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PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER'S ROLE: EFFECT ON CORPORATE
IMAGE AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR:

(A CASE-STUDY OF METRO MASS TRANSIT LIMITED)

BY

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DECLARATION

This research work is submitted as part fulfillment for the award of a Masters of Arts Degree in Public Relations. The work is as a result of my own investigations. All sections of the text and results which have been obtained from other works or sources are fully referenced. I understand that plagiarism constitute a breach of Ghana Institute of Journalism and will be dealt with accordingly.

Signed

Date.....

SUPERVISOR DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has been supervised and assessed with the laid down guidelines by Ghana Institute of Journalism.

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Charles Asare Bamfo

Supervisor's Signature.....

Date.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my family especially my daughter Ohemea Akosua Adepa Manubea Kodua-Boateng for their sacrifice and encouragement during the period of study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My greatest appreciation goes to the Almighty God who gave me the strength and grace to go through this study successfully.

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary business organizations highly acknowledge customer loyalty; consider it as a vital aspect, and a way towards long-term business success (Bowen & Chen, 2001). Currently, little was known about the role public relation officers play in the transport industry. In addition there are limited studies undertaken in the industry in Ghana as well. Hence, the study was to examine the effect of public relation practitioner role and its impact on corporate image and customer loyalty. The study employed a mixed research design which combines quantitative and qualitative. The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to sample 100 staff including both senior and junior staff and management. Questionnaire, focus group discussion guides and interview schedule were used for data collection. The quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Product and Service Solutions software version 21 (SPSS) while qualitative data used content analysis, transcription and interpretation respectively, to present a meaningful, descriptive and enhance presentations and comprehensibility of the research. Key findings from the research were; there is a positive correlation between public relation role and corporate image and a positive correlation between public relation role and customer loyalty. The study recommends that; Public Relations Officers in the transport industry be given periodic refresher programs to equip them with current public relations trends.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The contemporary business organizations highly acknowledge customer loyalty as a vital aspect, and a way towards long-term business success (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Caruana and Ramaseshan, 2015; Gronholdt, Martensen, and Kristensen, 2000; Gursoy, Uysal, Sirakaya-Turk, Ekinici, and Baloglu, 2015). Woodruff (1997) also argues that, service providers consider customer loyalty as a source of competitive advantage. It is important for firms to retain the existing customers rather than generating new ones. Lam and Burton (2006) believes this phenomenon five times reduces cost for firm. This shows the importance of customer loyalty for firms. Loyalty on the other hand, is a philosophy of leadership that seeks mutually beneficial management of the relationship between the enterprise and its stakeholders (Finnie and Randall, 2002). They have also argued that, higher customer retention results in a significant rise in profitability and business growth.

Bennett and Rentschler (2003) defined reputation as “a concept not only related to image, but one that refers to value judgments among the public about an organization’s qualities, formed over a long period, regarding its consistency, trustworthiness and reliability.” A company’s image can affect its credibility and effectiveness in reaching key internal and external audiences such as clients, employees, and the media. Internal factors that affect a company’s reputation

include its ability to communicate, transparency, human values, treatment of employees, ability to innovate, CEO's reputation, adaptability to change, and handling of social and environmental issues. Among the external forces that impact corporate reputation are customers, print and broadcast media, financial analysts, shareholders, industry analysts, regulators and government (Lines, 2003).

Marken (2002) defined reputation as assets that included "quality of products and services, ability to innovate, value as long-term investment, financial stability, ability to attract, develop, retain talent; use of corporate assets, and quality of management". Marken (2004) was with the view that reputation was built and managed on small daily actions. He explained that, "a reputation is built with each phone call, each email, each release, each decision and action." Genasi (2001) also warned against seeing reputation management as anything but day-to-day business and insisted that "quality of communication has to be supported by quality of action." In other words, reputation cannot be spun.

Transportation is indispensable to economic growth and development of human settlements" (Small, 2006; Gbadamosi, 2010). Transport serves as a key component in addressing poverty and social equity goals while ensuring adequate access to public services – education, healthcare, markets, jobs and recreation – that are essential to the lives of all persons (Mbara, 2002; Bullard, 2003). Efficient transport systems are therefore required to support socio-economic development, namely; integrating rural and urban economies, promoting regional integration, attracting foreign investment, and reaching global markets.

Public relations continue to be an emerging field of study with no consensus definition of its boundaries, changing nature, or theoretical underpinnings embraced by both scholars and practitioners (Curtin, 2012; Edwards, 2012; Greenwood, 2010; L'Etang, 2013a). Thus, public relations research is informed by rather different sets of assumptions, values, and worldviews that have been subject to debate (Davidson, 2016; Fitch & L'Etang, 2017; Russell & Lamme, 2016). Cameron, Wilcox, Reber, and Shin, (2008); Wilcox and Cameron, (2012) argues that the common terms used in most definitions of public relations include; deliberate, planned, performance, public interest, two-way communication, and strategic management function) and reflect the dominant functional/normative public relations paradigm of Grunig's "Excellence" framework (Gower, 2006, L'Etang, 2013b).

The framework resulted from a landmark study in 1984 that concluded public relations could achieve organizational goals through its interactions with strategic constituencies, its identification of stakeholders, classification of potential publics, and its use of symmetrical communication to develop and cultivate important relationships (Grunig, 2013). Increasingly however, the "Excellence" framework is being contested (Gower, 2006; Edwards, 2012), and consequently, there exist multiple constructed definitions of public relations (L'Etang, 2013b). Thus, public relations research and practice is informed by rather different sets of assumptions, values, and worldviews that have been increasingly subject to debate (e.g. Curtin, 2012; Edwards, 2012; Pieczka & L'Etang, 2006).

In 2009, the Canadian Public Relations Society adopted the following definition developed by public relations scholars Terry Flynn, Fran Gregory and Jean Valin, “Public relations is the strategic management of relationships between an organization and its diverse publics, through the use of communication, to achieve mutual understanding, realize organizational goals and serve the public interest” (Flynn, 2014: p.381). In 2011, the Public Relations Society of America launched a crowd-sourcing initiative to create a baseline definition of public relations that “captures the core essence of what public relations professionals do” (Rickey, 2012: p.34). However, it was found that the work of public relations is “so complex and there are so many moving parts, that trying to get the most elegant and simple definition is a challenge” (Rickey, 2012: p.34).

