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THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS IN ACHIEVING
THE CORE MANDATE OF INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN GHANA

BY

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that with exception of references to other peoples' work, which has been duly acknowledged, this work is as a result of my own research work and it has neither been presented in whole nor in part for another degree.

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

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30TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

DR. ALBERT ANANI-BOSSMAN

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God, for his immeasurable help throughout this work and for inspiring the confidence in me to be able to go through my studies with a positive zeal. May his name be praised forever.

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I thank the Almighty God for aiding me to complete this study successfully. My sincere appreciation also goes to my supervisor, Dr. Albert Anani-Bossman for all the patience and time he had for me throughout my work regardless of her busy schedule. His guidance and pieces of advice were very helpful and contributed tremendously to the completion of this long essay.

ABSTRACT

The practice of Public Relations has seen much evolution, the case of Ghana not being very different. Much as a lot of work has gone into streamlining the definition and practice of Public Relations, there is still some major gap to be filled in giving Public Relations its rightful place in the corporate environment. The goal of the study therefore is to develop an integrated, non-sequential framework for excellent public relations management for the International Non-Governmental Organisations sector in Ghana. The study empirically analyzes how PR is conceptualized and practiced in relation to the purpose (models) and roles (activities). Design/methodology/approach. The study adopted the qualitative approach to gather views for the purpose. It was found out that PR in Ghana is shaped, to a large extent, by a western ideology. PR is however influenced greatly by strong interpersonal relationships, which is premised largely on the culture of the country. What is obvious is that PR in the INGO sector is not fully strategic. PR practitioners are limited in their ability to make impact due a lack of understanding by management about the purpose of PR and budgetary constraints. The limitations of this research is that the use of a qualitative approach means that the results cannot be generalized. As the study focussed on one sector, it will be essential to look at other sectors using a generalized sample.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The formal practice of what is now referred to as “public relations” dates back to the early 20th century. In the relatively brief period leading up to today, public relations has been defined in many different ways; the definitions often evolve around the changing roles in the field and profession and technological advances. Good public relations require communication skills, expertise in dealing with all media and the principles of persuasion. As a public relations practitioner, you should know when and what to communicate; this involves analysis, judgment, decision making power, counseling and planning (Seitel, 2001). Because public relations in its modern form originated from the United States of America (Seitel, 2001), the developmental history is first discussed with reference to America. Thereafter an overview of international development follows which include most African countries.

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) play an important role in any society. NGOs have been referred to as the backbone of the civil society as defined by Hyden (1995). They exist because governments of nations cannot do everything for their citizens as much as they would want to. NGOs provide services to people and communities to help improve the quality of their lives. The NGOs do this through funds sourced from donor agencies, however, they encounter problems and challenges related to these funds and its management. NGOs generally are funded by Government, national/ international network of NGOs and/or corporate. Normally these funding

bodies try to rule the philosophy and working style of NGOs and turn them in their interest. Due to financial limitations in the sector, it becomes difficult to attract devoted volunteers and employees. Above all, numbers of NGOs are increasing day-by-day. Besides, owing to their purposes, charitable organizations must operate and be managed in the public interest. They must communicate their goals and objectives in order to maintain visibility, credibility, accountability and growth. These NGO have to communicate with various public like beneficiaries, volunteers and funding bodies and many more for achievement of organizational objectives. NGOs need to create awareness amongst beneficiaries about the cause. Attracting and retaining volunteers is also not an easy job for NGOs and only continuous and effective communication can help.

It has become imperative that NGOs create awareness about their activities but unavailability of funds and importance of trust and faith in the sector create need for a promotional tool, which is perceived as ethical. The objective is not to sell the product but to build long-term image and relationships. Public Relation (PR) clearly plays a vital role. Over last few years, PR has become an important weapon in the hands of communication department of any corporate organization. A proper mix of PR tools can help NGOs ensure that all stakeholders are reached effectively.

