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**EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) IN ROAD SAFETY
CAMPAIGNS**

SUBMITTED BY

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**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF
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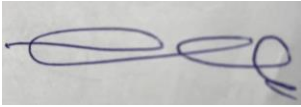
SEPTEMBER, 2020.

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the work presented is the result of my own effort, original research and findings and that no part of it has been presented for another degree or diploma in this University or elsewhere. All references to other people's work have been duly acknowledged. I am therefore to be held responsible for any error that might be detected in this project work.

(Candidate's signature)

DATE: 2ND OCTOBER, 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KENNEDY MORN', is shown within a rectangular grey box.

**KENNEDY MORNAH BANUNGKAE
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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

(Supervisor's signature)

DATE

DR. IKE TANDOH

10/2/ 2020



DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the Almighty God for His direction and help throughout my life in this Institution and also for inspiring confidence in me to go through with positive zeal. I also dedicate this study to my family, my wife, in particular, Nana Ama Konadu-Mornah and our beautiful children, Tinung-taa, Pogbanseu and Mwinibanyeng Mornah for the support, encouragement and sometimes the ‘disturbances’ that culminated in this successful journey. I thank them for their patience and the sacrifices they made towards the realisation of this goal. My debt to them is beyond measure. To all those who inspired and encouraged me along the line and contributed in diverse ways to reach this dream, I say thank you.

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Most especially, I dedicate this work to the memory of my late bosom friend, mentor and ‘uncle’ Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie (Sir John) who died while in office as the Chief Executive Officer of the Forestry Commission and one time General Secretary of the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Even in death, Wofa, I remember your contribution to this journey and I will forever value the role you played to get me this far. May your gentle and kind soul rest peacefully in the bosom of the Lord Almighty until we meet again.

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ABSTRACT

The unparalleled rate of road accidents in Ghana and its casualty rate has a devastating impact on the population. To mitigate the devastating effects of road crashes, road safety management is required. This study aimed to shed light on the effects of road safety communication on road safety management, with perspectives from the National Road Safety Authority of Ghana. An analysis of the literature on PR's role in road safety campaigns showed that contact in the field of road safety plays an important role in reducing road accidents. Another finding of the study was that PR in light of the canker presented by road safety accident, the UN General Assembly admonished its members to prioritise 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety. This study did not collect data as a result of minimizing contact due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To verify the effectiveness of the role of PR in road safety campaigns in road safety management in Ghana, future researchers with an interest in the subject area should collect data.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSO - Civil Society Organizations

FRSC - Federal Road Safety Corps

GRSP - Ghana Road Safety Project

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GNP - Gross Natural Product

MMTD - Motor Traffic and Transport Department

NRSA – National Road Safety Authority

NRSS - National Road Safety Strategy

NRSCAP - National Road Safety Commission Action Plan

NRSC - National Road Safety Commission

RTCS - Road Traffic Crashes

TRP - Transport Rehabilitation Project

TSR – Traffic System Risk

VANET - Vehicular Ad Hoc Networks

WHO – World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AND CONTEXT

Deaths and injuries caused by road collisions continue to be a major concern, and existing trends indicate that this will continue to be the case shortly. However, accelerating progress can be accomplished by an integrated strategy that involves the introduction and compliance of appropriate initiatives, such as road and vehicle safety requirements, regulations to reduce high-risk behaviour, such as speeding, as well as ensuring timely access to competent emergency treatment. The availability of accurate and detailed data on the burden and risk of road traffic incidents, injuries, and fatalities to achieve and track progress is crucial to this approach (World Health Organization Road Safety Status Report [WHORSSR], 2018).

The ability to incorporate context-specific and effective strategies is significantly restricted without awareness of the severity of the issue and the consequences of death and injury. Also, as illustrated in previous and current versions of the Road Safety Status Report of the World Health Organization (WHO), under-reporting of road traffic accidents is common in many parts of the world and, relative to other public health issues, results in a lower priority being given to road safety. While the number of individuals dying annually as a result of road traffic injury exceeds those dying from HIV / AIDS , tuberculosis and diarrhoeal diseases, only a small fraction of the political devotion and financial commitment in road safety is made to fight these diseases (WHORSSR, 2018).