Problem Statement

Issues on the role public relations play in building corporate image of an organization and sustaining customer loyalty has been an area of importance in public relations research (Mogensen, 2017; Salmon, Poorisat & Kim, 2019). Scholars such as Heinberg, Ozkaya and Taube (2018) and Chien and Chi (2019) are of the view that a corporate image is powerful; it helps to determine how a person will behave towards a company. The role of public relations therefore is to assist in building and protecting an organization’s image. There are lots of Public criticisms bordering on the attitudes of organizational staff over customer service issues. People complain that most business organizations do not carry out adequate public education on their activities (Theodore, 2012).

Concerning the Ghanaian transport sector, research conducted by Diao, Magalhaes and Silver (2019) indicate that most transport companies including the public-owned ones provide nice and comfortable buses for the cities but often uncomfortable, dirty and unreliable buses for the rural areas. Again, a research on public transport mode preferences of international tourists in Ghana reported that, most international tourists prefer private transport companies because they are perceived to be safer with less accident ratios than the public-owned transport companies in Ghana (Nutsugbodo, Amenumey & Mensah, 2018). Hence, criticism likely to give a bad image to an organization since a company's public relations and corporate image management are highly essential. But it is equally important to note that the public relations and corporate image of every industry is different. Irrespective of their differences though, they could be managed effectively.

Public relations activities are believed to be powerful tools that could be used by organizations to sustain its customer loyalty. In the telecommunications industry, researches carried out points to the fact that customer loyalty is based the strength of public relations and corporate image (Chen, Lu, Gupta & Xiaolin, 2014; Salhieh, 2019). According to Chadha and Bhandari (2015) for example, customers kept switching from one network provider to another network service provider when they had negative impressions about them. Customer loyalty and ways of fostering it has also been examined in the manufacturing industry (Kaur & Mahajan, 2011), banking industry (Rai & Srivastava, 2013), retail and shopping businesses (Diallo, Diop-Sall, Djelassi, & Godefroit-Winkel, 2018) but

for the transport sector, it has only been a recommendation for further studies (Nutsugbodo et al., 2018; Diao et al., 2019). Currently therefore, little is known about the role of Public Relations practitioner and its effects on corporate image and customer loyalty in transportation industry, this point to knowledge and empirical gap worthy of research. The purpose of the research is to understand the effect of the role of public relations on the corporate image and customer loyalty among transport companies in Ghana.

Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to examine the effect of public relation practitioner role and its impact on corporate image and customer loyalty.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the correlation between public relations role and corporate image.
2. Examine the correlation between public relations role and customer loyalty.
3. Find out which aspect of public relations role (namely social relations, broadcast media relations, newsletters, and advertorials) significantly affects customer loyalty.
4. Explore ways in which the work of the public relations officer could be enhanced in the transport industry.

Research Questions

This study would be conducted so as to answer the following questions based on the objectives of the study:

1. What is the correlation between public relations role and corporate image?
2. What is the correlation between public relations role and customer loyalty?
3. Which aspect of public relations role (namely social relations, broadcast media relations, newsletters, and advertorials) significantly affects customer loyalty?
4. In what ways could the work of the public relations officer be enhanced in the transport industry?

Significance of the Study

First, the research is intended to make contributions to public relations practitioners' role in the transport industry and its impact on corporate image and customer loyalty. The study was motivated because of the little importance that is attached with public relations practitioners in the transport sector.

Secondly, it would make managers of transport organization appreciate the impact of public relations practitioners in the organization. Hence, if there is none in these organizations, managers will see the need to engage one and if the organization has one, the public relation practitioner will be put to good use.

Thirdly, the findings of the study can serve as a reference point for researchers, academicians, and institutions to evaluate the role of public relations practitioner

in the transport sector and its impact on customer loyalty and corporate image.

Operationalization of Key Terms

Public relation, corporate image, customer loyalty and transport sector, the key terms used in the study are explained below:

1. Public relation: Wilcox and Cameron (2009:5) explain that people often define public relations by some of its visible techniques and tactics, such as publicity in a newspaper, a television interview with an organization's spokesperson, or the appearance of a celebrity at a special event. Public relations is, therefore, a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound ethical
2. Corporate Image: Hsieh and Kai Li (2008) refer to corporate image as a major promotional tool which refers to building good relationships with the company's public by obtaining favorable publicity and handling or heading off unfavorable rumors, stories and events.
3. Customer loyalty: In general, customer loyalty has been defined as favorable attitude towards a company's products to buying it constantly (Oliver, 2010).

Gaining loyal customer has become the main concern of marketing activities and goals of strategic market planning (Kotler and Armstrong, 2014; Oliver, 2010).

4. Transport sector: The transportation sector is a category of companies that provide services moving people and goods, or providing the infrastructure to do so. The transportation industry group consists of several industries including air freight and logistics, airlines, marine, road and rail, and transportation infrastructure. Transport means a shared system which is made available, usually against payment, for any person who wishes to use it (Ubbels, Nijkamp, Verhoef, Potter, & Enoch, 2001).

Organization of the Study

The thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter One covers the background to the study, problem statement, objectives and research questions, scope and the significance of the study. Chapter Two reviews literature on the theoretical and conceptual issues related to the research. Chapter Three discusses how the study was designed, carried out, and data was analyzed. It includes, population, sample size and research instruments. Chapters Four analyze evidence from the field based on the research objectives and data presentation. Chapter Five presents summary, conclusions, recommendations, limitations of the study and areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Literature review helps researchers to sharpen and refine the problem to be investigated and provide an explanation of the current state of knowledge in a chosen research area as found in academic books and journal articles (Kumekpor, 2003). Creswell (2003) adds that review of related literature provides a starting point for researchers to identify gaps, compare, contrast, critique, connect, summarize and evaluate information in the chosen field of study. Furthermore, it provides information on theories, concepts and empirical evidence for a critical analysis of the methodologies and approaches other researchers have used in solving similar problems (Babbie, 2005). Bryman and Bell (2007) also add that it highlights the strengths, weaknesses, contestations, inconsistencies and contradictions in the existing literature and draws lessons to inform the design and conduct of the new study.