The intellectual body of knowledge of public relations has grown significantly over the years, both globally and in Ghana; the profession continues to evolve toward establishing itself as a strong discipline. Unfortunately, the growth and development has occurred more quickly in other parts of the world than it has in Ghana. Nevertheless, public relations, both as a practice and an academic discipline, has received a lot of attention in Ghana and seen significant growth. Typical public relations functions, such as issues management and media relations, are being identified

and handled by public relations departments in organizations and practitioners are receiving the required training to excel both locally and internationally. It in this perspectives that this study seeks to investigate the role of public relations and communications in achieving the core mandate of international non-governmental organizations in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Public relation and communication has gained recognition locally and globally in organizational development. Public relation and communication over the years have been known to be one of the major agencies that aid the functionality of organizations and promote the interest and agenda of organizations. Non- governmental organization need healthy relationship with the public to meet their goals. Foundations and charities use public relation campaigns to raise funds and employ standard lobbying techniques with governments. At times NGOs seek to mobilize public support. Public relation professionals therefore use various strategies to conjure funds and to create awareness about the organizations aims and objectives. Even though public relation and communication existence has played a significant role in development of many recognized organizations like NGO's, it has not been given attention in literature. The researcher finds out that the few existing research conducted on public relation such as Adhei (2016), Gyan (2014), Nurudeen (2016) and others do not focus on the role of public relation and communication in achieving the core mandate of international non-governmental organizations in Ghana. Little or no attention has been given in literature on public relations and communications role in achieving the core mandate of international non-governmental organizations in Ghana. This study therefore focuses on the role of public relations and communications in achieving the core mandate of international non-governmental organizations in Ghana

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the role of public relations and communications in achieving the core mandate of international non-governmental organizations in Ghana

1.4 Objectives of the Study

2. Examine the purpose of public relations in an organization.
3. Examine the core mandates of NGO's
4. Examine the role of public relations in NGO's

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the purpose of public relations in an organization?
2. What are the core mandates of NGO's?
3. What is role of public relations in NGO's?

1.6 Scope of the study

The study will be limited to only international non- governmental organization in Ghana.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study will educate both governments and general public on the roles of public relation in achieving the core mandate of international non- governmental organizations (NGO's). The study will add a Ghanaian view to the existing global theory of public relations. The study will also, serve as a literature guide for future researchers in the field of public relation particularly. The study will also add or fill the gaps in the existing knowledge of public relation in Ghana

1.9 Organization of Chapters

This study will be organized into three chapters as follows:

Chapter One is the introductory chapter. It encompasses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, scope of the study and significance of the study.

Chapter Two is the literature review. It comprises the theoretical review and the conceptual review

Chapter Three is the research methodology of the study. It discusses the research design, population of the study, sampling, sample size, data collection instruments and data analysis.

Conclusion will be the final chapter which is chapter four

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The reviewing of literature offers the researcher the chance to delve into other related outcome of the study under consideration. The literature review gives a thorough understanding of the subject under study and how important it is to other studies. Through the literature review the researcher is able to ascertain how their own work differ or complement similar or other studies. It also shows the method used by other researchers on the topic and guides the research to fill the gaps and encompassing previous studies. According to Creswell, (2012), one of the fundamental assumptions of research is to add to existing knowledge hence it would be nearly impossible to conduct a research without referring to other scholars.

This chapter focuses on the theoretical underpinnings for the study. The study was guided by the models of public relations proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1984). The second part of this chapter also provides a review of the available literature related to the topic (conceptual review).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the four models of public relations proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1984). The models were based on communication, research, and ethics. Since that time Grunig and a team of scholars have proposed new models that have enriched the understanding of how public relations is practiced. The four models of public relations also described organizational communication activities. These models are: press agency, public information, two ways asymmetrical, and two way symmetrical. Research conducted in countries

such as the United States, India, Taiwan, and Greece (J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Sriramesh, Y. Huang, & Lyra, 1995) have indicated that Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models describe the practice of public relations internationally. These findings lead to a conclusion that the four models could be also practiced by public relations practitioners in Ghana. Grunig and Hunt (1984) characterized these models as abstractions and simplifications that help to describe the reality and give insights into "the history and progress of formal public relations" (p.21).

Key Tenets of the Four Models of Public Relation

The first four models of public relations were developed in an effort to describe the different ways public relations is practiced. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), the models described typical ways in which public relations uses two dimensional combinations of directions of communication, which are the one-way and two-way modes. They also described the models by using purposes of communication which are asymmetrical and symmetrical.

Press agency

The first model of public relations which is press agency was developed in the middle of the 19th century and it was explained by Grunig and Hunt (1984) as "public relations-like activities". According to Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002), this model uses persuasion and manipulation to influence an audience to behave as the organization desires. The goal of practitioners of press agency is publicity and propaganda. They also proposed that those practitioners "seek attention for their organization in almost any way possible" (p.308). Practitioners of this model use a one-way, source-to-receiver communication model. Grunig and Hunt (1984) postulated that the Press Agency model is characterized as one-way

communication, primarily through the mass media, to distribute information that may be exaggerated, distorted, or even incomplete to propagate a cause, product, or service.