The number of deaths from road traffic continues to increase, reaching 135 million in 2016. However, death rates have stabilized in recent years in comparison to the size of the world's population. The data provided in this report suggest that progress has been made in key areas such as regulation, requirements for vehicles and enhancing access to post-crash care. However, this development has not taken place rapidly enough to compensate for the growing

population and the rapid motorization of transport in many parts of the world. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) objective 3.6 to halve road traffic fatalities by 2020 will not be fulfilled at this pace (WHORSSR, 2018).

For children and young adults between the ages of 5 and 29, road traffic deaths are now the leading cause of death, indicating a need for a shift in the current agenda for child protection, which has historically ignored road safety. For all age groups beyond HIV / AIDS, tuberculosis, and diarrheal diseases, it is the eighth leading cause of death. The burden of road traffic accidents and casualties is disproportionately borne by poor road users and those living in low- and middle-income countries, where rising casualties are induced by increasingly motorized transport. No reductions in the number of road fatalities were observed in any low-income country between 2013 and 2016, while some reductions were observed in 48 middle- and high-income countries. Overall, in 104 countries during this time, the number of deaths increased (WHORSSR, 2018).

In Ghana, the National Road Safety Commission (NRSC) is the statutory body that, in compliance with the mandates of the Act of Parliament that created it (NRSC Act 567 of 1999), plays the lead role in championing, encouraging and organizing road safety activities in Ghana. The NRSC's key objective is to prepare, establish and encourage road safety and to coordinate road safety policies. The NRSC has a national vision to make Ghana a country with Africa's safest road transport system, and a corporate vision to become a respectable company with highly motivated workers dedicated to reducing the fatality rate to a single digit per 10000 vehicles. The Commission's mission is also to encourage best practices in road safety for all categories of road users (National Road Safety Commission [NRSC], 2018).

National road safety education, information and publicity are among the main functions of the Commission. It also carries out special road safety enhancement initiatives and co-ordinates,

controls and reviews road safety events, services and strategies. It also suggests that industry ministers and bodies define steps to be measured to avoid road accidents and injuries involving the use of vehicles on roads. Once again, the Commission advises the Minister of the Sector on the creation of road safety policies and action programs. The creation of a long-term road safety strategy and the preservation of a detailed road safety database for public information form part of the core functions of the Commission. It is then required to create, with the road authorities, procedures for auditing the safety of road building, reconstruction or improvement projects and to encourage research on road safety. It also sets standards for road safety equipment and ensures compliance (NRSC, 2018).

In 2016, crash statistics show an increase of 15.6 percent and 6.77 percent in deaths and serious injuries, respectively, but a decline of 11.7 percent in incidents over the figures for 2015. The Traffic System Danger (TSR) index has reached the single-digit mark (9.24 fatalities/10,000 vehicles) for the third time running. Fatal accidents rose by 7.6 percent in 2016, but the Greater Accra region reported the highest percentage reduction of -22.1 percent in fatal crashes at the regional level, followed by the Upper West Region (-2.5 percent). Fatal crashes increased in all the remaining regions; Northern (34.9%), Volta (34.5%), Eastern (30.4%), Brong Ahafo (26.1%), Upper East (20.5%), Central (18.8%), Ashanti (11.3%) and Western (2.2%) (NRSC, 2018).

In addition to the above, the Ashanti region reported the highest number of fatalities in 2016, with a total of 403 deaths, accounting for 19.3% of all fatalities in Ghana. This was followed by the Greater Accra Area (367 fatalities; 17.6%), Brong Ahafo (299 fatalities; 14.3%), Eastern (293 fatalities; 14.1%), and Central (213 fatalities; 10.2%). Together, these five regions led to more than three-quarters (75.5 percent) of all road fatalities in Ghana. It is worth noting that the Ashanti region has reported the highest number of fatalities for the first time in three years, as it used to be Greater Accra, which was the leading crash-prone region based on the number

of people killed in road crashes. In recent times, the deteriorating road safety situation in the Ashanti region can be due in part to the relaxation of traffic regulation on the main Accra-Kumasi highway (NRSC, 2018).

