly ideal. The most effective way to fix that is through PR campaigns. PR support and the right campaigns increase awareness for a brand while maintaining a positive and consumer-resonant image.

Public relations also enhances online presence. Everyone is digitally connected in today's world, and PR helps companies to create a strong online presence that is highly visible to their target audience. PR agencies provide organizations with support and guidance to help them advertise themselves online. PR experts can identify the best channels to spread a company's message to the right people. Press releases, social media and influencer connections with promotional content-publishing sites are some of the tools that PR organizations use to help their clients to strengthen their brand image.

Social Media in Contemporary Public Relations Practice.

Social Media has become a valuable tool in contemporary Public Relations practice since it gives the organization a direct voice to speak to the public. In public relations, communicating a message using media will engage audiences in dialogue, therefore, developing mutual understanding and ensuring the delivery of organizational objectives communication (Wang, 2015). Though previous modes of media allowed for the transmission of information, they could not cater for the human impulse to interact. The evolution and incorporation of social media in contemporary public relations practice has therefore enabled improvement of public relations practices. It provides organizations with the opportunity to better understand public relations strategies. The use of social media in public relations has enabled listening to the audience and reaching them individually and as groups. Social media has helped public relations realize its full potential and therefore led to the achievement of strategic objectives. As effective as social media is to public relations, it also comes with its problems.

First of all, since social media is always changing, it is therefore important for public relations experts to understand the current trends and keep up with the times. Additionally, the expectations of audiences keep on changing therefore, it is a constant learning process to understand the customer. The public relations professional should also learn to listen to all opinions, whether they may be negative or positive since all feedback is significant to the organization.

Secondly, a major aspect to be considered is the affordability of implementing social media in PR practices. There are a number of significant costs that are involved in implementing social media in PR within the organizational setting. These costs may include fees for mobile applications, the cost of hiring a social media strategist and digital marketing fees. Though it is beneficial for organizations to engage in the use of social media in PR practices, budgeting of costs

may also be important. The organization should therefore understand that there are costs involved and then invest accordingly.

Furthermore, another important area that is linked with social media usage in PR is the issue of greater involvement. Social media communication is a two-way street thus, the organization will have to dedicate more time to answering consumer needs. Greater engagement will involve developing strategies to win over the interest of the clients. Learning what the client wants and needs will lead to better engagement with the consumer.

Finally, we must acknowledge that the use of social media in contemporary Public Relations practice has made work more effective and efficient. For instance, many recruiters, hiring managers and human resources professional rely on social media for recruiting and evaluating job candidates. In some cases, social media research can also provide a hiring manager with a better understanding of the applicant's competency. It can also be used to monitor the behavior and performance of employees.

PR has become more integrated due to the cooperation between the public and organizations. A large number of studies have been done on the influence and use of social media in PR.

Many of them come up with that social media is the platform and carrier of public communication campaigns and strategic communication (Wang, 2015), which mostly are talking about communication.

Security Services and their use of Social Media

The use of social media has brought significant changes to communication in PR practice and the security agencies are not exception. Security agencies share information about the threats and imminent attacks to prepare the nation for such occurrences. They are responsible for overseeing the well-being of nation's people, security and territorial sovereignty. With such widespread

influence, it is imperative that security has an internal voice in the form of communications representation, ensuring policies, procedures and relevant breaking news items are universally and regularly communicated (Security Magazine 2018). Security agencies interact with the general public on a daily basis. Whether it is giving directions, interviewing/interrogating a suspect, maintaining law and order in the country or simply reporting an incident to a supervisor, effective communication is essential to the success of the business they protect. Just like other organizations use social media for communicating to its Stakeholders, so do the security agencies use websites and social media handles to communicate to the general public. Security agency like the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) also depends on communication for effective and efficient operations. The Ghana Armed Forces is seen as an entity with unique rules and regulations that makes it difficult for them to be open and interact with general public in the society.

Internal and External Communication in the Armed Forces.

The main purpose of communication from the standpoint of the organization is its successful functioning. Internal and external communication is considered to be very important resources of corporate communication.

Internal communication is the exchange of information within an organization. Within an organization, messages can be exchanged via personal contact, telephone, e-mail, intranet (the website accessible only by employees), Group meetings, Company blogs, Employee training within an organization, Company newsletter, etc. This type of communication can be vertical, horizontal and diagonal. Internal communication helps employees in performing their work and identifying and promptly dealing with potential problems. External communication on the other hand is the exchange of information both within and outside of the organization. Organizations

communicate with the outside world on a daily basis. External communication can be done through Advertisement of an organization, Response to a customer, Press conference, Annual reports and letters, Print media, Face to face meeting of two organization heads, Tender document, etc. This Study will focus more on the external communication between the Armed Forces and the General Public.

The GAF through the use of social media can communicate to the general public by sharing positive news with them. The GAF can share positive news like re-opening of Basic and Secondary Schools to the general public, employment vacancies, issuing of press releases and media advisory to the civil media, educating the general public on recruitment and enlistment fraud so that they will not be victims.

This platform can also help the Armed Forces advertise and announce date for enlistment and recruitment and other activities that may interest the general public. Through the use of social media, the Armed forces can get direct feedback from the general public. The usage of social media has brought significant changes to communication in PR practice. However, there are also some other areas that are also influenced. In Ghana, there seems to be little demonstrable evidence to show the communication processes and the level of operation in the GAF (Andrews, 2015). This is perhaps because not many academic studies have been conducted on the communication processes and relating matters of the GAF. Thus, there is little public knowledge about how the GAF communicates with its various stakeholders and the role being played by the units established to lead the organization's communication. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the role of social media in contemporary Public Relations practice in the Ghana Armed Forces. It will also focus on the extent to which the GAF is using social media platforms and tools, which are

currently in vogue in organizational communication, to enhance effectiveness in its communication.

A Brief History of the Ghana Armed Forces

The Ghana Armed Forces, founded in 1957, takes its roots from the Gold Coast Constabulary with personnel in Tamale, Kumasi and Takoradi (Globalsecurity, 2015). Ghana inherited a military that was predominantly made up of white British Officers and a host of semi-educated Non-Commissioned Officers. Although the government had Africanized the military, it still inherited some colonial legacies. The GAF was then not seen regularly by civilians, unless the need arose. They were living in barracks across the country (Shaibu, 2014). The objectives of creating barracks were, among others, to ensure quick and easy mobilization of personnel for national assignments. However, the military came out of the barracks in the late 1960s. This gave the military a lot of presence in the civilian communities (Azadu, 2017).

Getting into contact with Civilians in the society arguably means the formation of relationships with the society. These relationships have been equally beneficial and inimical. On the positive note, the GAF has engaged itself in several activities such as disaster management, construction, waste management and internal security operations such as Operation Calm Life and the recent Operation Vanguard (Segbefia, 2017). GAF also has its Hospitals and Bank open to the public, intensifying their presence and relationship with the public. It was due to this relationship that the Directorate of Public Relations (DPR) in the GAF was established. This directorate was not established only in General Headquarters, it also has detachments in all the 7 Garrisons (deployment areas) namely; 1 Garrison in Tema, 2 Garrison in Takoradi, 3 Garrison in Sunyani, 4 Garrison in Kumasi, 6 Garrison in Tamale and 7 Garrison in Ho respectively. The establishment

of the Directorate is to provide a focused, sustained and practical strategy for sound and effective communication between the Ghana Armed Forces and the General Public.

Today, the Directorate of Public Relations of the Ghana Armed Forces uses every social media outlet available to correspond with the outside world. With the exception of running enlistment activities, all other communications of the Ghana Armed Forces can be done through any of the social media handles.

The development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the 21st century has brought into being the Internet and other social media which has made connectivity and access to information very easy. Through this innovation, the Ghana Armed Forces created a website www.gaf.mil.gh in November 2013 for the purpose of sharing and informing the general public of its activities and its role in national development.

Accessing very basic information on the Armed Forces by the general public was non-existent and quite frustrating in the past. With the creation of the website, the Ghana Armed Forces is viewed as gradually building social bridges with its civilian counterparts who now see the institution as a development partner.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Operations of the GAF are arguably seen to be clandestine. The philosophy of being clandestine in one's operations can be problematic at times. All over the world, people have built some level of mistrust and the lack of expressing opinions (Waldron, 2016). The Ghana Armed Forces is not an exception. Some people are of the view that, the Armed Forces provide the general public with scanty information especially when it comes to information of public interest while others also think the Armed Forces do not provide them with any information pertaining to their daily operations as compared to the other sister security services. The Public Relations Directorate of

the GAF has tried to overturn this outcome; yet, the public believes that more can be done with regards to transparency in procurement and non-strictly related security matters (GAF, 2016). There are issues of what the GAF priorities are in the current fight against the use of social media for negative purpose or against the GAF's communication policy.

The Introduction of website for the Ghana Armed Forces has given a new dimension to how communications are to be done in a modernized society. It must however be noted that some people living in rural area and other parts of the urban areas do not have access to the Internet. Similarly, those who may have access might also lack the knowledge or skills to use the internet effectively. This issue has made these people unaware of the existence of a website for the Ghana Armed Forces.

The study seeks to look into the problems (inability to effectively communicate with the general public by sharing information about their activities and role national development) that the GAF faces in trying to build a positive relationship through communication with its publics. The Study also seeks to explore the impact social media has on the internal and external communication processes of GAF.

1.3 Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to assess the use of social media in Public Relations practice in the Ghana Armed Forces.

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the purpose of introducing the website and social media handles for communication by the Ghana Armed Forces.

2. To assess the impact of the social media sites and tools used by the Ghana Armed Forces in its communication.
3. To ascertain the effect of social media on the communication operations of the GAF as an organisation.