Public Information

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), the public information model which is the second model was developed early in the 20th century in response to the attacks of journalists on corporations and government agencies. This model uses press releases and other one-way communication techniques to distribute organizational information. Journalists were employed by organizations and corporations to inform the publics about the organizational actions and activities and the circulated information is perceived as accurate and is generally favorable to the organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). McDonald (2015) identified that organizations that practice press agency and public information models need technicians to implement outward communication from the organization to target publics.

Communication staff are not involved in strategic planning and problem solving under the press agency model. The model is used as a way to disseminate information relying on very little research and no feedback from the public. The public information is also a one-way model. The process is one way; the practitioner is a skilled communicator who is not involved with monitoring the environment but simply provides external communication for decisions made and action taken by others. The public information model is a truth-oriented approach to public relations. The practitioners strive to provide accurate information to the public and do not disclose unfavorable information voluntarily.

The Two-way asymmetrical model

The two-way asymmetrical model is the third model of public relations. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), it was founded on behavioural and social sciences during World War I. This model uses research to determine what communication channels and messages are most likely to produce support of an organization's publics without changing the organization. Grunig and Hunt (1984) noted that practitioners of the two-way asymmetrical model use research to learn about attitudes and behaviours of publics in order to manipulate them in a manner that suits the organization. In the two-way asymmetrical model, communication is balanced in that it adjusts the relationship between the organization and its publics through negotiation and compromise. The practitioner of this model uses planned communication to manage conflict and to improve understanding with publics. The practitioner uses research to facilitate understanding and communication rather than to identify messages most likely to motivate or persuade publics (Rhee, 2004)

The Two-way symmetrical model

The fourth model identified by Grunig and Hunt (1984) is the two-way symmetrical model. Grunig and Grunig (1992) proposed that the two-way symmetrical model is used by organizations that practice excellent public relations. They described this model as the most ethical model which enhances organizational effectiveness. Formative research is used to facilitate understanding and dialogue between the organization and its publics.

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), this model of communication is grounded on a free exchange of information that is used to alter attitudes in both the organization and its publics. The two-way symmetrical model uses communication to negotiate with publics, resolve conflict,

and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its publics. In the two-way symmetrical model, “understanding is the principal objective of public relations” rather than one-sided persuasion (Grunig & Grunig, 1992, p. 289). The two-way symmetrical model is also characterized by unstable, one-sided communication. Practitioners of this model use social science theory and research on attitudes and behaviours to persuade publics to accept the organization's point of view or to behave as the organization wants (Rhee, 2004). Petersone (2004) observed that this model “is the most ethical model and enhances organizational effectiveness” (p.18).

2.3 Relevance of the four models of Public Relations to the Study

Public relations in Ghana started from a stage that can be described “as reflecting Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) press agentry and publicity” because practitioners used the media to “project themselves or their organizations by publicizing what the organization was doing” (Thompson, 2015, p.73). Public relations in Ghana gradually progressed to the public information stage because practitioners started using communication techniques such as newsletters and notices to disseminate information. Thompson (2015) identified that PR in Ghana is moving towards the two-way symmetric model which has become “the standard for effective public relations and reflects a professionalization of the field in Ghana” (p.80).

2.4 Conceptual Review

2.4.1 Definition of Public Relation

Public relations practitioners for many years have been struggling to define the role and place of PR in an organization and the contribution of public relations to the performance of an

organization. This, in part, is also due to a lack of appreciation- or even understanding- by organizations of the role that public relations is expected to play in the strategic planning and management of an organization, leading consequently to various definitions of the practice. According to the Mexican Statement (1978), Public Relation is defined as “the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences; counseling the organization’s leaders; and implementing planned programmes of actions which serve both the organization’s and public’s interest”.

The concept of modern public relations dates back to the late 19th century and the early 20th century, although some scholars predate it back to earlier time (Wilcox 2006; 68, Cutlip, Center & Broom 2000; 102). Since the formal practice of the profession was determined, PR has gone through many definitions, often evolving alongside its changing roles and technological understanding.