The road user class with the highest share of fatalities continued to be pedestrians (824; 39.5%) followed by motorcycle users (437; 21%) and then bus occupants (364; 17.5%). The crash statistics show that the pedestrian fatality share once again fell below the 40% mark resulting in an annual reduction of -0.84% in pedestrian fatalities over the 2015 figure. This is in sharp contrast with the annual increase of 59.0% for bus occupant, 35.3% for motorcycle and 17.5% for car occupant fatalities. Safety measures for pedestrians should be sustained while those for bus occupants should be refocused and stepped up to stem the situation (NRSC, 2018).

Motorcycle users also stood the greatest risk of death in traffic, registering the second highest road traffic fatalities (21.0%) after pedestrians, thus overtaking fatalities among bus occupants (17.5%) and car occupants (10.7%). Though there was a drop of -9.3% in motorcycle fatalities in 2015, it increased by 35.3% in 2016. This calls for pragmatic measures to curb the rising rate of increase in motorcycle fatalities (NRSC, 2018).

Day in and day out, these numbers begin to add up. This study aimed to find out the role that PR can or does play in road safety campaigns concerning the disturbing issue of rising road injuries at hand. This, the researcher concludes, would be of wide interest to politicians, to the discipline of PR, and the entire government.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Given that people are almost unintentionally susceptible to making errors and committing violations, most road safety practitioners are especially interested in human behaviour. That is where campaigns for road safety come in. It can have several and various objectives, such as educating the public of new or little understood traffic laws, raising awareness of issues, or

persuading individuals to refrain from risky habits and instead follow healthy ones. Road safety campaigns, however, only supplement but do not substitute activities involving year-long traffic campaigns.

In several cases, awareness campaigns have been introduced to fill the gap between encouraging road safety and changing driving behaviour for a wider audience. However, road traffic accidents continue to rise even in the face of road safety and communication campaigns (WHO, 2020). The human factor, however, continues to exert a powerful impact on the safety of roads.

This study aspires to incorporate the PR viewpoint to contribute to the continuous growth of traffic accidents. The study thus envisages filling the gap by specifically identifying the role of PR in contributing to road safety campaigns. Looking at the role of PR in road safety campaigns, this research aims to examine the reason for this growth from the communication perspective. The research will be performed based on Ghana's geographical background. This will help to carve a niche such that the research becomes a valid academic reference material on the role of PR in Africa's road safety campaigns.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Even though this study will explore the essence of PR in road safety campaigns, it is important to spell out certain specific objectives.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To ascertain the role PR can play in promoting road safety campaigns
2. To find out the benefit(s) of road safety campaigns
3. To find out the extent PR can impact road safety campaigns

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Specifically, the study aims to answer the following research questions to help the role PR plays in road safety campaigns promotion.

1. What is the role PR can play in promoting road safety campaigns?
2. What is/are the benefit(s) of road safety campaigns?
3. To what extent can PR impact road safety campaigns?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study implores to explore the role of PR in road safety campaigns primarily. However, although there are previous studies on road safety, this paper will discuss the phenomenon in the context of Ghana. This will help bring to the fore the role PR can play in promoting road safety as well as its relevance to policymakers and stakeholders. Therefore, the outcome of this research will serve as a guide for policy formulation and decision-making input for the years to come.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Four chapters will be incorporated into the study. A detailed introduction to this study will be given in chapter one, which is the introductory chapter. It will cover the research context, the problem statement, the research goals, the study justification, the importance and the scope of the study. The Theoretical and Philosophical Structure and Empirical Analysis will consist of Chapter two, which is the Literature Review. The chapter will study the latest research literature and concentrate on supporting road safety campaigns through the use of PR and other similar strategies. Chapter three, which is the chapter on Research Methods, will concentrate on defining the research design or strategy to be followed by the researcher in the conduct of the study. The key results will be outlined in the next and final chapter, recommended for research and policy decisions, and the analysis will be concluded.

1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter gave an introduction into the idea behind conducting this study. It comprised a background of the study as well as giving a contextual fitting. This was then followed by establishing the problem the paper seeks to solve as well as outlining research objectives and research questions which will guide the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 SYSTEMS THEORY

Grunig and Hunt (1989) also propounded the Systems Theory as it relates to PR. A way of looking at organisations is device theory. This can use it to construct business processes, and could also be used to evaluate their problems and diagnose them. Each organization is part of a system with three components, according to the system theory; the organization, its audiences, and its goals. Survival is the primary organizational goal.