1.4 Research Question

The following research questions have been formulated to establish the objectives of the study.

1. Why do GAF use social media?
2. What is the preferred social media site used by GAF?
3. What Benefit do GAF derive from social media?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study would be beneficial to academia as it would provide empirical findings on social media, philosophies and security implications of information dissemination in the public via social media. It would, therefore, serve as a reference point for future studies. It would also serve as a model for studying existing communication structures of the security agencies in Ghana and serve as benefits to the Public Relations (PR) and Human Resource (HR) Departments of such Institutions whose objective is to have effective relationship with their publics. The emphasis on the role of communication within the organisation will be focused on how internal and external relations are built and maintained at the GAF.

1.6 Scope of the study

As the research objectives and questions have shown, this study sought to explore the use of social media at GAF. In pursuit of this goal, the study focuses on the communication operations of GAF

at the General Headquarters, Burma Camp in the Greater Accra region only and does not concern itself with other social media activities of GAF outside the capital region, and headquarters of the GAF. Thus, the results of the study should be understood in this regard.

1.7 Organisation of the study

This study is organised as follows:

Chapter one deals with an introduction, background, statement of the problem, objectives, significance, scope, definition of terms and organization of the study. Chapter two deals with the theoretical framework and review of the available relevant literature on corporate social media's impact on how businesses perform. Chapter three consists of a description of the methodology used. The description covers the research design, research population, sample size and sampling techniques, sources of data and instrument used, data collection procedure and data presentation and analysis. Chapter four is made up of the presentation and analysis of the primary data collected from respondents and discussion of results. Chapter five comprises the summary of the study, conclusion, and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

According to Denney and Tewksbury, (2012) literature review is a comprehensive overview of prior research regarding a specific topic. They explained that the overview both shows the reader what is known about a topic, and what is not yet known, thereby setting up the rationale or need for a new investigation, which is what the actual study to which the literature review is attached seeks to do (Denney & Tewksbury, 2012). The literature review was placed under the following: Conceptual Framework, Review of Related Literature and Theoretical Framework.

2.1 Review of Related Studies

This section shall consider reviewing scholarly articles and papers that have similarity in variables to this study. These variables that would be considered are: Social media and effectiveness of using social media.

2.2. Empirical Review

Danso-Ankrah (2006) studied military/media dichotomy and its impact on military operations in West Africa. The study found out that the military is caution in giving out information to the media because the media most often misrepresent information given them without regard to security requirements, protection of lives and future roles and effectiveness of the military. This study further revealed that strained relationship between media and the military is as a result of military interventions in the democratic governance of the country.

Sapey (2014), in a study on the role played by Ghanaian PR practitioners in communicating unfavourable organisational information, found out that the practitioners have little control over

what they communicate to the stakeholders and publics. This according to the study is a resultant of unfavourable economic conditions and lack of employment opportunities in the country serving as deterrents to strict compliance to the ethical code of the Institute of Public Relations (IPR), Ghana. For example, article 17 of the code suggests that a practitioner breaks relationship with employers where the activities of the employers go contrary to the IPR code of ethics.

An extensive body of research has documented problems with the DAD (Decide, Announce, Defend) model in non-military contexts (Beierle & Cayford, 2002; Chess & Purcell, 1999; Hendry, 2004). It does not provide a venue for democratic participation, which is expected in environmental communication (Norton, 2007) and contemporary Public Relations practice (Kent & Taylor, 2002). These findings suggest that manipulation disguised as participation, and even inadequate participation, leave both stakeholders and agency personnel frustrated, disillusioned, and angry (Grunig, 2001, 2013; Hendry, 2004). When a stakeholder knows decision makers are not listening, apathy is both logical and likely (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Peterson et al., 2005; Senecah, 2004). Similarly, repeated negative relationships can make agency personnel begin to resent the public and fear the loss of power or public turmoil over agency decisions and outcomes (Predmore et al., 2011).

Both public participation and Public Relations scholars suggest positive outcomes from interactions with the public require providing information, listening to stakeholder opinions, sharing some level of power over decision making, and building strong and intimate relationships with stakeholders. These key ingredients reflect the idealized form of Public Relations in most relevant theories: citizen power forms of Public Relations in Arnstein's (1969) ladder, providing the public a "voice" in Senecah's (2004, p. 13) trinity of voice theory, the two-way symmetrical Public Relations in Grunig and Hunt's (1984) models, and Kent and Taylor's (2002) dialogical

model. Models for measuring the quality of relationships cultivated by Public Relations vary, but share a focus on: intimacy, similarity, openness, immediacy, credibility, trust, agreement, accuracy, common interests, and relationship history (Ledingham 2003). This research suggests that improved relationships fostered through authentic participation make perceptions of fairness more likely even when stakeholders do not have formal power in the decision making process (Norton, 2007; Shapiro, 1993; Senecah, 2004).

Simon, (2015) also conducted a study on “social media as a PR communication tool. This study determined the effectiveness of use of social media as a PR communication tool in organisations. Specifically, the study sought to find answer to the level of effectiveness of social media in communication.

It was revealed that the organisations uses social media platforms in their public relations practice to communicate with their staff, stakeholders as well as the general public through the use of Facebook; WhatsApp, Twitter, and Blogs. Simon, (2015) came to the realization that the use of social media for communication was highly effective. The major challenges were that, the study came across on the effectiveness of the use of social media complaints, unreliability of delivery time frame of information which can be caused by unstable network and the delay in giving feedbacks. The study went ahead to conclude that social media as a public relations tool for communication was rated to be effective however, there are uncontrollable factors that contribute to the problems encountered by organisations and managers, and profile variables did not affect the level of effectiveness on the use of social media as a PR communication tool. (Simon, 2015). Another scholar whose work was considered for review under this section was Baruah, (2012) In her study on “the social media and its potential for technology enabled connections” various elements identified on how effective social media can be for communication.

- **Sharing of ideas:** Social media sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events and interests within their individual networks. Web based social networking services make it possible to connect people who share interests and activities across political, economic and geographic borders.

- **Medium of communication:** Social networks are increasingly being used not only by organisations but by educational institutions (teachers and learners) as meanings for communication. Teachers create chat rooms, forums and groups to extend classroom discussion to posting assignments, tests and quizzes, to assisting with homework outside of the classroom setting.

- **Bridges communication gap:** Social media bridges the distance among different people. It offers platforms for online users to find others who share the same interests and build virtual communities based on those shared interests.

Source of information: Content generating and sharing sites serve as sources of information for various topics. Users can search for content, download and use the content available on these sites free of cost.

- **Important marketing tool:** Social media is widely used by most of the firms/organizations to create awareness of products/services in the society. The companies resort to social networking sites to generate opinions of the general public concerning how they operate.

- **Important customer interaction tool:** Social Media Networking is perfect for customer interaction, customer feedback, and customer support. New business contacts can be obtained for networking purposes.

Irrespective of the above identified effectiveness of social media and its tools, Baruah, (2012) argued that it is important to remember that while social media can have a positive impact, it can

have a less favorable effect on organisations, in which case, corporate communication teams need to understand how they can use social media to their advantage. She went on to posit that the communications landscape has changed thanks to social media. (Baruah, 2012)

Another study conducted by Veer et al, (2019) on “effectiveness of social media tools and its impact on promotions” identified that social media achieved the largest number of users of social media network amongst others; it reveals that Social media has a good audience to advertise. Not only Social media, but other social networking organisations also largely generated their revenue through online promotions (Veer, et al., 2019).

2.3 Defining social media

By definition, social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The Internet gives everyone the opportunity to share views and experiences (Trusov et al., 2009). There are many different social networking sites on the Internet, and some of these are among the most visited websites on the Internet (González-Herrero & Smith, 2008). Some of these popular social media networks include: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Youtube, Spotify, Skype and Zoom, among others.

2.3.1 The Use of Social Media by Public Relations Practitioners

- **Social Media - Broadcasting Channel?**

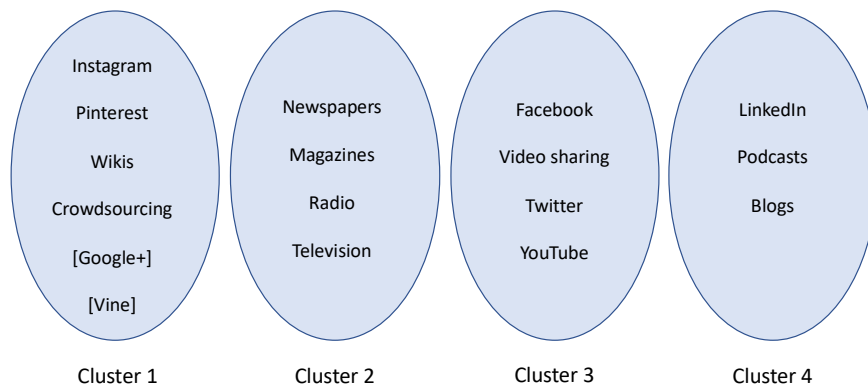
Kent (2013) proposed that social media should not be used as a cost-effective way of pushing out the organisation’s messages or as a substitute for the diminishing mass media, but as a two-way symmetrical tool to build relationships. He advised public relations practitioners to serve the interests of their publics, not only of the organisation itself. Practitioners were also encouraged to

foster long-term approaches as well as transparency, inclusiveness and more input from their publics.