This section of the thesis includes a theoretical framework of the study as well as literature review with regards to public relations practitioners role, customer loyalty, corporate image, transport sector and as well as operational definition of key terms.

The chapter is organized as follows:

- Theoretical Framework

- Public Relations and Management
- Public Relations and Marketing
- Two-way Symmetrical Model
- Systems Theory
- Situational Theory
- Concept of Public Relations
- Corporate Image, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty
- Product Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty
- Customer Loyalty
- Public Transportation
- Profile of Metro Mass Transit Limited

Theoretical Literature Review

Different theoretical models and concepts exist regarding the role and functions of public relations. In order to describe the various roles and functions of the public relations practitioner, it is important to look at the various world views of public relations models and theoretical roles. Grunig cited in the Kitchen (2003) conceptualized that there are four models of public relations. These are:

1. Press agency or publicity,
2. Public information,
3. Two ways-asymmetric and
4. Two-way symmetric.

While the four theoretical roles of public relations by Grunig as cited in Heerden (2005) are:

1. The communication technician
2. The communication facilitator
3. The expert prescriber and
4. Problem solving facilitator.

The communication technician role of public relations is mostly conceptualized as the beginning of professionalism (Grunig & Grunig, 2002). The practitioners are often responsible for the communication tactics of news releases, organizing press conferences, employee newsletters, position papers, designs brochures and media placements (Castelli, 2007). Grunig and Grunig (2002) further maintained that the practitioners, in performing the role as communication technician, are usually not involved in defining problems and developing solutions, but base their tactics on the technical skill of writing. Theaker (2004) further stated that the communication technician's role of public relations may not require them to undertake researches or be involved in organizational decision making; except to decide which communication mechanism suits their prescribed purpose.

The communication facilitator of public relations is a boundary spanner who listens to and brokers information between the organization and its key publics (Theaker, 2004). According to (Cutlip et al., 2000), the goal of this role is “to provide both management and publics the information they need for making decisions of mutual interest.”

Practitioners serving as the public relations manager within an organization are expected to be knowledgeable about innovations in public relations and are expected to demonstrate leadership in new approaches to old problems (Dozier 1984, cited in Castelli, 2007).

The expert prescriber's theoretical role of the public relations is associated with the responsibility to handle consultation function or participation by other senior management. It is the role where the practitioner is responsible for describing and solving public relations problems independently. The expert prescriber acts as the authority on both public relations problems and their solutions (Castelli, 2007). The problem-solving facilitator's roles of public relations, according to (Dozier cited in Castelli, 2007), is the role where the practitioners are assumed as problem solver, decision-maker and planner. They are expected to be knowledgeable about innovations in public relations and expected to demonstrate leadership approach to solve problems.

Ströh (2007, p. 1) explaining the importance of public relations stated that it must be the parasol function that manages the communication between an organization and its publics to build and enhance healthy relationships to the benefit of all parties involved. As Rosenberg (2013) put it, "the most valuable type of public relations activities involves anticipating problems, planning to prevent problems or at least trying to solve them while they are still small" (p. 13).

The issue of the roles of public relations was also dealt by Cutlip et al., (in Theaker, 2004, p. 57). They identified two dominant roles of public relations: the

communication manager role and the communication technician role. The communication manager plans and manages public relations programs, advises management, makes communication policy decisions and oversees their implementation. On the other hand, the communication technician is the one who is not involved in organizational decision making, but implements public relations programs.

Concerning the roles of public relations practitioners, Pearson (2008) stated that public relations practitioners today varies from the purely technical to the respected counselor within organizations of every kind, from huge profit-making conglomerates to small grassroots not-for-profit and everything in between. On the other hand, Mehta and Xavie (ND), points out that the roles and responsibilities of public relations practitioners are influenced by two forces: the professionalization of public relations and the nature of the organizational environment. In fact, the multiple roles of public relations may be because of its multiple functions through its association with communications, management, marketing and others.

Lubbe and Puth (2002) showed how public relations practitioners are involved in a variety of work assignments or functions which may include research, strategic planning, counseling, communication, evaluation, media relations and placement, organizing, writing, editing, media production, speaking, training, management.

However, the most common prevailing perspectives that influence the function of public relations in broad concept, as Venter (2004) put it, are communication,

management and marketing. Communication Perspective of Public Relations Of the important factors, for the success of high level officers, communication perspective of public relations is the basic ingredient to make a good decision that can contribute to the goals of an organization. Public relations practitioners help to provide managers good information which may be vital for managers in order to impart the right decisions. The communication perspectives of a public relation are, therefore, used to provide genuine data or information about their organizations.

The communication role of public relations Saylor looks at all the stakeholders in the organization and uses a variety of tools and tactics to enhance relationships with these publics. At its best, the communication function uses research and monitoring methods to keep a finger on the pulse of internal and external perceptions of the organization. It uses a variety of communication channels to enhance the organization's reputation. And most importantly, it provides strategic counsel to the organization's leaders to help the team make better decisions (<http://www.saylor.org.book>).

The communication perspective of public relations is also emphasized by Rosenberg (2013). He stressed that public relations have to be interpreters and functions as communication links between an institution and all of its publics.

Public Relations and Management

The practice of public relations, from management perspectives, according to Rosenberg (2013), has the oversight of organizational internal communications

policies and actions, oversight of organizational external policies and actions and coordination of internal and external communications. According to Theaker (2004, p. 50), the management perspective of public relations is twofold: first helping to collect and interpret information from the social environment so that strategic decision can be made and second, the communication of the strategic vision. The notion of public relations as a managerial function is emphasized in many definitions put forward to explain the nature of the discipline (Kitchen, 2003). Numerous studies have been done in an attempt to explain the management role of public relations; e.g., Cutlip et al., 2000; Skinner et al., 2001 and Seitel, 2004 advocate that when managing an organization's public relations system, practitioners must demonstrate comfort with the various elements of the organization itself. They must be the interpreter of the organization's philosophy, policy and programmes, all which emanate from top management. The management perspective of public relations is also supported by Onwunali (2006) who stated that public relations is an instrument of management and its consideration should be taken into account when formulating policy. He also suggested that public relations should be placed at top management level of an organization.