To thrive, the perception of organizations as open social networks that must communicate with their environment is known as the System Theory Approach. According to Cutlip, Centre and Broom (2006), 'the main function of PR is to help organizations respond to and respond to changes in the climate of an organization. Organizations depend on a variety of critical resources in their environment: from consumers who buy the goods or services, manufacturers who supply products, workers who supply labour or management, investors, and even controlling governments.

Katz and Kahn, who adapted the theory of general systems to organizational behaviour, first applied the Open-systems method (Bertalanffy, 2019). By mapping the repetitive cycles of input, output and feedback between organisations and their external environment, this approach defines organizational behaviour. The device receives feedback either as information or in the form of resources from the environment. In an attempt to restore harmony to the setting, the system then processes the input into the environment. The system then sends feedback to decide if the results were effective in restoring balance.

The method strategy focuses on the means used in situations to ensure organizational survival and illustrate long-term goals rather than the short-term objectives of the goal achievement

approach. Systems can, technically, be considered either open or closed. Open organizations have shared their environment with knowledge, energy, or resources, while closed systems have not. In reality it is because no social systems can be completely closed or opened and so they are usually identified as relatively closed or relatively open. The distinction between closed and opened systems is determined by the level of sensitiveness to environmental deviations, whereas open systems are responsive to changes in the environment.

On the other hand, the *closed-systems approach* is insensitive to environmental deviations, whereas open systems are responsive to changes in the environment. The system approach is an external standard that measures effectiveness based on long term growth or sustainability. Effective systems are characterized by steady state that system theorists call homeostasis in order to avoid the static connotation of equilibrium and bring it out the dynamic, procedural, potential maintaining properties of basically unstable systems Buckekley (1967, p.14). If an organization is able to maintain homeostasis, which includes not just survival but also growth, then it is effective. This perspective is broader and more comprehensive than the goal – attainment approach because it is not limited to measuring effectiveness as to how well an organization is meeting the demands of the various groups and organization that are concerned with its activities (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978, p.11).

Most effective organizations according to the system theory adapt to their environment. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) described the environment as the events occurring in the world that have any effect on the activities and outcomes of organizations. Environments range from ‘static’ on one extreme to ‘dynamic’ on the other. Static environments are relatively stable or predictable and do not have great variation, whereas dynamic environments are in a constant state of flux. Because environments cannot be completely static or constantly changing, organizations have varying levels of dynamic or static environments.

Organization that exists in dynamic environments must be open systems in order to maintain homeostasis. Because dynamic environments are constantly changing, they create a lot of uncertainty about what an organization must do in order to survive and grow; the key to dealing with uncertainty is information. An organization monitors its environment and collects information about environmental deviations that is labelled as input. Input can be also thought as a form of feedback. The most important information is negative input, according to the systems theories, because this information alerts the organization to problems that need to be corrected. Negative inputs tells the organization that it doing something wrong and that it must make adjustments to correct the problem; positive inputs tells the organization that it should continue or increase that activity.

Organizations then organize and process this information to formulate or responses to these changes. As Cutlip, Centre and Broom noted, open systems use information to respond to environmental changes and adjust affect the structure or process of the organization or both. The structure is what the organization is whereas process is what the organization does. Adjustment is intended to reduce, maintain, or increase the deviations' Cutlip, Centre and Broom (2006), p.181. For example, an organization can alter its structure by downsizing to remain competitive. Other organizations may cause their processes in order to adhere to new environmental laws. Processing positive and negative input adjust to environmental change called throughput in the throughput of information, the organizations analyses it and tailors it strategically to fit with the organizational goals, values and within the relationship context it holds with publics.

The Public Relation professional can cause the academic concept of *Systems Theory* to implement protocols for regular feedback to the organization, there by aligning it with the desires of publics in its environments. The theory can also be useful in understanding the role of research and feedback in creating a thoroughly analysed and consistent strategy (the

throughput stage of information systems theory). The analysis of information and creation of strategy known as throughput helps to conceptualize and justify not only the research budget of the but also the need for making decisions that strategically align public communications of an organization with the information needed by publics. The practical implementation of this approach keeps from being used as a simple publicity function, and places the function squarely in the strategic planning process.