However, international research found that the practice disregarded the recommendation to use social media as a conversational tool. Grunig (2009) and Valentini (2015) criticised organisations for using social media as a broadcasting channel for promotional and marketing purposes, neglecting the two-way symmetrical approach to build relationships with their publics. Their view was shared by other scholars, who found that non-profit organisations used social media for disseminating organisational information, which stimulated the publics' attention, but not their engagement (Cho et al., 2014; Lovejoy et al., 2012; Waters & Jamal, 2011). Gabriel and Koh (2016) observed a comparable dissemination approach among Malaysian public relations practitioners. This finding was confirmed by Kautz et al. (2020), who found that German sport clubs relied on reporting, promoting and informing when communicating on social media although dialogue with their publics generally resulted in a higher engagement rate.

Macnamara et al. (2017) described the same approach used by practitioners in the Asia-Pacific region, as these used social media more as a broadcasting channel than an engagement and social listening tool.

Since social media became mainstream, its use by organisations has significantly changed. Whereas in the beginning, the major focus lay on the use of blogs, the repertoire of social media has continued to expand over the years, including platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (Barnes et al., 2020). Although in the early 2000s, public relations practitioners perceived blogging to be a powerful tool in their field (Kent, 2008), corporate blogs were not used as standard public relations tactics (Porter et al., 2007). Macnamara (2010b) therefore concluded that organisations were not ready to adopt social media.



Note: Adapted from Sommerfeldt et al. (2019). Social media platforms in brackets do not exist anymore.

One cluster entailed earned media such as print publications, radio and television. Regarding social media, three more clusters were identified. The first social media repertoire consisted of Instagram, Pinterest, Wikis and crowdsourcing as well as the discontinued platforms Google+ and Vine. The second included Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and video sharing. Finally, the third cluster consisted of LinkedIn, podcasts and blogs.

Sommerfeldt et al. (2019) believed that the different affordances of the social media platforms led to certain repertoires, each serving different strategic motives. For instance, GAF uses Facebook and Twitter as relationship-building channels, which also serves as an image-building tool.

2.3.2 The Impact of Social Media on Ghana Armed Forces Public Relations

With the spread of social media, PR performance has become more professional and powerful. Due to the huge user base of social media, numerous information is provided to PR professionals for analysis, making them more specialized in positioning stakeholders. They assess the massive information collected directly or indirectly. PR practice performs better according to the different results of the information analysis and has made great contributions to GAF, which are reflected

in three aspects, namely, the ease of establishment of the relationship, the key role of decision-making and the improvement of the strategy. The use of social media has brought GAF and the general public more closely than they used to be. Social media is a great vehicle for disseminating important news in the Ghana Armed Forces. Information like press release which is normally made for civil media and general public can be sent to the public through social media for easy and quick accessibility. Once the media houses have access to it, they can quickly share it on their social media handle. Also, information on enlistment and recruitment can be disseminated to the public through the use of social media.

Research has shown that the emergence of social media platforms has dramatically changed the practice of Public Relations. As a result, a large variety of international research has examined the impact of social media on the practice of public relations and how practitioners have perceived and applied different social media tools (e.g. Eyrich et al., 2008; Navarro et al., 2018; Zerfass et al., 2017).

Several scholars advocated for embracing this new type of media (e.g. Allagui & Breslow, 2016; Clampitt, 2017; Smith, 2017). Breakenridge (2008), for instance, claimed that social media or PR 2.0 gave public relations practitioners opportunities to address traditional media via a different channel and also engage directly with influencers and customers. Social media's conversational format even led Solis and Breakenridge (2009) to exclaim in their book title that social media was "putting the public back in public relations".

Edosomwan et al. (2011) considered conversation to be a key factor for the successful use of social media as a lack of conversation would lower the organisation's credibility and brand loyalty. Therefore, they advised organisations to assign enough resources to engage in conversations with their publics on social media.

2.3.3 Opportunities, Benefits and Challenges for Public Relations

As social media is based on multi-directional conversations, it allows public relations practitioners the opportunity to fulfill the two-way symmetrical communication model (Grunig, 2009; Macnamara 2010a). Grunig (1992) advocated for this as an important part of excellent public relations. Grunig (2009) stated that social media needs to be applied to its full potential as part of strategic public relations and criticised the organisations that simply used social media for disseminating information. A two-way symmetrical approach enables practitioners to apply effective communication and build relationships with various publics through direct engagement and listening to their conversations (Petrovici, 2014). The application of two-way symmetrical principles in leading conversations on social media was considered beneficial for organisations

2.3.4 Reputation-Building with Transparency

According to Kietzmann et al. (2011), social media has significant impact on the “reputation, sales, and even survival” (p. 241) of organisations. Social networking sites like Facebook or micro-blogging services like Twitter into the public relations strategy is likely to enhance corporate transparency and authenticity by actively engaging publics online (Men & Tsai, 2014). Transparent communication by honestly answering publics’ inquiries on social media adds to the organisation’s reputation while authentic and ‘personable’ communication fosters sustainable relationships between the organisation and its publics. Therefore, social media may help organisations to build a positive reputation and stronger relationships with their publics (Briones et al., 2011; Edosomwan et al., 2011).

2.3.5 Reduced Control over the Message

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media has reduced the control that organisations have over their messages. They stated that before social media became mainstream, public

relations practitioners could better control the organisation's message by press releases, for instance. Through the emergence of social media, conversations could take place outside the organisation's sphere of influence. As Grunig (2009) pointed out, this a challenge for public relations professionals, who believed that social media would hinder them from asserting control over the organisation's messages. According to Bhargava (2010), agency practitioners used blogs more often than in-house practitioners. The study traced the lower adoption rate of social media by in-house practitioners to the prevalent control paradigm within organisations. She assumed that besides the practitioners' need to have control over the message, organisations imposed internal restrictions on employees, hindering practitioners from adopting social media.

International research found similar patterns. Aragón and Domingo (2014), for instance, found that some Spanish organisations did not want to overcome their control paradigm and therefore chose not to engage on social media, and organisations interested in engaging on social media lacked the know-how.

Macnamara (2010) argued that organisations needed to abandon their common control paradigm to be successful on social media – a statement echoed by Ngai et al. (2015). They recommended that organisations balance the need to adopt and engage on social media platforms with the need to guarantee their business' security and integrity. Such a balance might be achieved by assigning specific employees with the management of the organisation's social media channels, as Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) proposed.

2.3.6 New Skills on social media

Early research also found that public relations practitioners needed to acquire new skills to be successful on social media (Macnamara, 2010b). This was confirmed by US practitioners

interviewed in 2011, who found it difficult to keep abreast of the constantly changing social media environment (DiStaso et al., 2011). They admitted that they still needed to acquire further knowledge of social media.

Macnamara et al. (2017) observed a similar trend among New Zealand public relations professionals. In 2017, these practitioners still considered their social media skills as moderate, although they believed they had improved their skills since 2015. Half of the questioned practitioners identified technical knowledge and technical skills as fields that needed professional development. Lower ranked practitioners identified a higher need for technical training than their colleagues in higher positions.

In contrast, Bhargava (2010) found that New Zealand senior practitioners considered the internet time-consuming with a tendency to foster misunderstandings and that social media was a sphere for younger generations. These findings were contradicted by the positive self-assessment of senior practitioners regarding their technical skills later reported by Macnamara et al. (2017).

2.3.7 Communication Functions and Social Media Use

Several scholars argued that the communication function was likely to influence the practitioners' use of social media platforms (Jiang et al., 2016; Sommerfeldt et al., 2019). Bhargava (2010), for instance, discovered that the functions with the highest use of social media were media relations, internal communication, marketing and brand public relations. In contrast, fund-raising, investor relations and sponsorships were the public relations functions that used social media the least (Bhargava, 2010). Jiang et al. (2016) found that publicity in the form of information dissemination, special events and product communication were the functions that used social media the most. Social media were also regularly used in community relations, media relations and reputation

management. They reported a moderate use in the functions of monitoring, social marketing and government relations and limited use in internal communications and investor relations.

Sommerfeldt et al. (2019) showed that the communication function was even likely to influence the selection of a platform. For instance, LinkedIn and blogs were preferred for lobbying and marketing public relations. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were used for internal communications and customer relations. Instagram was adopted for advertising and measuring publics' reactions to organisational messages, for instance. Facebook and Twitter were also used for media relations.

2.3.8 Strategic Versus Ad Hoc Use of social media

With the growing popularity of social media since its emergence in the early 2000s, some organisations chose social media platforms to set up their presence almost randomly while others ignored social media altogether (Lardi, 2013). This lack of a strategic approach poses challenges and risks to organisations such as communication crises and damage to the organisation's reputation (Lardi, 2013; Ott & Theunissen, 2015).

Lardi (2013) therefore advised practitioners to adopt a social media strategy by setting social media objectives, defining target publics, selecting appropriate platforms and monitoring the tactics. He recommended the social media strategy to be part of an organisation's business strategy. This approach was affirmed by Macnamara et al. (2017), who stated that communication strategies needed to align closely with an organisation's overall strategy.

The interaction between the Ghana Armed Forces and its publics is being strengthened and is becoming more rapid and effective. Mykkanen and Vos (2015) indicated in their research that PR pros develop and operate the communication process and make the dialogue between the

organization and internal and external target audience. Previously, PR practitioners mainly communicate with certain individuals, such as their own business and other partners. Now, social media has expanded to other target groups that include all the people who are critical to the success of the organization.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The study shall consider the Excellence Theory of Public Relations.

2.4.1 The Excellence Theory of Public Relations

The Excellence Theory developed as a result of a research programme commissioned by the Research Foundation of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) in 1984. It sought to explore how public relations could evolve from a tactical craft that broadly focused on publicity and media relations to become a management discipline. (Waddington, 2012). James Grunig assembled a team of six public relations academics and practitioners under his leadership. These included his wife Larissa Grunig of the University of Maryland; David Dozier of San Diego State University; William Ehling of Syracuse University; Jon White, a UK consultant, academic and teacher; and Fred Repper, a public relations practitioner.