The global nature of public relations means that identifying a single meaning for the profession is very difficult. Scholars and practitioners do not seem to agree on a single definition of public relations (Butterick, 2011:6, Hutton, 2007:45; Verčič, et al 2001:374). Public relations has therefore been defined variously by both scholars and institutions over the years. Whereas the European view of public relations based on four key dimensions; namely, reflective, managerial, operational and educational (or what is known as the reflective paradigm), the American concepts of PR focuses on the relational approach, that is; emphasis is placed on the two-way symmetrical model as a means of establishing mutually beneficial relationships (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2002: 14; Verčič et al 2001:380). The authors therefore defined public relations as a communication activity based on sound strategy to maintain mutually beneficial relationship. For the Institute of Public Relations (IPR, UK) Public relations is about ‘reputation –the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you.’ (Franklin et al 2009:175). The use of reputation management is based on the belief that good reputation enhances credibility which lead to several benefits including higher sales and earnings, price premiums, higher stock price better community relations among others (Therkelsen, 2006). In 2012, the Public Relations Society of American came up with a new or modern definition of public relations. The definition focuses on PR as a communication process that is strategic in nature and also places emphasis on mutually beneficial relationships.

2.4.2 Public Relations Development from the Global Perspective

Sriramesh (2009) conducted a study on the various environmental variables which have aided the development of public relations globally. The aim of the study was to establish the factors that account for the global growth of PR, both as a profession and an academic discipline, as well as its prospect. The author was of the opinion that the growth of PR is highly linked with globalization, which is “credited for moving the public relations body of knowledge toward greater cultural relativism in order to make it more relevant to practitioners who are faced with the challenge of communicating effectively with the diverse publics of the emerging markets of Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Africa” (Sriramesh, 2009, p.1)

Drawing on the works of notable PR scholars (Bentele and Wehmeyer 2009; Al-Badr, 2004; Grunig and Hunt, 1984), Sriramesh (2009) argued that contrary to popular assertion that PR is a 20th century activity, the profession can be traced to as far back as the pre-biblical era, where certain activities with semblance to modern day PR were performed. However, Sriramesh (2009) conceded that modern PR practices began in the 20th century, an assertion which makes PR a relatively young field compared to other professions and academic disciplines.

Through a thorough historical analysis of the evolution of PR, the paper identified four main variables which support the development of PR. These variables are economic development, rise in media and communication technologies, increasing democratization of nations and increased homogenization of cultures. These factors, Sriramesh (2009) contended, were offshoots of globalization. The study discovered that countries with centralized economies tended to emphasize public sector undertakings where the government became the ‘sole public’ for public relations practitioners. However, the capitalistic economies favour private enterprise where

public relations would be needed to communicate with multiple publics. The study also identified the “pluralistic democratic system as the environment where public relations is most advanced and practiced in a strategic manner” (Sriramesh, 2009, p.5). The print and broadcast media, according to the findings, still took much of the focus of public relations practitioners regardless of the inception of new and social media.

The study by Sriramesh (2009) rightly captures the crust of the current study, in that it establishes a clear relationship between PR development and economic and media liberalization. It provides direction to the current study, especially for the purposes of comparison. Sriramesh’s (2009) study gave a global outlook of the factors that propelled public relation evolution, the current study being undertaken will seek to affirm if these variables apply in Ghana or not.

2.5 Development of Public Relations in Ghana

One study which has proven to be a necessity for understanding the origin and emergence of PR in Ghana in the early 1990s was conducted by Gyan (1991). This study is crucial because it was conducted at the twilight of Ghana’s return to democracy after more than a decade of military rule under the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC). The regime was noted for its flagrant abuse of media freedom and freedom of expression, a situation which inhibited the growth of PR in Ghana, since it thrives on media liberalization to function effectively.

It is in respect of the above circumstances that Gyan’s (1991) study is hailed as having laid the foundation for empirically understanding how the forces of economy, media and education combined to shape the public relations practice in Ghana. To address these objectives, Gyan (1991) conducted a study on a profile of public relations practice in Ghana. sixty self-

administered, in-depth and largely unstructured questionnaires were sent to thirty purposively-sampled organizations in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. The findings of the study suggested that PR had a low place in many organizations and was accorded very little respect and recognition. The study recommended a greater need for education and training of practitioners to adequately equip them with the necessary skills to face the modern challenges of the practice. Another recommendation was for qualified practitioners to enter the classroom to share their knowledge and experiences so that students could have a better understanding of the practice as it pertains on the field.