Lastly, *System Theory*, however, is not without shortcomings. The first shortcoming relates to measurements, and the second is the issue of whether the means by which an organization survives really matter. Robbins noted that one criticism of this approach is that it focusses on “the means necessary to achieve effectiveness rather than on organizational effectiveness itself” Robbins (1990), p.62. Measuring the means, or process, of an organization can be very difficult when compared to measuring specific end goals of the goal-attainment approach.

2.0.1 Relevance of the selected theory to your present study

The relevance of this theory hinges on the need for PR, because Grunig (2013) asserts that the practice thrives in an open system in which the boundaries between subsystems, suprasystems and environments are permeable and responsive to feedback. This way, PR professionals will help to proactively adjust and adapt to ever-changing environments in order to make strategic plans to maintain relationships especially in the case of road safety campaigns in this scenario. Also, other functions such as creating awareness for the messages and campaigns as a whole through publicity tools such as billboard adverts, television and radio commercials among others will be the task of the PR professionals.

In line with the views of the theory, PR professionals for instance must constantly monitor their environment, intended goals, actions and feedback from stakeholders and publics in order to make the necessary changes to the road safety campaigns so that it fit within the environment

and reach a goal state of equilibrium. Cutlip (2013) observes that the essential role of PR is to act as an open system and to help organizations adjust and adapt to change in their environments, so they must monitor and interpret environmental factors and work with management to develop strategic plans of organizational change and responsiveness.

2.1 DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTS

2.1.1 Definition of Public Relations

PR refers to the expected and ongoing effort between an entity and its audiences to build and sustain goodwill and mutual understanding. This includes creating sustainable partnerships to create a positive brand picture between a company and all its audiences. PR was defined by Edward Bernays as a management mechanism that tabulates public attitudes, identifies an organization's policies, procedures, and interests, followed by the implementation of a program of action to gain public awareness and acceptance (Bernays, 1945). In 1991, PR practice was described by the Institute of International PR in the UK as "the planned and sustained effort to build and maintain goodwill and understanding between an organization and its audiences."

2.1.2 General Practice of Public Relations

PR specialists establish and maintain relationships with an organization's target audience, the media and other opinion leaders. Common responsibilities include designing communications campaigns, writing news releases and other content for news, working with the press, arranging interviews for company spokespeople, writing speeches for company leaders, acting as an organization's spokesperson, preparing clients for press conferences, media interviews and speeches, writing website and social media content, managing company reputation (crisis management), managing internal communications, and marketing activities like brand

awareness and event management (Botha, 2010). Success in the field of PR requires a deep understanding of the interests and concerns of each of the company's many stakeholders. The PR professional must know how to effectively address those concerns using the most powerful tool of the PR, which is publicity (Botha, 2010).

2.1.2.1 Advertising

Debasish and Murilidhar (2013) describe advertisement by an established sponsor as any paid form of non-personal presentation of products, services or ideas. For the delivery of messages to customers, conventional media such as radio, magazines, television, newspapers, direct mail, books, transit cards (tax and bus advertisements), and billboards were widely used. In addition, the Internet has developed as a new platform for advertisement. However, as a result of its flexibility, some authors claim that the internet media is a stand-alone medium. It is a highly versatile medium that allows you to make adjustments without incurring a lot of extra costs over the course of the campaign as and when needed (Blaga, 2013).

Loda (2014) adds that television is acknowledged to be the most powerful advertising medium and it reaches a broad spectrum of present and prospective customers. The greatest benefit of advertising lies in its ability to reach a larger number of customers at a given time period. This makes cost per contact relatively low in advertising than with other elements of the promotional mix. The greatest advantage of advertising is that it can reach masses of audience, for example, through national television channels. However, Loda (2014) argues that the credibility of advertising has reduced in recent years because it is known to be a vested interest source and consumers very often discount the information. This is coupled with the fact that the cost of advertising is generally high and this makes it more expensive than other communication tools or channels.