2.4.2 General underpinning and levels of the Excellence Theory

The Excellence Theory's general theory proposed that the value of communication can be determined at four levels (Grunig & Grunig, 2010)

Programme level – effective organizations must empower public relations as a critical management function.

Functional level – Public relations should be an integrated communication function and separate from other management functions including marketing.

Organization level – effective organizations should base internal and external communication and relationship building on a two-way symmetrical model.

Societal level – Organizations must recognize their impact on other organizations and publics. They cannot be effective unless they are socially responsible.

The original Four Models of Public Relations and vision of two-way symmetrical communications as a model of excellence was reinforced by the subsequent analysis that emerged from the Excellence Theory. (Waddington, 2012)

This theory holds much relevance to this study in that, the excellence theory opens up on the core communication principles and models organizations must adopt in their attempt to effectively communicate to their publics. Again, the theory does not only shape professional public relations practice but also helps organizations such as the Ghana Armed Forces in identifying the various levels of communication (program level, functional level, organizational level, and societal level) and how to effectively utilize them. In the Ghana Armed Forces' attempt to paint a positive image of itself in the light of the Ghanaian society by employing effective tools and strategies (and the use of social media) in managing the crisis they face, the excellence theory cannot be overlooked.

2.4.3 Academic Criticisms of the Excellence Theory

The original Four Models of Public Relations and vision of two-way symmetrical communications as a model of excellence was reinforced by the subsequent analysis that emerged from the Excellence Theory. As we'll see some academics believe this shows Grunig's foresight while

others claim that the research team was unduly influenced by the Four Models of Public Relations. (Waddington, 2012)

Critical appraisal of the Excellence Theory isn't hard to find. A critical review together with responses from members of the original research team would be sufficient material for a paper in its own right. A chronological summary of some of the different aspects of academic criticism is outlined below.

Michael Karlberg (1996), in a paper for the Journal of Public Relations Research makes the case that the Excellence Theory is overly concerned with consumers as a primary audience. He believes that the research team missed an opportunity to explore the broader implications of the relationship between an organization and its markets.

In Paradigms, System Theory and Public Relations, Magda Pieczka (1996), says that the two-way symmetrical component of the Excellence Theory is over-idealized. In doing so, she attacks the research agenda from which it was developed and the premise of systems theory on which the model is based.

Shirley Leitch and David Neilson (2001), challenge the rigid nature of the Excellence Theory in a chapter written for the Handbook of Public Relations. Their belief is that publics are not fixed categories waiting to be identified but are formed dynamically through the conversation in which they participate.

In Public Relations, Society and Culture, Lee Edwards and Caroline Hodges (2001), argue that Grunig's rigid focus on organization theory over simplifies human behavior. They suggest that this singular focus on public relations within organizations overlooks the social world in which those organizations operate.

2.5 Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The Excellence theory holds much relevance to this study. Considering the Ghana Armed Forces as a public institution that dwells on the use of public relations tools, the theory assists by empowering public relations function. For an effective organization public relation must be empowered as a critical management function. Again, the communication roles of the public relations officers should be an all-inclusive one both in managerial and administrative function. The theory suggests that for an effective public relations practice in an organization, public relations should be an integrated communication function and separate from other management functions.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical foundations of the study. It focused on the theories and models that underpin public relations. Additionally, the chapter contained a review of related literature, which has been done by other scholars in the past. In the subsequent chapter, we would look at the methodological approaches available and make the best choice of methodology that best suits this study and use that to gather data in the field.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological groundings of the study. The methodology is fundamental to the construction of all forms of knowledge and provides the tools for undertaking a research work whereby understanding is created (Daly, 2003). The Chapter covers the research approach, design, data sources, data collection and related matters.

3.1 Research Approach and Design

The research approach of the study is based on pragmatist knowledge. The study believes that in order to understand people's views and actions, particularly those relating to communications in the GAF, there is the need to use paradigms and philosophies that can interchange. Knowledge cannot be fully acquired through a single method. Hence, it is important to use mixed methods that is, both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather and analyze data. This will give a better understanding of the way GAF understands the use of social media in the practice of Public Relations. The multiple approaches seek to have in-depth knowledge regarding the uniqueness and similarities of the operations of Public Relations by GAF with regards to social media as against that of the practice of Public Relations by civilian organisations. Hence, both inductive and deductive data analysis approaches will be used in this exploratory study.

3.2 Data Sources

The study gathered information from primary and secondary data sources. The primary ones involved getting direct information from research participants using questionnaires distributed to

the Staff and the in-depth interviews of Key staffs of GAF. The secondary sources are those gathered from library files and documents.

3.3 Study Population

The Staff strength of the Administrative section at the GAF Headquarters is 432 and that of the Directorate of Public Relations is 185 (DPR, 2018). This makes the entire population to be 617. Of this population, 58% of them are males whilst 42% are females. The DPR, only, has 83 civilians population as against 103 numbers of military personnel.

3.4 Sampling Methods and Sample size

Yamane (1967) had admonished that sample sizes should be carefully fixed so that they would be adequate to draw valid and generalized conclusions. Based on this the study planned to sample 237 Staff of the DPR and General Headquarters. This sample size is approximately 38.41% of the Staff population of the GAF. A bigger sample size is used because it gives a higher rate of representation of views and makes it easier to generalize findings from the data. The sample size was calculated using a sample size calculator provided by Statistics Solutions (2018). This was done using a 95% confidence level and a confidence interval of 5.

The sampling technique employed included the purposive and convenience sampling techniques. The convenience sampling gives the researcher the opportunity to leverage individuals that can be identified and approached with as little effort as possible. These are individuals that are geographically close to the researcher. The purposive sampling will be used to deliberately conduct in-depth interviews for the three (3) DDPRs who supervise the various units that will be engaged in the survey and additional three (3) other Senior Officers from other Directorate within the Armed Forces. This is so because they are perceived to have in-depth knowledge about the

operations of the Public Relations and their years of experience at the department will be of an invaluable contribution to the study. The state of Public Relations requires people who have been in the department for long to be able to contextualize the variations that have taken place over time and be able to ascertain the changes thereof. Six (6) Officers with the ranks of Commander, Lt Colonel, Majors, Captain, Lieutenant and Sub-Lieutenant who heads various sections of the Directorate and other Directorate in the Armed Forces were interviewed for their opinions

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments for the study are the questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaire is appropriate when the researcher wants to confine the responses of the respondents in such a way that, the differences in responses do not go overboard. The interactive interview is a purposeful interaction, discussion or conversation between two or more persons during which one person or group of persons (the researcher in this case) poses questions to the other person or group of persons (the respondents – editors) in anticipation of receiving answers.

The questionnaires have a total of nineteen (19) major questions, with some questions having sub-questions. The questions were placed under four themes. The themes were demographic section, internal and external relations of GAF, the philosophies and principles guiding the DPR operations at the GAF, and the state of social media in Public Relations practice at the GAF. Under the demographic theme, five (5) questions were asked. The internal and external operations had 15 questions, the philosophies and principles also had 4 questions with 5 sub-questions, and the state of social media in Public Relations practice at GAF had 1 question with 17 sub-questions. The questionnaire is attached as appendix A of the research work.

The interview guide which is attached as appendix B of the research contained 17 questions which were related to that of the questionnaire. Since the study is using triangulation, the follow up questions paved way for almost the same questions in the questionnaire to be asked during the interviews so as to be able to better triangulate responses as against those gathered from the surveys. Three Officers answered the interview guide while the questionnaire was answered by senior staff between the ranks of Sergeant and above.

3.5.1 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instrument

According to Golafshani (2003: 99 -100), the use of reliability and validity are common in quantitative research and now it is reconsidered in the qualitative research paradigm. Since reliability and validity are rooted in positivist perspective then they should be redefined for their use in a naturalistic approach. However, the concepts of reliability and validity are viewed differently by qualitative researchers who strongly consider these concepts defined in quantitative terms as inadequate. In other words, these terms as defined in quantitative terms may not apply to the qualitative research paradigm. The question of replication in the results does not concern them (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), but precision (Winter, 2000), credibility, and transferability (Hoepf, 1997) provide the lenses of evaluating the findings of a qualitative research.

According to Raimo Streefkerk (2019), quantitative data analysis is based on numbers where more advanced statistical analysis is used to discover commonalities or patterns in the data. The results are often reported in graphs and tables and figures. The SPSS was used in the calculation of average scores and the reliability and validity of the results. The qualitative on the other hand is a more difficult data analysis. It consists of text, images or videos instead of numbers. The thematic analysis approach was used to closely examine the data to identify the main themes and patterns.

To ensure this happens, the research instruments for the study were made to reflect the inputs of the project supervisor. The essential change to the basic research work was conducted in consultation with the supervisor. Appropriate references were made in regards to work from other researchers.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Some of the ethical considerations taken into account collecting data as promised based on the informed consent solicited from the participants that, information provided were treated as confidential. Regarding this study, the necessary ethical considerations associated with the conduct of research are implemented. Respondents were not coerced to respond to any question and are free to end the interview or the questionnaire whenever they wished to.

3.7 Analysis of Data

The responses gathered were coded and data organized using Microsoft excel. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was employed to analyze the data gathered. Descriptive analysis was used to explain the demographic population. The mean and standard deviation were also used to interpret the use of social media in Public Relations practice in GAF and make extrapolations from the results. The interviews will be analyzed based on thematic analysis.