Gruning and Gruning (1998) contextualize that when public relations is part of the organization, it is likely to manage communication programs strategically. By drawing on the concept of the management's role of public relations, Gruning and Gruning have been able to show that public relations must report to those who run the organization. However, in many organizations, this

reporting relationship has not always been in practice. Seitel (2011) pointed out that the management function of public relations is in a position to: (1) evaluate internal and external opinions, attitudes and needs on an ongoing basis; (2) to advise management regarding their possible effect and to act as an instrument in bringing about policy changes and in directing new courses of action.

Hence, the high-level of organizations and the practitioners of public relations should know very well their publics to achieve organizational missions. These organizational missions can be determined by the external and internal stakeholders. The public relations practitioner acts as a counselor to management and as a mediator, helping to interpret private aims into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action. This view clearly indicates that relationships are at the center of public relations, and is seen as an important ingredient for the effective functioning of an organization.

Public Relations and Marketing

The marketing perspective of public relations is being incorporated into the marketing communication mix (Kitchen, 2004). As it is also indicated in Kotler and Mindak (cited in Kitchen, 2004), public relations and marketing communications are inextricably interlinked. Although marketing and public relations have a lot in common, many scholars believe that they are not the same thing. They deal with organizational relationships and employ similar processes, techniques and strategies.

However, the two functions have to be separated by mission and goal. Gruning and Gruning, (1998, p. 141) concluded that public relations is most excellent when it is strategic and when marketing does not dominate public relations. The overarching premise that the organization is best served by an inherent diversity of perspectives provided by marketing and public relations when those functions remain distinct and coordinated yet not integrated.

According to Belch and Belch (2003), marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, sales promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfies individuals and organizational objectives. The purpose of marketing is to attract and satisfy clients at a long-term premise. Thus, its aim is mainly to maintain and build customers for the organizational products or services. Whilst, public relations as Koekemoer (1998) said is the management function through communication of perceptions and strategic relations between an organization and its internal and external publics. When an organization deliberately plans, and distributes information in an attempt to control and deal with its image and the nature of the publicity it receives, it is really engaging in a function known as publicrelations (Rawjee et al., 2012).

Kotler and Mindak, in Guning & Gruning (1998) identified five alternative arrangements of relationship between public relations and marketing:

1. Separate but equal functions (marketing and public relations have different functions, perspectives and capabilities).

2. Equal but overlapping functions (both are important and separate functions, but they share some terrain, particularly product publicity and customer relations; in addition, public relation serves as a ‘watch dog’ on the social responsibility of marketing).
3. Marketing as the dominant function (marketing manages the relationship with all publics in the same way as the relationship with customers – ‘mega marketing’).
4. Public relation as the dominant function (if public relation builds relationship with all key publics of organization, then programs to build relationships with customers, i.e. marketing, would be a subset of public relations).
5. Marketing and public relations as the same functions (public relations and marketing converge in concepts and methodologies and a single department manages the external affairs of the company (p. 143)).

However, Gruning and Gruning (1998, p. 141) argued that public relations is excellent only if it is housed in a single department or specialized communication departments. The differences between public relations and marketing as argued by Gruning et al. (2007), are that the marketing function should communicate with the markets for an organization’s goods and services. In contrast, the public relations should be concerned with, all its publics of the organization. Still, it is crucial to recognize that both public relations and marketing convey the essence of communication. The main focus of both functions is to maintain and build harmonious relationships with the organizations and their internal and external stakeholders.

The major purpose of marketing is to make money for the organization by increasing the slope of the demand curve. While the major purpose of public relations is to save money for the organization by building relationships with publics that constrains or enhances the ability of the organization to meet its mission (Rawjee et al., 2012). Based on this, it is important to understand that without a clear indication of the role and place of these interrelated disciplines in an organization, their contribution to the overall functioning and performance of the organization could be greatly misunderstood and diffused.

Two-Way Symmetrical Model

The two-way symmetrical model depicts a public relations orientation in which organizations and their publics adjust to each other. It focuses on the use of social science research methods to achieve mutual understanding and two-way communication rather than one-way persuasion. In 2001, Grunig created other names for the symmetrical model: mixed motives, collaborative advocacy, and cooperative antagonism. His intent was to present a model that “balanced self-interests with the interest of others in a give-and-take process that can waver between advocacy and collaboration. Grunig argued that this model was the most ethical because all groups were part of the resolution of problems.

Dozier, Grunig, and Grunig (2005) presented a new model of public relations that came from their research on excellence in public relations and communication management. They found in a study of 321 organizations in three countries that public relations practitioners who exhibited the most effective or

excellent public relations practices used the “new model of symmetry as two-way practice. This depiction of public relations placed the organization and its publics on a continuum. Because in the best practice of public relations, public relations practitioners and their supervisors reported using both two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical models.

Dozier, Grunig, and Grunig reasoned that given each specific public relations situation, organizations and their publics would seek to persuade each other as much as possible. They are pictured at opposite ends of the continuum, either as a pure asymmetry model in which the dominant coalition tries to force a public into accepting the organization’s position or as a pure cooperation model in which the public uses communication to convince the dominant coalition to accept the public’s position. The middle of the continuum is the “win-win” zone in which the organization and the public use communication to achieve a decision acceptable to both sides.

This new model advances our thinking about the practice of public relations because it considers both parties in the public relations situation. Because the organization and its publics will be employing communication strategies as well, we have to be as savvy about our publics’ communication strategies as we are our own (Heath, 2016). The work on developing models of public relations that more effectively describe how public relations is carried out continued in 1996, with the report of two different models: the cultural interpreter model and the personal influence model. Although both models fall into the

asymmetrical category, they give us more to think about in our understanding of the practice of public relations.