2.1.2.2 Social Media

According to Hays *et al.* (2013) social media refers to practices, behaviours, and activities among communities of people who gather online to share knowledge, opinions, and information using conversational media. Conversational media refers to Web based applications that make it easy to create and transmit content in various forms such as videos, words, audios, and pictures. Social media refers to ‘fluid’, ‘conversational’, and ‘participatory’ online communities. Safko (2010) in a simple definition states that social media is the media people use to be social. Social media terminology is made up of two parts. The first part, *social*, refers to the instinctual need of humans to connect with others which has been done in various forms since the beginning of human species. People need to be around and take part in activities as groups of similar like-minded people where they can feel at home and comfortable to share their experiences, ideas, and thoughts. The other part, *media*, refers to the means used by people to connect to other people. Safko (2010) further indicates that whether they are bells, the telegraph, drums, written words, the telephone, television, radio, mobile phones, video, audio, websites, or photographs, the technology used by people to make those connections is what constitutes media.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: p. 61) noted that social media is a group of applications based on the Internet that build on the technological and ideological foundations of Web 2.0, which enables the creation and sharing of User Generated Content (UGC). This is supported by Howison *et al.* (2014) who similarly highlighted that social media became evident through Web 2.0 developments and conceptualised it as the second stage of Internet development. Chan and Guillet (2011) argued that social media only emerged in recent years and there is not a universally adopted definition for it. Some of the literature equates social media to terms such as user-generated content, Web 2.0, consumer-generated content, and even social websites.

According to Leung, Law, Hoof and Buhalis (2013) social media is a popular buzzword as well as a technological concept which brought pervasive changes in business-to-customer communication, business-to-business communication, and customer-to-customer communication. Social media has increased in popularity at a global level in recent years. For example, *Facebook* was said to have more than one billion users in 2012 since its invention in 2004. *Facebook* and other online social networks have profoundly improved the propagation of much needed information by making it easy to understand and share on the internet (Akrimi and Khemakhem 2012: p. 2). Syed-Ahmad *et al.* (2013) reported that *Flickr* is the world's most popular photo community and it offers a platform where travellers can share and respond to photographs. Most travellers enjoy keeping their memories in photographic forms and they enjoy to share with others as well as passing comments after viewing the photographs (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010).

2.1.2.2.1 Categories of social media

Safko (2010) suggested there is a need to categorise the entire world of social media. In responding to the need, the following categories of social media were found but the categories are not equally applicable and effective in promoting road safety campaigns in Ghana. The categories are: social networking, publishing, photo sharing, audio, video, microblogging, live casting, virtual worlds, and gaming, search, mobile, and productivity applications. Irina, Razvan, Ridica and Daniel (2014) equally argue that certain social media categories cannot equally meet personal needs of the individuals as well as the needs of the business.

According to Kang and Scheutt (2013) there is a variety of forms of social media such as photo sharing sites (*Photobucket, Flickr*), social networks (*Facebook, Twitter*), video sharing and creating site (*Ustream, YouTube*), microblogging tools (*Twitter*), online communities, social tagging (*Digg*), rating/review websites (*TripAdvisor*), public internet forums, moblogs/blogs, podcasting, tagging sites, wikis, news readers (*Google Reader*), and individual websites. These

forms of social media were also adopted by Akar and Topcu (2011) who also gave a similar way of categorising the various forms of social media. However, there are great differences in how writers categorise social media and there are no common criteria of categorising social media given (Fischer and Reuber, 2011).

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Study in Ipinge and Owusu-Afriyie (2014) to assess the efficacy of learners in road safety programs as primary respondents. The study showed that the percentage of self-reported road safety awareness among road users was high. In the same vein, Ipinge and Owusu-Afriyie (2014) note that, this was a cause for great concern, there was a low percentage of awareness of particular campaigns and programs. Poulter and McKenna (2010) also observe that the efficacy of road safety education approaches is at best short-term and limited to certain, but not all, psychological causes, with some chance of unintended effects, after considering evidence from both studies.