3.8 Conclusion

The study has been able to outline the methodology that is employed to ensure the successful collection, gathering and analysis of data. The next chapters look at condensing the data into

meaningful information and juxtapose the analysis to findings and theoretical positions by scholars.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

According to Hammond (2015: 69), data analysis involves the process of treating huge data or a mass of data to summarise, simplify and interpret them. This section aims at presenting the findings by condensing and analysing the data that was gathered. This was done through the analysis of the two hundred and thirty-seven (237) distributed questionnaires attached as appendix A and a discourse analysis of the interviews attached as appendix B granted by Officers from the Directorate of Public Relations (DPR) and heads of other departments within the Armed Forces.

4.1 Data Treatment Processes

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), data analysis in mixed method research consists of analyzing the quantitative data using quantitative methods and the qualitative data using qualitative methods. In this study, both quantitative data and qualitative data were collected simultaneously. The quantitative method employed a close and open-ended questionnaire with 19 questions divided into four thematic areas and an interview guide with 17 questions. The questionnaire had 237 respondents. The qualitative method used a semi-structured interview guide to elicit data from six (6) respondents. Three from the Directorate of Public Relations, who are the Deputy Director PR, Officer in Charge (OIC) of Website/Media Relations and OIC Newsroom Section. The other three Senior Officers were from other Directorate within the Armed Forces. They included the Deputy Director, Directorate of Information Technology (DIT), The Second in Command from the Defence Intelligence (DI) and the Administrative Officer of the Directorate of

Communication and Information System (DCIS) within the Ghana Armed Forces. Their responses were recorded and transcribed into written form that was analyzed and coded.

These methods of gathering information are believed to supplement each other and also boost the validity and dependability of the data. Parallel constructs was used to assess information for both data types. Both data were analyzed separately and their results were compared side-by-side in a discussion. The triangulation technique was applied to facilitate the validation of data through cross verification from the two data forms in order to corroborate findings.

4.2 Presentation of findings

This section of the study presents the findings gathered from the field. It seeks to do this by concurrently presenting the qualitative and quantitative analysis together as practicable as possible.

4.3.1 Demographics

The quantitative method was used in the demographic analyses of the respondents and other data collected. In order to understand the employees regarding the use of social media in the practice of Public Relations in GAF, it is essential to understand the demographics of the people involved in the study. Based on the issues raised, the demographics section of the study will give insight into the beliefs, age, gender and perceptions of the people involved in the study. This is so because, most times, the responses of people are also dependent on where they are coming from, their age and experiences in life.

Table 1: Background and Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	132	55.7%
Female	105	44.3%
Age Range		
18 - 25 years	78	32.9%
26 - 39 years	93	39.2%
40 - 55 years	36	15.2%
56 and above	30	12.7%
Educational background		
SSSCE/WASSCE	45	18.9%
HND	92	38.2%
Bachelor's degree	68	28.7%
Masters' degree	32	13.5%
Profession		
Monitoring and media relations	22	9.3 %
Production	11	4.6%
Radio Section	23	9.7%
Newsroom	21	8.9%
Photo section	31	13.1%

Film production	27	11.4%
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Website	41	17.3%
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Protocol section	61	25.7%
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Number of years with DPR

less than 5 years	43	18.1%
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6-10 years	83	35.1%
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11-15 years	74	31.2%
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Above 20 years	37	15.6%
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The data gathered revealed that, of the two hundred and thirty-seven (237) Staff that participated in the study, one hundred and thirty-two (132) were males while one hundred and five (105) of them were females. For the sample of the interviews, six (6) Officers from GAF were chosen. Four of them were females and two were males. Unlike the surveys where the males were more than the females, the story was different in the case of the interviews. The Staff groupings indicates that majority of Staff at GAF are males in real numbers. And this indicates that the findings will have more male respondents than females.

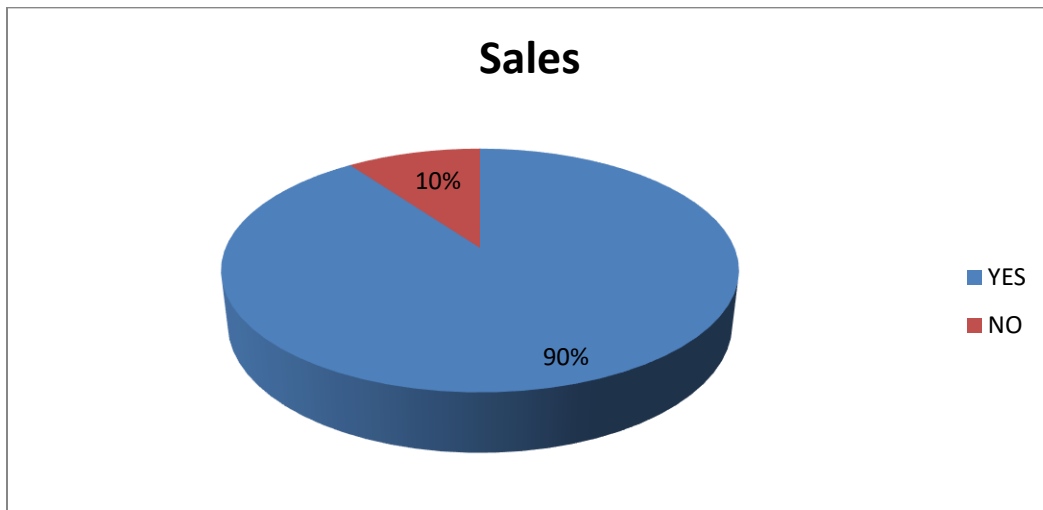
39.2% of the respondents (highest percentage) were between the ages of 26 and 39. Those who fell between 56 years and above had 12.7% and they formed the least of the age groups. This shows a relatively younger population with an average age between 35 – 40 years. Also, 38.2% indicates that majority of the respondents has Higher National Diploma (HND), 28.7% has Bachelor's degree, and SSSCE/WASSCE 18.9% and 13.5% has Master's degree. Majority of the respondents (35.1%) have been working with GAF between 6 and 10 years. 15.6% of the respondents have been working there for more than 20 years. The years of working with GAF shows a Staff that

have handled Public Relations issues for quite a number of years, hence their knowledge about the practice is arguably palpable.

Ghana Armed Forces engage in social media.

The first objective was to find out if the Ghana Armed Forces engage in social media. Majority of the respondents (90%) said yes while a few of them (10%) said they do not.

Figure 1: Does GAF use social media?



4.3.2 Reasons GAF uses social media

The next objective was to find out why Ghana Armed Forces use social media. Among the reasons for using social media, a high number of respondents (40%) stated that GAF use social media to engage in public discussion about the Armed Forces activities, 36% GAF use social media to send news update on GAF to the general public, 14% said for communication with other sister security services, 10% to monitor operations of its Personnel on deployment.

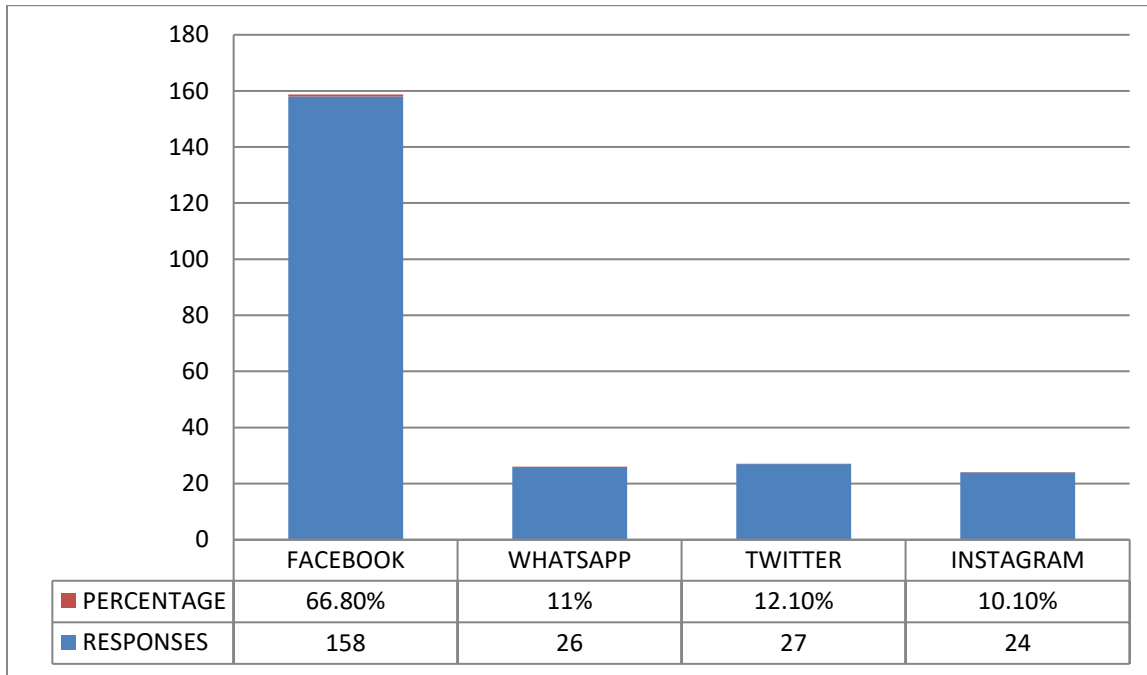
Table 2: Reasons for using social media

REASONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
To engage in public discussion about the Armed Forces activities	95	40%
To send news update on GAF to the general public	85	36%
For communication with other sister security services	33	14%
To monitor operations of its Personnel on deployment	27	10%
Total	237	100%

4.3.3 Preferred social media site used by GAF

The third objective of this study was to find out the preferred or favourite social media site of GAF. The respondents were given a number of social media platforms and were asked to tick the platforms they use and 158 (66.8%) said they were on Facebook, 27 (12.1%) use Twitter, 26 (11%) use WhatsApp and 24 (10.1%) use Instagram. Respondents were later asked to rank their favourite or preferred social media sites (from one to eight where one is favourite). Facebook is therefore the preferred and favourite social media platform of GAF since the site has the most information on GAF activities and its operations, followed by Twitter. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Pfeiffer et al (2014) which shows that social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp are accessed more on the African continent, and it also agrees with Shabir et al.'s (2014) study that found that the preferred social media platform of the youth is Facebook.