In what seems to be a fulfillment of Gyan's (1991) recommendations, Amoakohene (2015) found out that since the study by Gyan (1991), the number of educational institutions rose from two in 1990 to thirteen (13) in 2012. The study by Amoakohene (2015) analysed the changes and development which have occurred in public relations education since Gyan's (1991) study of public relations practice in Ghana. The study was conducted through a rigorous analysis of data from the Institute of Public Relations (IPR), Ghana and the National Accreditation Board (NAB). Amoakohene (2015) identified that the increase in the number of communication training institutions from two as of 1990 to 13 in 2012 was commendable. The findings further suggested that although the number of institutions that taught public relations in Ghana had increased, the fact that the majority of those institutions awarded bachelor's degrees and diplomas made it difficult for practitioners to take up managerial roles.

Just like Amoakohene (2015), Kotia's (2010) study also focused on the contribution of education to the development of public relations in Ghana. To meet the aims of the study, a content analysis of the public relations curricula used by four accredited institutions in Ghana was

conducted. Kotia (2010) further relied on the 2006 recommendations of the Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE) as a benchmark for the analysis of the data. The findings indicated that although seven institutions had been accredited by NAB as of 2009, only four were actually teaching public relations. Further findings showed that teaching and learning of Information Communication Technology (ICT) was very basic to the profession but received very little curriculum attention. It was also identified that institutions which started teaching public relations since their establishment, relative to institutions that grafted public relations onto already existing programmes showed a relatively higher level of adherence to CPRE recommendations.

Gleaning from these studies (Amoakohene, 2015; Kotia, 2010), eleven educational institutions started offering PR as a new academic programme between 1990 and 2012, with six of such institutions receiving their accreditation between 2009 and 2012. These studies provide the framework for understanding how expansion in the PR education has transformed the profession. They also help in understanding the increasing demand for experts and professionals with public relations background. It is important to state that the transformation in PR education began taking shape since 1992, when Ghana returned to constitutional rule. However, both studies did not establish whether the new wave of democracy accounts for this or not. On account of this, Thompson (2015) sought to place the development of PR in Ghana's political context.

Thompson (2015) wrote a paper on the evolution of public relations in Ghana's emerging democracy. The paper outlined the stages through which public relations has evolved in Ghana. The stages are public relations in pre-independent Ghana as well as during the independence

struggle; the second stage is the period between independence and the 4th Republic. And the last stage is public relations in the stable democracy of Ghana's 4th Republic.

The study found that the traditional chieftaincy institutions in pre-colonial Ghana practiced some kind of public relations prior to colonization. Between the independence era and the Fourth Republic, public relations were handled by the Information Services Department (ISD). Thompson (2015) further identified that during the colonial period, the press agency model was most dominant. Between the first and third republics, along with the military governments, public relations in Ghana was used as a government tool which mainly reflected the public information model and a bit of the press agency model (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

2.6 The role of Non- Governmental Organizations

2.6.1 Social Development

NGOs play an important role in global social development—work that has helped facilitate achievements in human development as measured by the UN Human Development Index (HDI) (n.d.). One of the major strengths of NGOs is their ability to maintain institutional independence and political neutrality. Even though NGOs need to collaborate with governments in numerous instances, failure to maintain neutrality and autonomy may severely compromise the NGOs' legitimacy. Unfortunately, if a government insists upon political allegiance, the NGOs encounter the dilemma of either violating the neutrality position or failing to provide needed services to the population. Indeed, some NGOs have been asked to leave troubled countries due to political reasons (Asamoah, 2003). The major advantages that NGOs bring to this role include “flexibility, ability to innovate, grass-roots orientation, humanitarian versus commercial goal

orientation, non-profit status, dedication and commitment, and recruitment philosophy” (Asamoah, 2003). The drawbacks in working with NGOs are similar to the advantages that were previously listed. In addition, some other disadvantages include “over-zealousness, restricted local participation, inadequate feasibility studies, conflicts or misunderstandings with host partner, inflexibility in recruitment and procedures, turf wars, inadequately trained personnel, lack of funding to complete projects, lack of transparency, inability to replicate results, and cultural insensitivity” (Asamoah, 2003).