Due to unsuccessful initiatives, improving road safety is still the exception rather than the norm, although modern methods of behaviour change are often overlooked (Hoekstra and Wegman, 2011). While Hoekstra and Wegman (2011) note that road safety campaigns are used to influence the public to behave more safely in traffic, only a fraction of such campaigns are evaluated formally and thoroughly (Boulanger, Divjak, Orozova-Bekkevold and Zabukovec, 2007). Vulcan (2000) states that communication is key in the provision of information when discussing the role of communication in road safety campaigns and is vital in introducing new ideas that can contribute to a change in attitude. Vulcan (2000) emphasizes that when used to promote or implement a particular road rule, advertisement campaigns have been shown to be very successful, stressing the role of PR in road safety campaigns.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on reviewing the literature on how certain theories could help solidify the base of the study. Further, various concepts that needed to be understood to get a better understanding and perspective of the study were discussed. Also, the researcher introduced related studies to bring to light an empirical perspective. The next chapter gives a presentation of the research methodology that will be employed by the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

Sileyew (2019) suggests that the methodology of study is the way researchers ought to perform their study. The research design is planned to provide a study with an acceptable structure (Sileyew, 2019). To try to explore the role of PR in road safety campaigns, this study used a descriptive approach. Bryman and Bell (2015) clarify that the method of gathering data to address questions about the current status of the subjects in the sample is descriptive research design. This approach is frequently favoured by social science researchers and has often been used by them (Kvale, 2007).

The choice to be taken about the research method is a very important decision in the research design process as it defines how relevant information for a study can be obtained; however, several interrelated decisions are included in the research design process (Aaker, George, and Kumar, 2000, Sileyew, 2019). This review followed the qualitative method of analysis in accordance with this claim. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative approaches include an interpretive approach to study and include case studies, interviews, personal experience and observations. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) note that researchers plan to understand the phenomena under analysis in terms of the meanings people carry to them using qualitative techniques. This view is supported by Grbic (2007), who argues that the underlying assumptions of positivism are challenged by qualitative researchers and are instead driven by the paradigms of constructivism and/or interpretivism, whereby it is presumed that no objective information that is independent of interpretation can be produced, so the concepts of truth and reality become subjective. The study will employ the qualitative approach to research where the non-probability sampling technique will be adopted to select the sample for the study. A purposive sampling will be used to select the respondents of the study. These respondents will

consist of resource persons which from the NRSA, Chief Drivers from selected lorry stations in Accra and PR consultants.

3.1 SOURCES OF DATA

Tripathy (2013) is of the view that research does not always involve collection of data from the participants. The existing data can be analysed to generate new hypothesis or answer critical research questions. Secondary analysis refers to the use of existing research data to find answer to a question that was different from the original work (Fielding and Fielding, 2008). This study sourced data primarily from secondary data sources. This was done in line with Tripathy's (2013) assertion that there is huge amount of data that is being collected through the routine management information system and other surveys or research activities. This saves lots of time, money and other resources (Tripathy, 2013). The data was sourced from books, journal articles among others in an attempt to state or back arguments made by authorities in various parts of the study.

3.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

To ensure reliability, the emerging data and its interpretation were peer-reviewed. The researcher anticipated that the feedback would be valuable in shaping this study as well as its data interpretation as a whole. Further, the researcher also worked closely with the research supervisor at all the stages in the research process for guidance.

3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

This study took into account ethical considerations because of the nature of the problem that the study seeks to investigate. All literature and other scholarly materials used in this paper were duly acknowledged and cited accordingly.

3.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter sought to spell out the guideline the research used to collect data for the study. This began by giving overview of the research population and sampling among other things. The next chapter discusses the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This section presents a discussion of the final chapter of the study. The discussion will be done along the lines of addressing the research questions. The researcher's reflection as well as the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research will also be discussed.

4.1 SUMMARY

With Bliss and Breen's (2012) assertion that more than 50 million deaths and 500 million serious injuries on the world's roads can be projected with some certainty over the first 50 years of the 21st century, unless sustained new initiatives are taken, this study sought to find out the role PR can or plays in road safety campaigns. Especially as Bliss and Breen (2012) indicate that in low and middle-income countries, the high price paid for mobility in terms of human loss and suffering is forecast to rise to unprecedented levels. The study then set the following objectives in conducting the study. The first was to ascertain the role PR can play in promoting road safety campaigns. The second was to find out the benefit(s) of road safety campaigns and the third was to find out the extent PR can impact road safety campaigns.

In this regard, the study found that PR played a critical role in promoting road safety campaigns, PR roles as suggested by Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006) are among the PR techniques that could be used to propagate road safety which includes community relations, CSR, social media management, media relations and others. For example, media relations may be used to pitch articles to journalists as well as address inquiries where news tracking and evaluation may also

be used as part of the function of media relations to gauge public opinion from time to time. While Travis (2020) asserts that effective use of PR activities can result in successful campaigns, Elvik (2015) argues that identifying the conditions under which such campaigns can be effective is relevant.