Figure 2: Ranking of social media sites



4.3.4 Benefits of social media

The last objective was to find out the benefits the GAF derive from social media. To know the benefits, they were asked if social media have helped them in certain ways. The first question asked, was to find out whether social media have helped respondents to engage in public discussions about GAF activities, and majority of the respondents said yes. Respondents were also asked if social media helps send news update on GAF to the general public said yes. The last question was asked in order to find out whether social media enable GAF monitor operations of its Personnel on deployment, and they said yes.

4.3.5 Other Findings

Respondents were also asked how often the Ghana Armed Forces uses social media to send press releases to the media, majority of the respondents stated that GAF often use social media to send press release to the civil media. Respondents were also asked how GAF get feedback from stories they post on their social media platform.

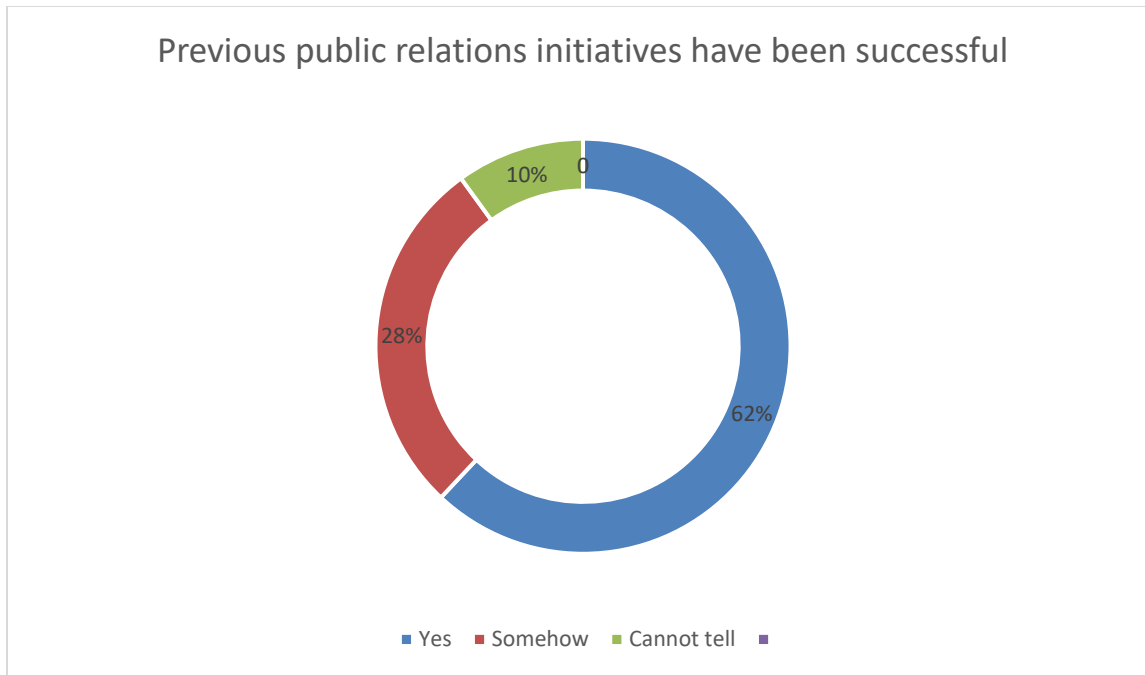
From the below table, it can be seen that, 94 (39.7%) of the respondents said they were able to tell from the various social media handles during the period, 73 (30.8%) of the respondents also said they were able to tell when the civil media come around for more information .

Table 3: Feedback from Stories posted on Social media

Means	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Through media that come around for information	73	30.8	30.8	30.8
Through the press cuttings	70	29.5	29.5	60.1
Through the various social media platforms	94	39.7	39.7	100.0
Total	237	100.0	100.0	

The Staff of the DPR were certain that their previous Public Relations initiatives had been successful. Even though 10% could not tell whether the initiatives were successful or not, 28% were not sure of the success rate of the previous Public Relations initiatives.

Figure 3: The quantitative method of analysis was applied in the Distribution of success of social media in Public Relations initiatives.



4.3.6 Juxtaposing the use of social media in the Ghana Armed Forces and other organisations.

Here, both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis were used comparatively and the findings shows that the responses differed with reference to the questionnaire and interview guide. On the philosophies and principles that guide the practice of Public Relations with the use of social media in the Ghana Armed Forces, respondents were asked to rate their responses from a Likert scale using 1 as strongly agree and 5 as strong disagree. This was to ascertain whether the use of social media in PR practice by GAF is different and if not, the similarities that exists. The means and standard deviations were calculated. This was to get the rate of agreement on the various responses given.

4.3.7 Philosophies and Principles of PR at GAF

Table 4: To what extent do social media contribute to strategic management of your organization?

Item	Mean Variation	Standard Variation
We contribute to strategic planning	2.26	1.32
We contribute in responding to major social issues	2.84	1.36
We contribute to routine operations (eg. employee communication, community relations, or media relations programmes)	2.54	1.28
Regularly conducted routine research activities	2.69	1.28
Specific research conducted to answer specific questions	2.27	1.13

The first issue under this section was to find out about the contribution of the DPR to strategic management of the Ghana Armed Forces. As part of the definition of Public Relations, it says it is a management function. Hence, playing a management function requires a contribution to the strategic management of the entire organization through the coordination of communication among the various units to make sure there is collaboration, understanding and harmony in the organization.

The respondents indicated that the DPR does not actually contribute to the strategic management of the GAF. The mean score was 2.26. The standard deviation was 1.32. This indicates there is a dispersion of the responses to this question. Inasmuch as majority of them do not agree that the department plays a strategic role, their responses were at the extreme ends. Another thing measured was the contribution of GAF PR using social media in responding to major social issues. They agreed (M= 2.84) that the GAF PR usage of social media contributes to responding to major social issues through drawing a communication plan to tackle the issues and keep its publics informed about the extent of the social issue. Though they agreed on this, their standard deviation recorded

1.36. This indicates a conflict in the responses since the regression analysis shows some respondents strongly disagreeing to the statement.

On the routine operations of the GAF, the respondents marginally agreed that they contribute to employee communications, community relations and media relations programmes. However, there was a trend change in their responses this time round. Their answers were marginally dispersed as well. This shows that the respondents had their answers being close to each other and are not widely varied (SD= 1.2), in comparison to earlier responses. The respondents were then asked to show if the DPR through social media undertakes routine research activities regularly. They were mostly indifferent about their responses to this question (M= 2.69). Their responses were also not varied since the deviation was 1.28. Finally, under the strategic contribution of the GAF PR to the management of GAF, the study realized that the GAF PR does not engage in research that is specific to certain situations. So even though they conduct research, they are within the general makeup or request of the entire GAF organization and not GAF PR or specific (M= 2.27). The responses were also close with a deviation of 1.13.

During the one-on-one interviews with the various heads of departments in the Armed Forces using the interview guide, one of the interviewees was asked how DPR deal with its publics.

She said;

The DPR deals with “the general public by sending out press releases, media advisories, social media as well as community relations to enable them relate with others. The DPR also serves as an interface on coordinating, planning and executing roles for state ceremonies and military programmes on behalf of GAF.

She added that;

The GAF PR also uses Social media to get people closer. For example, during Open Day, the Armed Forces opens its doors for the civil populace come and learn what the Armed Forces does by projecting these activities via social media for easy audience reach.

In terms of the use of social media in PR practice in GAF, the DPR is divided into several sections with specific roles and reporting structures. In terms of operation, the task of DPR is to release on time and with transparency the information about the activities of the GAF and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to the general public, through media or internet (social media) in order to promote the image of the GAF.

4.3.8 State of Social Media Operations in GAF

Table 5: Describes how Directorate of Public Relations uses social media in sharing information.

Item	Mean Variation	Standard Variation
GAF takes into account the effects of social media	2.39	1.11
The information GAF provides is factual	2.54	1.18
GAF considers the interests of the public as much as GAFs interest	2.23	1.24
GAF solely uses social media in our information sharing to the public	2.50	1.16
In our public relations, GAF believes that favourable information should be disseminated but unfavourable information should be kept from the public	2.97	1.51
When doing programmes or projects, GAF avoids disclosing negative information about GAF	2.52	1.27
GAF believes the role of Public Relations and the use of social media is to promote the interests of GAF even when GAF's decisions have negative effects on the publics	2.89	1.18
GAF tries to avoid dialogue with the public on social media when the GAF makes unpopular decisions	3.08	1.38
GAF does not only try to change the attitudes and behaviours of members of the public, but also try to change our attitudes.	2.58	1.27

GAF believes Public Relations and the use of social media should provide mediation for GAF- to help management and publics negotiate conflict	2.64	1.07
GAF conducts programmes or projects them through social to persuade publics to agree with the GAF's point of view.	2.44	1.26
GAF conducts programmes and project them through social media to persuade publics to behave as the GAF wants them to behave	2.59	1.29
Before carrying out Public Relations or communication activities, GAF first conducts research to understand how the public feels about certain issues	2.55	1.33
After conducting Public Relations or communication activities, GAF conducts evaluations of these activities by monitoring feedbacks on our social media handles	2.56	1.21
Public Relations programmes in the GAF through social media involve two-way communication between the organisation and publics	2.65	1.83
Information flows in and out of GAF because of social media	2.32	1.01
Most Public Relations programmes in the GAF are designed to disseminate information through social media to the publics	2.11	1.28

4.3.9 The state of the use of social media in Public Relations practice in GAF (Both methods of data analysis were used).