2.6.2 Sustainable Community Development

NGOs have shown leadership in promoting sustainable community development. Due to their particular ideology and nature, NGOs are good at reaching out to the poor and remote communities and mobilizing these populations. They can also empower these populations to regain control of their lives and can work with and strengthen local organizations. In addition, such NGOs can carry out projects more efficiently and at lower costs than government agencies and, most importantly, promote sustainable development (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010). The five dimensions of sustainable community development are as follows:

1. Increasing local economic diversity
2. Self-reliance: development of local markets, local production, local processing, greater co-operation among local economic entities
3. Reduction in the use of energy combined with recycling and management of waste products
4. Protection and enhancement of biological diversity and stewardship of natural resources
5. Commitment of sustainable communities to social justice. (Bridger & Luloff, 1999)

Since NGOs are professionally staffed organizations aimed at reduction of human suffering and to the development of poor countries (Streeten, 1997), they have a significant role to play in supporting women, men, and households. The roles for such NGOs include “counseling and support service, awareness raising and advocacy, legal aid and microfinance” (Desai, 2005). The long-term aim for these NGOs is to assist in sustainable community development through activities such as capacity building and self-reliance (Langran, 2002). This can be done by funding projects, contributing to awareness, and promoting the self-organization of various groups (Baccaro, 2001).

A case study in Vietnam illustrates that NGOs play an important role in promoting sustainable community development (Hibbard & Tang, 2004). Usually this is accomplished by providing three basic functions: (1) service delivery (relief, welfare), (2) education, and (3) public policy advocacy (Stromquist, 2008). The idea is that NGOs can promote sustainable community development via three functions: (1) microfinance, (2) capacity building, and (3) self-reliance. NGOs ought to develop local products and local markets; develop social, capital, and human resources; encourage and motivate people to participate in activities; and act as network liaisons between community and systems. In this manner, the long-run goal of sustainable community development would be achieved (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010).

2.6.3 Sustainable Development

NGOs have played a significant role in promoting sustainable development at the international level. NGOs are going beyond their primary focus on governments and starting to address large corporations. In this vein, NGOs have focused attention on the social and environmental impacts of business activity, helped in part by advances in information and communications technology.

The brands of multinational corporations have also been vulnerable to pressure from activists and from NGOs on the corporation's labor, environmental, or human rights record. As the downstream customers are targeted, even the supply chain partners and suppliers are feeling the pressure (Hall-Jones, 2006).

In response to such concerns, many corporations are embracing a stakeholder approach that looks at the impact of business activity on customers, employees, communities, and other interested groups. There are numerous visible manifestations of this shift. The primary one has been an increased attention to social and environmental affairs. Many corporations are taking responsibility for their actions and are starting to report on the impact of their activities. A secondary shift is more heartening: Many companies have designed management structures that integrate sustainable development concerns (Hall-Jones, 2006).

NGOs can take most of the credit for creating these trends. The question remains as to how the business world should react to NGOs in the future. Should companies gear themselves in preparation of attacks from hostile critics? Should companies engage NGOs to become helpful partners? Depending upon their philosophy, not all NGOs are willing to collaborate with the private sector. Some of NGOs observe at a distance, and monitor, publicize, and criticize cases where companies fail to consider its impacts upon the community. However, other NGOs are willing to allocate some of their resources to working along with business in order to further corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Hall-Jones, 2006).

2.6.4 Sustainable Consumption

NGOs can also play an important role as partners to business/industry in promoting sustainable consumption. Some of the instances where this partnership has been successful is in categories such as product development, sustainable housing, labeling, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), green purchasing, marine stewardship, and so on. The basic premise is, can NGOs influence behavioral change? Specifically, there are two questions that need to be asked: (1) How are NGOs educating households to change their consumption behavior, and (2) how can NGOs be potential partners to businesses in promoting sustainable consumption (Kong, Saltzmann, Steger, & Ionescu-Somers, 2002)?

A range of projects shows that NGOs are engaging businesses to promote sustainable consumption. Some of the interesting approaches are as follows:

Using Strategic Means to Point Out Problems

NGOs are encouraging households to exercise their power as shareholders. In case shareholder power is substantial, this can raise public awareness and change business policies. For example, Friends of the Earth's (FoE) Green Paycheck Campaign tells individuals how to use their shareholder power and screen their investments so that "money becomes a tool for change" (Kong et al., 2002).