On exploring how the benefit(s) of road safety campaigns, Schulze and Koßmann (2010) notes that ensuring that the chosen means are efficient should be derived from research evidence. In March 2010, a United Nations General Assembly resolution (A/64/255) proclaimed 2011-2020 the Decade of Action for Road Safety to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world by increasing activities conducted at national, regional and global levels (WHO, 2011). The resolution called on all member states to implement road safety activities, particularly in areas of road safety management, road infrastructure, vehicle safety, road user behaviour, road safety education and post-crash response (National Road Safety Commission Action Plan [NRSCAP], 2010). The extent to which the United Nations General Assembly had to make this proclamation directly infers the seriousness of road traffic accidents. The importance of road safety arises when as a part of the notable actions to combat this menace, road safety management was proposed.

Schulze and Koßmann (2010) notes that to make mobility safer and reduce accident risks, a scientifically based road safety management is needed. It is therefore imperative to find out extent to which PR can impact road safety campaigns. In this endeavour, developing clear steps and intentions to influence and convey thoughtfully crafted messages to the public is very important (*AxiaPR*, 2020). PR functions such as social media management can be used to attract positive public opinion and support. *AxiaPR*, (2020) notes that PR professionals embarking on campaigns need to ensure that when their audiences search for them on the internet and through social media, they see them in a positive light. Also, embarking on

strategic community relations endeavours can help drive a road safety campaign towards achieving successful results.

4.2 CONCLUSION

The introduction of efficient and creative means of communication in the management of road safety is as important to people as it is to the government. Based on the reviewed literature, it is not possible to underestimate the importance of road safety communication in road safety management. Corben, Logan, Fanciulli, Farley and Cameron (2010) argue that with a significant list of achievements in traffic safety over some 40 years, Australia's most successful initiatives have emerged from consideration of the scientific basis for achieving effective results. In the Ghanaian circumstance engaging in strategic research road safety management will go a long way to help alleviate the effects of road accidents. While numerous road safety campaigns have been carried out, the researcher suggests that sensitization should be aimed at young people. This is because even in the face of these initiatives, road injuries continue to surge. This program would enable young people to take care instead of drivers or pedestrians to mitigate road accident risks. This method would encourage young people to accept positive and safe actions on the road. Though social media has been acknowledged as an effective tool for communication, key stakeholders in road safety management like the NRSA has to ascertain the communication channels that can best reach their targeted audience. In summary, if the necessary communication networks were used to communicate with the target community, road safety management would be successful.

4.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study set out to conduct a thesis however due to complications resulting from COVID-19, data collection was not possible because of the health implication attached. The researcher had to resort to secondary data as the main source of data. The study thus was converted into a desk research. Also, coming by literature on communication in road safety management in Ghana and Africa was not easy. For this reason, the researcher had to rely on more western literature. This therefore infers that the findings and conclusion made by the study is to some extent hypothetical and not new knowledge.

4.4 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

In seeking to find out the role PR plays in road safety campaign the study discusses various concepts to help appreciate them individual. After this, the researcher then attempted to draw a link between the concept of PR and road safety to ascertain the relationship between the concepts and their diverging points. The study then note PR functions or activities that could be employed in road safety campaigns. This was done in the hope that a better understanding and adoption of this will in effect equip the NRSA and other stakeholders to carry successful road safety campaigns. This study will as well be of influence in developing policy on road safety.

4.5 AUTHORS REFLECTIONS

The author believes that round table discussions for all major stakeholders such as the Ministry of Road and Highways and the Ministry of Transport, as well as the different driver unions. This topic may suggest an analysis of the road safety management phenomenon. Findings from this project will also inform the decisions they make that could also lead to the coating of

carnage management policies. While the NRSA is liaising with its stakeholders, the possibility of road accidents can be proactively recognized by efficiently carrying out exercises to cover potholes, replace signposts, and ensure that road marking are clear. This could extend as far as other road safety resources are concerned. The NRSA may also use public relations and ads to alter perceptions through, among others, the internet, social media, and theatrics (Akan drama).

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