The next objective of the study was to find out the state of the use of social media in Public Relations practice at GAF and the challenges to the practice. Various questions were established to find out what the use of social media in Public Relations practice is to GAF. The first item that was measured was whether the DPR takes into account the effects of social media on society. They agreed that the DPR does not actually consider the effects of their operations on the society (M= 2.39). This could be related to the fact that they do not engage in specific research, and hence do not know the impact of their operations through social media on society. However, it could be that

they are not concerned much about the general public and do not engage with them often. They all agreed to this position with a deviation of 1.11. Inasmuch as the DPR does not consider the effects of their operations on the society, they provide factual information through social media to their publics. With a mean of 2.54, the respondents were of the view that information sent from the DPR to the other units and departments of GAF is factual and accurate. The DPR places paramountcy on the interest of GAF over the interest of the public. This was realized when the respondents (M= 2.23) said they do not consider the interests of the public as much as that of GAF. Ironically, they agree to explain their motivations for doing things in the public. They recorded a mean of 2.50 and a deviation of 1.16. The next item was to find out about the kind of information suitable for dissemination via social media. The respondents were of the view that (M= 2.97) the DPR believes that favourable information should be disseminated whilst unfavourable information should be kept from the public. Even though they believe in sharing factual information, this portion of the study shows that the information might not be truthful. It could imply that the information might have all the facts but might not be telling the truth. This emphasized the fact that the GAF PR avoid disclosing information that will have negative implications for the image of GAF (M= 2.52). The deviation response was 1.27. In the organization of programmes, the DPR tries to cover up all negative characteristics of the GAF from social media and promote a very positive image of the organization through the same mode.

With the interests of GAF on the use of social media, the DPR respondents believe that the role of Public Relations is to promote the interests of GAF even when GAF's decisions have negative effects on the publics and so though GAF has embraces social media by way of engaging the public, its interest is paramount. The mean score was 2.89. The responses were also not extreme (SD= 1.1). Another issue is that, the DPR tries to avoid dialogue with the public through social

media when the GAF makes unpopular decisions. This was agreed to (M= 3.08) but the deviations were high (SD= 1.38).

The respondents when asked whether GAF uses only social media to change attitudes and behaviours, they said the GAF does not only use social media to try to change the attitudes and behaviours of members of the public, but also try to change personnel attitudes and behaviours towards information sharing through social media (M= 2.58). Personnel of GAF undergo routine engagements that will help them relate well with the public through social media. They agree that the use of social media in Public Relations practice should provide mediation for GAF through providing the management of GAF tactics of public negotiations. In terms of persuasion during negotiations, the respondents said the GAF PR routinely use social media to conduct programmes to persuade the general public to behave in ways that the GAF wants them to behave (M= 2.59). Persuasion is needed to make people change paradigms and support a certain paradigm. However, it is wrong when the tactics are manipulative. Few of the respondents (M= 2.5) agreed that the DPR carries out communication activities after conducting research to understand how the public feels about certain issues. This response is quite contrary to the fact that the respondents said the department does not engage in department specific research. It is worth noting, however, that the increase in the level of agreement was minimal, but has substantial implications for the truthfulness of the answers provided by the respondents. For the interviewees, they were of the view that they had to promote a positive side of GAF through social media by assuring the public that recalcitrant soldiers will be punished after it was realized that some soldiers joined some policemen to engage in extortion during an internal security operation. Another also mentioned an incidence in 2011 when the Bagre Dam at Burkina Faso had to be opened. The DPR had to coordinate other government agencies to come out with a contingency plan through social media in solving the

issue. Another interviewee was tasked to look into internal recruitment scam at GAF by the use of social media. He retorted that ‘there was a reported recruitment scam where people take advantage of the process and extort monies from desperate applicants. These activities dent the image of the GAF. “I was part of an investigation team, some years back, to investigate a recruitment scam. The team unravelled the issue with the help of the Defence Intelligence (DI) and resolved the issue, therefore, saving the image of GAF.”

They also agreed ($M=2.56$) and with a marginal deviation of 1.21 that the DPR after conducting Public Relations activities and promoting them through social media, conduct evaluations of the activities. The evaluations are done in the perspective of the Staff of the DPR. External publics are included in the evaluations. The respondents argued with a mean of 2.65 that Public Relations programmes via social media in the GAF involve a two-way communication between the organization and its publics. However, the responses were greatly deviated ($SD= 1.83$). This indicates that the responses were at the extremes. They agreed that information flows in and out of the DPR. With a mean of 2.11, they disagreed that most Public Relations programmes in GAF are designed to disseminate information to the publics.

The Deputy Director PR was asked about his perceptions of the use of social media in public relations practice.

He said;

In my opinion, social media has become the most used way of communication in organisations and it I perceived to be a good practice. Social networks like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and others are now the ways people communicate with each other. Its usage in PR practice will go a long way to enable the GAF share relevant information to the general public, by advertising of its activities. some of our offices do not have internet connection. Those which are hooked to the internet are not able to access it constantly, because of network problems. These hiccups make social media usage quite undesirable.

The Second in Command from the Defence Intelligence (DI) was asked to state the major problems facing the DPR with regards to social media.

He said;

One of the biggest problems faced by the DPR using social media in rendering Public Relations services to GAF is inadequate resources. We do not have enough computers to work it. Some of the workers even use their personal laptops and so they cannot extend its use to other staff, this is making it difficult for us to effectively monitor all our social media platform and that is a big challenge for us challenge.

He further stated that;

Some of my staff lacks the understanding of the use of social media due to poor or no training. Due to this they end up posting information on the wrong social media platform.

The Officer In Charge of Monitoring and Media Relations was asked how many social media handles GAF has and who controls these handle.

He said;

For now, we (GAF) have about four (4) main active social media handles aside the usual GAF website we use. We have Facebook, Twitter, Instagram as well as WhatsApp. But the whatsapp is was introduced not long ago so we are now trying to use it more so that it will be known to everyone since the public is more active with whatsapp than the other networks.

He further mentioned;

The office I am in charge of which is Media Relations and website section are the two offices that controls and Monitors GAF social media handles.

The interviewees called for sensitization and education of social media in PR practice and GAF hierarchy on Public Relations and the use of social media and provide the necessary resources for the department. They also called for GAF to allow them operate without any pressure from the Chain of Command. They also called on Military High Command to encourage personnel to enroll with the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) to undertake relevant courses. With the limitation of the use of social media in PR practice, much room must be created for PR practitioners in GAF to practice as well as be proactive.

4.4 Conclusion

The chapter was able to condense the data gathered from the field into meaningful notes. It was able to draw interpretations on the outcome of the findings. The next chapter looks at summarizing the work, juxtaposing the findings to theoretical positions and writing recommendations that arose from the study for GAF and other future studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the whole study. It summarises the key points made from the analysis and provides the major conclusions. It also makes recommendations for further research based on the results of the analyses.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study was conducted to assess the use of social media in Public Relations practice at the Ghana Armed Forces. The study was motivated by a literature search, which revealed that there was little work done on the subject. It was further discovered that there was little study on the way the Ghana Armed Forces uses social media in the practice of its Public Relations. The study thus focused on the GAF PR Unit since it is the body that handles the Public Relations activities of the GAF as a case. The next paragraphs would discuss the objectives one at a time and analyze them within the context of the research questions that were posed.

The first objective was to explore the kind of social media frequently used by GAF. The study revealed that apart from the GAF website, the main social media platforms GAF uses to actively engage with their internal and external publics are Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram. According to Walinski (2015), although the American public has readily accepted new media technologies, such as social networking sites into their daily lives, the U.S. military has lagged behind the public and private sectors with integrating those services as main form of

communication and exchange information tools. In GAF's engagement with the public, the DPR ensures favourable information about GAF is disseminated to the public via social media.

According to Heiberg (2010), civil-military relations in a democracy is the result of the power struggle between the elected government, which is the highest expression of the people's political will, and the military organization, which forms an extremely potent part of the state administration. Inasmuch as GAF PR engages more with the internal publics, the various units and departments within the Armed Forces pose as a challenge to the success of PR practice using social media. Even though GAF communicate through social media to its publics, the PR directorate does not operate independently. They follow strict regulations laid down by the military high command as far as sharing information to the general public is concerned.

Before any information is shared on social media handles, it must go through a process and upon approval by the top hierarchy. This is quiet contrary to what the Systems of Systems (SoS) proposes. According to Smith, Harikumar and Ruth (2011), various units within a system should have operational independence. They argued that the components systems in SoS to be operationally independent. A SoS is built to fulfill specific purpose(s). In such a system the normal operational mode of the component systems can be subordinated to the central operational mode of the system. Alternately, when component systems are more collaborative, the central operational mode of the system may be compromised.

The second objective was to assess the effect of social media on GAF Public Relations Practice. This included looking at social media so far as communication is concerned and how that affects the internal and external publics of GAF. The study revealed that GAF does a lot of internal communications, but only engages in external communications as and when it is needed. This was

done by way of juxtaposition what happens in civilian organisations when it comes to social media in Public Relations Practice.

The study revealed that, whereas civilian organisations often employ open ways of practicing public relations, the GAF PR encourages a two-way symmetrical communication model to Public Relations practice with the use of social media when necessary. This then indicates that GAF had gradually moved from the use a closed system philosophy in the practice of Public Relations to an open system of communications as far as social media is concerned.