Assessing Environmental Impacts of Products

NGOs rank products and services based on their environmental performance and impacts. The idea is that consumers can then pick and choose what products or brands they would purchase. For example, many consumer organizations have adopted a commitment to sustainability in their

mission statements, such as in Austria, Germany, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands, and their assessment of products reaches consumers via magazines, websites, and other publications (Kong et al., 2002).

Greening the Supply of Products and Services

NGOs are developing or designing products that will minimize the environmental impacts of consumption. The consumer is simply offered an alternative of more sustainable consumption, and this choice is deemed empowering. For example, the WWF is engaging the retail sector to offer more sustainable food products. It also cooperates with the catering sector to design WWF Weeks for the menu and one permanent WWF dish. This campaign has been successful in increasing demand for organic products in Switzerland (Kong et al., 2002).

Focusing on Market Forces

Creating a green demand that will drive changes in supply, NGOs are providing information through labels that would empower consumers to make informed choices. For example, WWF has worked with the industry to design labeling schemes to help in the launch of independent certification bodies. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) was created in 1993 to protect the world's forest by a coalition of NGOs, businesses, and government entities. Unilever and WWF started the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) to establish a certification scheme for sustainable fishing (Kong et al., 2002).

Forming Extensive Networks of Different Stakeholders

NGOs enter into collaborations with other NGOs and businesses to highlight issues and jointly look for solutions. For example, the Green Purchasing Network (GPN) promotes green purchasing among consumers, businesses, and other governmental organizations in Japan. It consists of 2,150 members including Sony, Fuji, Toyota, Honda, Canon, and Mitsubishi among others (Kong et al., 2002).

You had a subtitle on the role of PR and communication in NGOs. Why did you take it out?

This is very important. You should be able to discuss how PR influences the work of NGOs.

There is a lot of literature on this.

2.7 Related Studies on Public Relations Practice

Study conducted by Kwame Baah-Boakye and Ming-Yi Wu in 2007 on the topic “A profile of public relations practice in Ghana: Practitioners roles, most important skills for practitioners, relationship to marketing and gender equality”, highlighted that “Steyn (2005) did a database search of African Theses and Dissertations (a Project of the Association of African Universities). Research carried out by Gyan (1991) discussed public relations practice in Ghana and argued that public relations has received little attention in Ghana. Public relations practitioners also played insignificant roles in their organizations. Gyan's 1991 thesis provided some preliminary information about public relations practice in Ghana.

In Baah-Boakye and Wu's study, it was revealed that majority of Ghanaian organizations have now seen the importance of public relations and have given it the necessary support. The study showed that 84.4% of the participants who were public relations practitioners answered “yes” to a question asked in relation to whether the participants have decision making power in their various organizations.

On specific functions and most important skill for public relations practitioners in Ghana, the study showed that, eight (12.5%) participants chose writing. Forty-nine (76.6%) participants chose interpersonal communication. Seven (10.9%) participants chose speaking different languages. It was obvious that interpersonal communication skill was the most important skill for public relations practitioners in Ghana then. The significance of this study, according to Baah-Boakye and Wu, was that it discussed various contemporary research issues, including the roles that Ghanaian public relations practitioners perform, the most important skills for public relations practitioners, among few others.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the orderly way of solving a research problem (Lehmann, 2010). This section will cover the research design, selection of cases, selection of subjects (population and sample), data collection instrument, data collection procedure and data processing and analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The study was exploratory in nature and for that matter employed the qualitative research approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3).

Data was collected using in-depth interviews in order to allow the researcher to probe further and ask follow-up questions when the need arose. The qualitative approach also helped the researcher to gather rich data. Wimmer and Dominick (2011) posit that the wealth of detailed information provided by the in-depth interview serves as a great advantage to the researcher. This method therefore helped in gathering a wealth of knowledge and understanding into the transformation of public relations in Ghana. According to Potter (1996, p.27), a quantitative approach would not

allow the researcher to capture “diversity among people...and how each human creates meaning...from a different set of experiences.

3.3 Research Population

Wimmer and Dominick (2003) define a population as a group or class of subjects, variables, concepts or phenomena. Babbie (2013) also defines a population as the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements. The first target population for this research was all public relations practitioners who have practised in Ghana for ten years or more and are members of the Institute of Public Relations, Ghana (IPR).

The second target population consisted of all international non-governmental organizations in Ghana who have operated in Ghana for ten years or more. Morse (1986) as cited in Denzin and Lincoln (1994) identified a respondent as someone who has the knowledge and experience the researcher requires, has the ability to reflect, is articulate, has the time to be interviewed and is willing to participate in the study.