Systems Theory

Tench and Yeomans (2006:27) postulate that it is clear that organizations are not free floating bodies unaffected by what is around them. They are affected by and in turn affect the environment in which they operate. Systems Theory describes organizations as a set of subsystems that affect each other and jointly interact with the external environment. Lubbe and Puth (2002:41) define a system as 'a set of objects or entities that interrelate with one another to form a whole'. Organizations have to adjust and adapt as they change from within and as the environment changes. They form part of a social system that consists of individuals or groups such as suppliers, local communities, employees, customers and government, who all interact with it. Public relations are there to develop and maintain good relationship with these publics, to help the organization achieve its objectives. Tench and Yeomans (2006:27) describe organizations as having typically five subsystems.

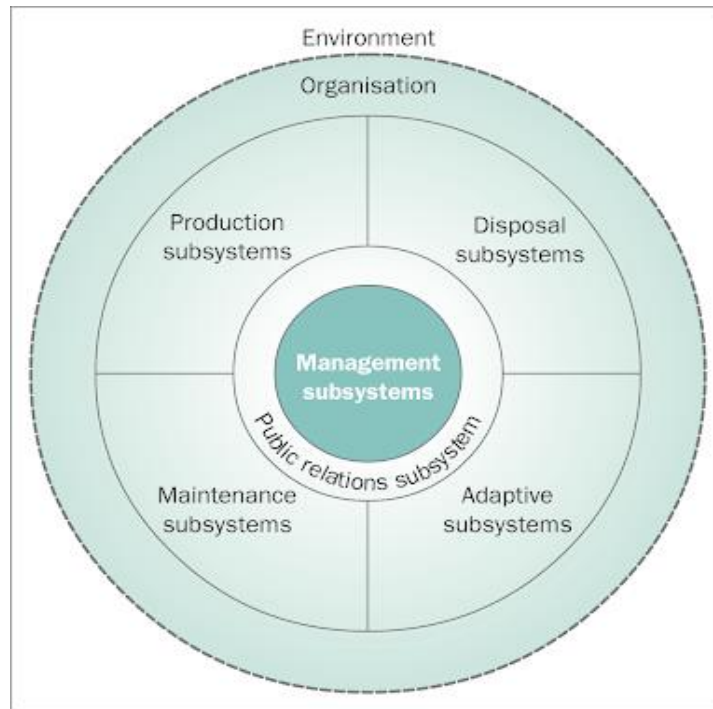


Fig.1: Organizational Subsystems

Source: Tench & Yeomans (2006:27)

Figure 1 above illustrates the five subsystems of an organization. Tench and Yeomans (2006: 27) maintain that production subsystems produce the products or services of an organization. Maintenance subsystems work throughout the organization encouraging employees to work together. Disposal subsystems encompass the marketing and distribution of products and services. Adaptive subsystems help the organization adjust to its changing environment, such as the strategic planning role.

Management subsystems control and direct all the other subsystems and manage any conflicting demands that they might have. They also negotiate between the requirements of the environment for example, demand for a particular product and the survival needs of the organization (supply of that

product). Usually the board and senior management of the organization undertake this responsibility. According to Lubbe and Puth (2002:41), “the systems approach is one of the most fruitful approaches to public relations management. This approach illuminates the part which public relations play in the effective operation of the organization”. For an organization to be successful, it needs to operate as an open system. It has been noted that the organization which has the greatest potential for ongoing success is one that interacts actively with its environment.

Tench and Yeomans (2006: 27) suggest that by taking a systems perspective, it can be seen that public relations professionals have a *boundary-spanning* role. They work at the boundaries within organizations, working with all the internal subsystems by helping these subsystems with their external communication by both providing expert advice on what and how to communicate and by helping them with implementation. For example, public relations may work closely with marketing (disposal subsystem) on product support and with senior management (management subsystem) on investor relations.

Seitel (2006:87) further claims that public relations’ practitioners function at the edge of an organization as liaisons between the organization and its internal and external publics. In other words, public relations practitioners have one foot inside the organization and one outside. As ‘boundary managers’, public relations practitioners support their colleagues by helping them communicate across organizational lines both within and outside the organization. In this way, public

relations professionals also become systems managers, knowledgeable about and able to deal with complex relationship inherent in the organization.

Broom, Casey and Ritchey (2000: 218) base their theoretical framework on the systems theory. They state that the interdependence of elements in a system forms the basis of all interactions and relationships. Furthermore, the elements of “mutuality of understanding, trust, credibility, emotion, intimacy and similarity, immediacy, and dominance-submission” should be taken into account, as all contribute to the understanding of relationships. Based on this, public relations is, therefore, a practice where the process includes the influencing of the environment. Public relations performs surveillance and information- distribution roles; in addition it has an important role to govern and maintain an organization as an open system and ensure that an organization is adaptable and flexible to all changes within the environment and remains stable at all times. Public relations can help and govern organizations to maintain this interaction.

Lubbe and Puth (2002:41) maintain that the Systems Approach offers a framework which places and positions the public relations process logically within the ambit of the organization’s operations. The Systems Approach is an abstract perceptual framework which is an exceptionally good aid to understanding and practicing public relations. Cutlip *et al.* (2000:190) maintain that applying the open systems approach to public relations calls for purposeful sensing of the environment to anticipate and detect changes that affect organizational relationships with publics. Public relations must be selectively sensitive to specifically defined publics that are mutually affected or involved by

organizational policies, procedures and actions. An open systems approach to public relations has the capacity to initiate corrective actions within organizations and direct programmes to affect knowledge, predisposition and behavior of both internal and external publics. The outcomes sought are maintenance or achievement of goals that reflect the mutual interest of organizations and their publics.

Thus, organizations employing open systems public relations maintain their relationships by adjusting and adapting themselves and their publics to ever-changing social, political and economic environments. Therefore, public relations are important to build an understanding and knowledge of the contribution of both terrains to the importance of relationships. Emphasis should also be placed on the strategic importance of public relations in organizations so that organizations may acquire a holistic approach to communication and relationship management. Lubbe and Puth (2002:41) reinforce that it should also be noted that in addition to all the public relations functions, the open systems approach gives public relations the role to recognize changes in the organization's social settings and advise clients or employees on how the organization should change itself and respond to establish a "common meeting ground". Public relations professionals are agents and managers of change, both inside and outside their organizations.