According to Killenberg (2007), the need for military organisations to act as closed agencies led to several journalists being turned back during the operations in Granada. Complaints by the press about lack of access so that they could judge for themselves what they wanted to know, led to the formation of a commission that recommended a rotation pool of reporters to cover future military operations. The press was to be sworn to secrecy until the military lifted any news embargo. The study also revealed that GAF use of social media in its Public Relations practice has set a new landscape for two-way communication in its Public Relations practice, which allows it to distribute information and communicate with its publics without solely relying on mainstream traditional media. According to Flew (2008), social media is best understood as a group of new kinds of online media, which share characteristics such as participation, openness, conversation, community and connectedness. The study makes it clear that GAF use of social media in its Public Relations practice has enable it to respond to negative issues which can dent its image quickly and can also monitor its audience reach.

The final objective was to ascertain the implications of social media in PR practice in GAF. The study revealed that the GAF PR is yet to incorporate a more liberal orientation to the use of social media in Public Relations practice. It was also realised that GAF use of social media has both

positive and negative implications. In that, the use of social media has enhanced the practice of PR by making it easy to reach a large number of publics in a short time. It also poses a challenge in terms of dealing with highly fragmented public who may not be able to access social media.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the research results, the following conclusions can be drawn as follows:

The Study concluded that, Social media is dramatically changing the way PR is Practiced in GAF. Social Media has accelerated and intensified the way public relations practitioners communicate and relate their attitudes in the Armed Forces. Social Media has given GAF dynamic new ways to communicate with its Internal and external publics.

The objectives and research questions that define the contours of the study were all achieved as a result of the content analysis and discourse analysis applied to the available data. The findings reveal a lot is still needed to be done by GAF to help promote the use of social media in its Public Relations operations. The GAF PR needs more autonomy and must be guided to operate in a more liberal environment. The study has offered few insights into the use of social media in public relations practice but the full ramifications of social media and the way it is continuing to evolve go far beyond the scope of this paper.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This study faced several limitations. The target respondents were very busy individuals who were hard to access. The researcher was dependent on the cooperation of the respondents and some were unwilling to respond because they thought their identity will be revealed. This made the research take much time than expected. The researcher also guaranteed the respondents anonymity.

The researcher admits that while the findings were very insightful, the study was limited by the use of just one Directorate in the Armed Forces. This single-cased research, however, will contribute new empirical data to build academic knowledge on the use of social media in public relations practice.

5.5 Recommendations

In the light of all the study results, the following recommendations can be proposed:

This study has shown that social media has significantly increased in importance for public relations practice in the Armed Forces. However, it identified several themes that suggest there are gaps in knowledge about the use of social media in public relations practice in GAF. It is advisable that GAF offers training on this topic for experienced public relations practitioners.

The results of this study show that GAF Public Relations still do not use the full potential of conversational opportunities that social media can offer. Therefore, this research supports the suggestion of earlier studies advocating for a two-way symmetrical use of social media. GAF PR are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the advantages of a conversational use of social media and to promote this approach within the organisation.

The Ghana Armed Forces should hire more employees who are more experience and knowledgeable in social media usage to help increase organizational performance.

The Ghana Armed Forces should use social media platforms to develop and enhance the performance of the organization by creating new ways of innovation which lead will to more effectiveness and efficiency within the Armed Forces.

According to the China Daily (2018), militaries are opening up their operations to the civilians as far as social media is concerned. They are making the general public know much about them than ever. The GAF through the use of social in their PR can help create trust in their activities by engaging more with the public. Organising routine press releases and increasing media presence through social media will help people understand their operations and come to terms with them.

The military should also look at ways in which a two-way symmetrical communication model can be used to deal with the public. This can be done through soliciting through social media, public views on information or issues that are not regarded to be classified. This can be done by adopting social media as one of the means of interacting and getting closer to the civilian publics. This will not only make the military get closer to the people, but can also serve as a means of gathering intelligence.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM (GIJ) SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SoGSaR)

Dear Respondent,

I am a Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) graduate student, studying Public Relations. I am conducting a research on **The Use of Social Media in Public Relations practice in the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF)**. As a result, you have been selected to assist the study by providing candid answers to the following questions on the topic. The survey is solely for academic purposes and therefore your anonymity and confidentiality is highly assured. Your participation is important but you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You are expected to indicate your level of disagreement or agreement to all the statements contained in the questionnaire by checking (✓) the appropriate space.

Instructions: Please kindly tick [✓] your response. Do not write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you for your co-operation.

SECTION A: Demographic Data

1. Sex:

a. Male []

b. Female []

2. Age Groupings:

a. 18-25 []

b. 26-39 []

c. 40-55 []

d. 56 & above []

3. Qualification:

a. G.C.E. O & A Level []

b. SSSCE []

c. HND []

d. Bachelor's degree []

e. Master's degree []

Other (specify).....

4. How long have you been working with the GAF's PR Directorate?

a. 0 - 5 years []

b. 6 - 10years []

c. 11 - 19years []

d. 20 years and above []

5. What is your department of operation?

a. Monitoring &Media relations []

b. Newsroom []

c. Photo Section []

d. Film Production []

e. Protocol Section []

f. Website []

g. Production []

h. Radio Section []

SECTION B: Internal and External PR Operations of GAF

6. Do the Ghana Armed Forces engage in social media

YES [] NO []

7. Why do Ghana Armed Forces use social media?

.....
.....

8. What is the preferred social media site used by GAF?

.....
.....

9. What benefit do GAF derive from social media?

.....

10. How often do GAF use social media to send press release to the media?

.....

11. How do GAF get feedback from stories they post on their social media platform?

.....
.....

12. How did you measure the increase?

.....
.....

13. Would you say GAF’s use of social media in its PR practice has been helpful? Why or why not?

.....
.....

14. Does GAF currently post information via any social media handles?

YES [] NO [] SOMEHOW []

15. What strategies are used by GAF to manage its various social media networks?

.....
.....

16. What motivated GAF to add social media platforms to the traditional communication network?

.....

17. How often and does it yield the necessary results needed.

SECTION C: Philosophies and Principles of PR at GAF

The next sets of questions are about the different functions and activities that Public Relations departments could be involved in.

Please enter a number from 1 to 5 to the extent you agree that each item describes what your DPR does. A score of 1 means strongly disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 means neutral stance, 4 means agree and 5 means strongly agree to answer questions 18 and 19.

18. To what extent do social media contribute to strategic management of your organization?

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
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A	We contribute to strategic planning					
B	We contribute in responding to major social issues					
C	We contribute in routine operations (eg. employee communication, community relations, or media relations programs)					
D	Regularly conducted and routine research activities					
E	Specific research conducted to answer specific questions					

SECTION D: State of Social Media Operations in GAF

Please choose a number that indicates how much you agree or disagree that the statement

19. Describes how Directorate of Public Relations uses social media in sharing information.

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
A	We take into account the effects of social media					
B	The information we provide is factual					
C	We consider the interests of the public as much as GAFs interest					
D	We solely use social media in our information sharing to the public.					
E	In our public relations, we believe that favourable information should be disseminated but unfavourable information should be kept from the public					
F	When doing programs or projects, we avoid disclosing negative information about the GAF					
G	We believe the role of Public Relations and the use of social media is to promote the interests the GAF even if the GAF’s decisions have negative effects on the publics					
H	We try to avoid dialogue with the public on social media when GAF makes unpopular decisions					
I	We not only try to change the attitudes and behaviours of members of the public, but also try to change our attitudes and behaviours					

J	We believe using social media in the practice of Public Relations should provide mediation for the organization – to help management and publics negotiate conflict					
K	We conduct programs or projects through social media to persuade publics to agree with the GAF’s point of view					
L	We conduct programs or projects through social media to persuade publics to behave as the GAF wants them to behave					
M	Before carrying out Public Relations or communication activities, we first conduct research to understand how the public feels about certain issues					
N	After conducting Public Relations or communication activities, we conduct evaluations of these activities by monitoring feedbacks on our social media handles.					
O	Public Relations programs in the GAF through social media involve two-way communication between the organization and publics					
P	Information flows in and out of GAF because of social media.					
Q	Most Public Relations programs in the GAF are designed to disseminate information through social media to the publics					

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM (GIJ)

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SoGSaR)

I am a Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) graduate student, studying Public Relations. I am conducting a research on **The Use of Social Media in Public Relations practice in the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF)**. I would be very grateful if you could assist me in this study by granting me interview on the topic. The interview is for academic purposes and therefore your anonymity and confidentiality is highly assured. Your participation is important but you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

1. Describe how GAF PR deals with its publics?
2. Describe the role of social media in PRs activities.
3. Describe how GAF PR operations are organized. Describe the reporting structure, personnel and the key relevant roles of each person.
4. What is/are the major problem(s)/opportunity (-ies) facing PR with regards to social media?
5. Pick and briefly articulate the most significant solution or approach you would recommend to address this opportunity or challenge?
6. Describe a situation in which you had to manage the GAFs reputation during a social media crisis.
7. What challenges did you face, and how did you maintain GAFs reputation?
8. Compare and contrast your use of social media in Public Relations practice in the civilian sector
9. Discuss unique coordination issues, interagency coordination, military hierarchy, budgetary issues and other issues such cultural differences.
10. What are your perceptions of the use of social media in public relations practice?

11. Describe the changes, if any, you believe are needed in the use of social media. Describe the steps you would recommend to implement these changes?
12. What type of Public Relations tactics has GAF adopted on social media usage in the past two years?
13. How many social media handles do you have and who controls your social media handles?
14. If your company has a current Public Relations program, about how often do you release press releases to the media?
15. What were the press releases that you recently distributed about?
16. Would you describe/compare your PR operations in the past and now with reference to social media?
17. Is social media helping GAF in the positive or negative way? If negatively, what do you think must be done?