3.4 Sampling

Wimmer and Dominick (2011) define a sample as “a subset of a population that is representative of the entire population”. The non-probability sampling approach was adopted for this study. The purposive sampling method was used to identify respondents who can give the required information. According to Opoku-Amankwa (2009. p, 18.), in purposive sampling, “the respondents or elements are intentionally selected for the study based on certain characteristics

or qualities to meet the needs and requirements of the study.” One of the members of staff at the IPR office helped the researcher to identify members of the institute who had practiced for ten years and above. Likewise, the international agency for non-governmental organizations in Ghana help the researcher to identify members who have operated in Ghana for ten years and more. This list was used to draw the sample. The type of purposive sampling used was intensity sampling. According to Patton (1990), an intensity sample consists of information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely (but not extremely). With intensity sampling, one selects participants who are experiential experts and who are authorities on a particular experience. Using the logic of intensity sampling, the researcher seeks excellent or rich examples of the phenomenon of interest.

3.5 Sample Size

Ten participants were selected for this research. The sample size was based on the recommendations of McCracken (1988), who suggested that a sample size of eight was sufficient for qualitative interviewing because it was essential to work in-depth with fewer participants. The ten participants or respondents comprised of six public relations practitioners and four public relations lecturers. The six PR practitioners had been practicing in Ghana for at least ten years while the four international non-governmental had also been operating for at least ten years. These practitioners were all members of the Institute of Public Relations, Ghana (IPR). The researcher drew the sample size from the 2010 list of both IPR and international non-governmental agency.

3.6 Data Collection

In-depth interviews were used to collect data. Wimmer and Dominick (2011) defined an in-depth interview as an extensive one-on-one personal interaction in which much more information can be obtained while Bingham and Moore (1959) simply described qualitative interviewing as “a conversation with a purpose.” (p.4)

Interview guide were used to explore the views, experiences and opinions of the individual respondents. Both the public relations practitioners and international non-governmental organization involved in the study were asked questions which required them to provide their personal and professional experiences.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

Two semi-structured interview guides were designed to guide the direction of the interviews. One to be answered by public relations practitioners and the other to be answered by lecturers who taught public relations. The semi-structured interview guides were to give the researcher the opportunity to ask follow-up questions based on the responses that were provided. According to Mason (2002), the defining characteristic of semi-structured interviews is that they have a flexible and fluid structure, unlike structured interviews, which contain a structured sequence of questions to be asked in the same way for all interviewees. Mason (2002) also posited that the aim was usually to ensure flexibility in how and what order questions were posed. This method also helped to establish how particular questions might be followed up and developed with

different interviewees. This helps to shape the interview according to the interviewee's own understanding.

3.8 Instruments Administration

All ten interviews were conducted within three weeks. Emails were sent to ten practitioners and ten lecturers concerning the interview. Six practitioners and four lecturers responded with the date and time when they will be available for the interview. The venue for each interview was also provided. All the respondents were given clear and elaborate explanations concerning the objectives of the study as well as the goal of the study.

Gordon (1980) asserts that effective in-depth interviews entail creating a shared concern for each other in which both the interviewer and the respondent understand the contextual nature of the interview. All the interviews were conducted between late August and early September, 2020. An audio tape recorder was used to record responses from all the interviews after which the interviews were transcribed. Notes were also taken during the interviews. All the interviews were conducted in English. There was no need for the researcher to recruit and train additional interviewers to assist in the data collection since the interviews could be conducted single-handedly over the given period and none of the interview schedules coincided.

3.9 Data Analysis

The transcribed data was coded for emergent themes based on the objectives of the study to identify the role of public relations and communications in achieving the core mandate of international non-governmental organizations in Ghana. The themes were analyzed manually.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

The ethical concern in research is about creating a relationship which upholds mutual respect and responsibility, in which participants are pleased to candidly respond, in order to obtain valid results. Considering the above principle, the researcher seeks the consent of participants before interviewing the respondents. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity on the grounds that the work is purely for academic purposes. The study was adhered to the University code of ethics.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

The study gave a general background of both public relation and communication and international non-governmental organization. The objectives and purpose of the study was established in the study. The theoretical framework under pinning the study was explained thoroughly as well as the literatures related to the studies was reviewed. The study methods adopted to achieve the objective of the study was indicated.

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