Situational theory

Grunig and Repper (2000) agreed that it was a good start to use the concept of stakeholders as a way of describing relationships. However; they

concluded that not all people in stakeholder groups would be equally likely to communicate with an organization. They felt that public relations people could more effectively manage communications by identifying specific publics within stakeholder groups. These publics were subgroups that were more or less active in their communication behavior. An example of a stakeholder public would be active voters within the broader group of all registered voters. Candidates for political office focus their communication efforts on those voters who can be counted on to go to polls on Election Day. Grunig and Hunt proposed what they call a situational theory of publics to give us more specific information about publics' communication needs. Grunig and Hunt theorized that publics range from those who actively seek and process information about an organization or an issue of interest, to those publics who passively receive information.

According to these researchers, three variables predict when publics will seek and process information about an issue: problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement. The key is that publics are situational. That is, as the situation, problem, opportunity, or issue changes, the publics, with which the organization must communicate. According to Hersey and Blanchard (2009), situational theory also helps explain why some groups are active on a single issue, others are active on many issues, and others are uniformly apathetic. The specific relationship is determined by the type of group (active, passive) and how an organization is linked with the issue. Public relations people can plan their communication strategies much more accurately if they know how actively their stakeholder publics will seek information from the organization. Situational

theory keeps focus on the kinds of information that publics want rather than the organization's choice of information to distribute. It also assumes that publics will pay attention and seek out information that is in their best interests.

The concept of public relations

Wilcox and Cameron (2009:5) explain that people often define public relations by some of its visible techniques and tactics, such as publicity in a newspaper, a television interview with an organization's spokesperson, or the appearance of a celebrity at a special event. What people fail to understand is that public relations are a process involving many subtle and far-reaching aspects. Public relations include research and analysis, policy formation, programming, communication, and feedback from numerous publics. Its practitioners operate on two distinct levels – as advisers to their clients or to an organization's top management and as technicians who produce and disseminate messages in multiple media channels.

Public relations is, therefore, a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound ethical communication techniques as its

principal tool. Davis (2004:202) argues that the home for public relations functions is still not clear in most organizations. Wilcox and Cameron (2009:5) contend that public relations practitioners serve as an intermediary between the organization and all the publics that exist in the organization.

Theaker (2004:6) further claims that public relations, as a discipline, are concerned with the reputation of organizations (or product, services or individuals) with the aim of creating understanding and support. Koekemoer (2004:397) argues that the differing concepts of public relations reflect the evolution of this maturing function in organizations and society. The above authors all indicate the struggle of an emerging profession seeking its unique identity. The evolution of the concept and the numerous descriptions of the practice lead us to the definitions of public relations. These various definitions are important as they are indicative of the rapidly changing roles of public relations.

Seitel (2004:3) defines public relations as a planned process to influence public opinion, through sound character and proper performance, based on mutual satisfactory two-way communication. Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman and Toth (2004:5), on the other hand, define public relations as a leadership and management function that helps achieve organizational objectives, define philosophy, and facilitate organizational change. Johnston and Zawawi (2004:6) add that public relations is the ethical and strategic management of communication and relationships in order to build and develop coalitions and policy, identify and manage issues and create direct messages to achieve sound outcomes within a socially responsible framework. Focusing specifically on the

South African context, the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) (2005) defines public relations as the management, through communication, of perceptions and strategic relationships between an organization and its internal and external stakeholders.

Moloney (2000:6) argues that public relations are too multifaceted to be incorporated into a single definition, but that its effect on society demands extensive investigation regardless. He suggests that public relations can be defined differently as a 'concept' (communication management by an organization with its publics), as a 'practice' (mostly dealing with the media) and in terms of its effects on society (a category of persuasive communication undertaken through the mass media or through private lobbying by groups to advance their material or ideological interests). Center, Jackson, Smith and Stansberry (2008:9) highlight a formal three part definition of public relations, which states that public relations is a condition common to every individual and organization in the human environment.

Firstly, public relations are the systemized function that evaluates public attitudes and behaviors; harmonizes the goals, policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest; and executes a program of action to earn public understanding, acceptance and supportive behavior. Secondly, public relations is the full flowering of the democratic principle, in which every member of society is valued for himself or herself and has both a right and a duty to express an opinion on public issues and in which policies are made on the basis of free exchange of those opinions that result in public consent.

Thirdly, public relations are something everyone has; public relations foster the improvement of public relationships through specific activities and policies.

National and international public relations' organizations have formulated definitions of public relations. According to Wilcox and Cameron (2009:6), "the British Institute of Public Relations defines public relations as influencing behaviors to achieve objectives through the effective management of relationships and communication". On the other hand the British Institute of Public Opinion defines public relation as "the deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and all its publics". Cutlip et al. (2000:5) state that the Dansk Public Relations Klub of Denmark maintains that "public relations is the sustained and systematic managerial effort through which private and public organizations seek to establish understanding, sympathy and support in those public circles with which they have or expect to establish contact".

It can be acknowledged that there are literally hundreds of definitions of public relations. Thus organizations should carefully study these definitions and be able to pin-point one that will reflect their organization's vision, mission, objectives and overall values as practiced by their organization. Wilcox and Cameron (2009:6), therefore, reinforce that there are key words to remember in the above definitions such as: deliberate, planned, publics and stakeholders, management. Deliberate implies that public relations activities are intentional. They are designed to influence, gain understanding, provide information and obtain feedback and reaction from those affected by the activities.

Planned implies that public relations activities are organized. Therefore, solutions to problems are discovered and logistics are thought out, with activities taking place over a period of time. It is systematic, requiring research and analysis. Publics or stakeholders refer to everyone affected by the activities. Public relations activities should be mutually beneficial to these publics. Management implies that public relations are most effective when it is an integral part of decision making by top management. Here public relations are involved in counselling and solving problems at high levels, not just the dissemination of information after a decision has been made.

Seitel (2001:4) reinforces that the definitions of public relations will always differ, but almost all will agree that good public relations requires a firm base of theoretical knowledge, a strong sense of ethical judgment, solid communication skills and, above all, an uncompromising attitude of professionalism. Public relations evolved over many years to become a discipline but only recently in the last century has it received more prominence in the corporate world. Skinner et al. (2004: 19) claim that we are inclined to think of public relations as a 20th century phenomenon, but efforts to communicate with others and to deal with the force of opinion go back to antiquity. Rensburg and Cant (2009: 31) maintain that public relations as it is practiced today originated in the United States. To a large extent the development of public relations in the rest of the world has been influenced by developments in the United States of America. For example, Americans have been using Press Agency and other

publicity methods for some time. This has led others to follow this trend and to manufacture news and use stunts and gimmicks to gain attention.

Ravindran (2000: 2) states that the concept of public relations as one-way persuasive communication continued to dominate as the United States entered World War I and created the committee of Public Information. Headed by George Creel, the committee was responsible for uniting public opinion behind the war efforts through an extensive nationwide propaganda campaign. Seitel (2001:9) argues that during these early years, public relations were viewed as a publicity effort to influence others. Furthermore, various communication media such as advertising, films and exhibitions were used to such an extent that people eventually talked of 'the words that won the war'. Rensburg and Cant (2009: 29) reinforce those public relations as we know it today is much younger than many other disciplines. The relative newness of this practice means that the field is still evolving and its status is continuously improving. Therefore, a closer look into the early history of public relations is essential as it will clearly indicate the development of the public relations discipline.

McDougall and Levesque (2000) explained the customer satisfaction as "a cognitive or affective reaction that emerges in response to a single or prolonged set of service encounters. It is also view as the overall assessment of the service provider while future intentions are the stated likelihood of returning to the service provider". Like perceived consumer values, and customer satisfaction is also taken and viewed by the researchers as multi-dimensional variable that helps the researchers to evaluate the satisfaction in different contexts and industry. In

marketing literature, researchers made remarkable debate about the linkage between customer satisfaction and perceived quality and value by the customers.

Ravald and Gronroos (1996) posited that value is directly proportional to the how customer feels satisfaction with the products suppliers' organization and that satisfaction is based on value. Another important and distinctive explanation provided by the Zeithaml (1988) about the linkage between customer satisfaction and perceived value is that when consumers think that they received value against their money then they feel more satisfied as compared to the consumers who did not get the perceived value with their money. In simple words, customer satisfaction is the post-consumption evaluation by the customers based on value, price and perceived quality (Fornell et al., 1996; Khan et al., 2014; Ishaq et al., 2014).

Image is found intensively in marketing and psychological literature. Image defined by Nguyen and LeBlanc (1998) as "subjective knowledge, as an attitude, and as a combination of product characteristics that are different from the physical product but are nevertheless identified with the product". Zimmer and Golden (1988) explained it as the overall feelings in the consumers mind towards the specific product or service. MacInnis and Price (1987) explained the term image as "a procedure by which ideas, feelings, and previous experiences with an organization are stored in memory and transformed into meaning based on stored categories". From the literature associated with marketing management, the viewpoint related to corporate image defined the associations, impression,

attitudes and beliefs of the consumers' mind towards the company (Barich& Kotler, 1991).

Corporate Image, Customer Satisfaction & Customer Loyalty

In marketing field, research find out critical role of corporate image in consumers' buying behavior in product and services businesses (Ishaq, 2012). The most important factor in developing and maintaining loyalty is corporate image of an organization which refers to accumulating of consumption experiences on multiple occasions with emotional and functional principles of the products (Kisang Ryu, Lee and Kim, 2012). The emotional components associated with psychological dimensions exhibited through attitudes and feelings towards the organization's product and services whereas functional component is associated with tangibles aspects of products and services. Hence, corporate image is explained as "the result of an aggregate process by which customers compare and contrast the various attributes of organizations" (Kim et al., 2012; Ishaq et al., 2014).

Johnson et al., (2001) argued that corporate image is considered as attitude which is directly associated with customer satisfaction and loyalty because of its functional components. Corporate image is positively linked with customer loyalty in education, retailing, and telecommunication services in different regions (Nguyen and Leblanc, 2001). These results further endorsed by Juhl et al. (2002) and Kristensen et al. (2001) in food retailing sector and postal services respectively in Denmark. Some researchers (Sarstedt et al., 2012; Bravo et al.,

2009) argued that corporate image is an important aspect for the organization to maximize their profit, survival in the market, retaining customers, attracting customers and market share. Some recent researches concluded the significant impact of corporate image on customer loyalty (Helgesen, Havold, and Nettet, 2010; Ishaq, 2012). Studies of other researches (Martenson, 2007; Chang and Tu, 2005; Park et al., 2004; Zins, 2001; Abdullah et al., 2000; Ishaq et al., 2014) claimed the positive and significant impact of corporate image on customer loyalty and customer satisfaction.

Product Quality, Customer Satisfaction & Customer Loyalty

For survival and success of business operations, quality is considered as most integral part of any competitive marketing strategy from last two decade (Ishaq 2011a, Ismail et al., 2006). Researchers proved that companies that not focus on giving value to the customers and respond late to consumer's needs the results is highly adverse with respect to customer dissatisfaction and decreasing in profits. Hence, organization continually striving for customers' needs and fulfilling them on consistent basis to improve their perceptions. That's is why researchers proved the perceived customer value as an important antecedents of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ishaq, 2011b; Ismail et al., 2006; Law et al., 2004).

The studies of Eskildsen et al. (2004) and Bastos and Gallego (2008) found the direct impact of product quality with repurchase intentions, performance, customer loyalty and satisfaction. Products with higher quality gain

more acceptance that leads to satisfaction with wholesalers, retailers and organizations (Schellhase et al., 2000). Additionally, several studies provided strong empirical support about product quality was being an antecedent, with a positive relationship to overall customer satisfaction. Study of Chumpitaz and Paparoidamis (2004) claimed that high product quality always to customer satisfaction that further engenders loyalty. Surprising results of Tsuji et al. (2007) and Brady et al. (2006) argued that core product quality more strong associated with satisfaction and loyalty as compared to service quality. The sub aspects of core product quality including its attributes, issues and financial aspects were also positively associated with customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Customer Value, Customer Satisfaction & Customer Loyalty

Customer perceived value considered as significant role playing in high involvement industries (Glaveli et al 2006) and defined by Zeithaml (1988) as “the consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product (or service) based on perceptions of what is received and what is given”. The word "satisfaction" is significant by itself; as psychologists debate our overall "life" satisfaction so management seeks to provide job satisfaction and consumer satisfaction. Consumers demand satisfaction. Consumer behavior researchers seek to understand and explain consumer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction has emerged as one of the most powerful tools for sustaining a competitive advantage for business success and survival nowadays (Law et al., 2004; Khan et al., 2014). Researchers accepted customer perceived value as significant predictor of loyalty,

customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Ryu et al. 2008, 2010; McDougall and Levesque, 2000; Ishaq et al., 2014). Research studies of various other authors (for reference Petrick and Backman, 2002; Petrick, 2004; Cronin et al., 2000; Chen, 2008) claimed customer satisfaction as an antecedent of customer loyalty. From the study of Wells et al. (2011), Cater and Cater (2010) endorsed the positive association of customer perceived value with customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Customer loyalty

Loyalty is a philosophy of leadership that seeks mutually beneficial management of the relationship between the enterprise and its stakeholders (Finnie and Randall, 2002; Hart and Johnson, 1999). Higher customer retention (5%) results in a significant rise in profitability and business growth. The higher profitability derives from the basic profit associated with all activities, a rise in sales to each customer, economies generated as a result of improved reciprocal understanding between the customer and business, new customer recommendations by loyal customers, and bigger profits resulting from the lesser tendency of loyal customers to make purchases on the basis of price alone (Reichheld, 1996).

There are three types of key principles governing customer loyalty (Bhote, 1996). First, there are the matters of ethics and uncompromising integrity, mutual trust, openness and access to information. Then, there is a need to ensure closeness to the customer, allowing the customer to “coach” the business and

demonstrating true interest in the customer after the sale has been consummated. Finally, there is a need for a high value-added business proposition and for the enterprise to plan for the unexpected and anticipate customers' future needs. These principles are linked to a set of practices that facilitate their transfer or application to the company's day-to-day operations. Practices that generate loyalty fall under a number of main headings: (a) commitment and involvement of management (in regard to key principles, loyalty-oriented action, reinforcing behaviors), (b) internal benchmarking, (c) determination of customer needs, (d) analysis of competition's capacities, (e) measurement of customer satisfaction and loyalty, (f) analysis of feedback, and (g) ongoing improvement. It is on the basis of this set of principles (and underlying practices) that a company can build consistency that is always perceived as such by customers and employees.

Several authors have long suggested that loyalty is both attitude and behavior. In fact, Dick and Basu (1994) conceptualized it as a composite construct. Specifically, they defined loyalty as the strength of the relationship between attitude towards the target relative to available alternatives and patronage behavior. This led the authors to suggest four possible loyalty conditions by conceding that both relative attitude and repeated patronage could each be either 'high' or 'low'.

Relative Attitude	High	Latent Loyalty	True Loyalty
	Low	No Loyalty L	Spurious Loyalty (Inertia) L
		Low	High
		Repeat Behavior	Patronage

Fig: 2 Loyalty Condition

Source: Dick & Basu (1994)

Public Transportation

Defining “public transportation” must begin with a general understanding of the term “transportation” itself. Transportation, however, defies any single watertight definition. Schulz (2004) construes transportation in the widest sense not only to include the conveyance of freight and mobility of persons, but also recognizing the flow of information, labor and capital, and the activity of providing access to resources and opportunities. Defining the term in this manner broadens the scope to encompasses non-motorized systems; walking, bicycle and animal drawn cart (Rahman, D’Este, & Bunker, 2008; Krizek, Handy, & Forsyth, 2009), as well as non-traditional modes such as the use of ICT (Information and

Communication Technologies) to transfer expertise and resources between spatial environments (Schulz, 2004).

In the view of Mbara (2002, p. 3), transportation refers to a “system” comprising two major components, viz., the vehicle commonly referred to as the “carrying unit” and the path which in transport term is referred to as the “way”. In this sense, transport comprises of an „infrastructure component“ and a „service component“. The latter component constitutes the carrying unit – such as bus, aircraft, ship or train – whereas, the infrastructure component represents the roadway, railway, tunnel and amongst others. For the efficient operation of transport system, skilled personnel are indispensable. Mbara (2002, p. 3) therefore argues for „appropriate qualified staff as a vital third component of the transport system“. A precise definition of public transportation (also called *Public transit*, *public transport*, *mass transit* and *urban transit*) is quite limited in the transportation literature. However, throughout the literature, public transportation is generally used to mean; a shared passenger transportation service which is available for use by the general public (Pucher *et al.*, 2004; TCRP, 2009; Trans-Africa Consortium, 2010; Buehler & Pucher, 2012).

This embraces various transport services available to the general public; including carpools, shared taxis, ferries, passenger rail and bus services, and their variations (Litman, 2012a; Washington State Legislature Joint Transportation Committee, 2011). Perhaps, the essentials of this definition are that public transport is a mode where the “vehicle” in question is not necessarily owned by the user or used privately. There is also a popular view that “public transport”

means those modes that are owned and or operated by government. This is not a satisfactory definition because all modes – train, bus, ferries, and amongst others – have many examples of both private and public ownership.

In their article, *Alternative Ways of Funding Public Transport: A Case Study Assessment*, Ubbels et al., (2001) helps us with a working definition of public transportation. Ubbels *et al.*, (2001, p. 73) thus refer to public transportation as: „a collective transport system, which is made available, usually against payment, for any person who wishes to use it“. This definition reveals that public transport is deployed to mean the communal use of transport (such as train and bus), usually for commercial purposes. It is therefore, sometimes, used interchangeably with “commercial transport”. The emphasis is to serve “public good” rather “private good”.

Here, what is fundamental in Ubbels“ et al., (2001) definition is “access” and “sharing”. These two dimensions – access and sharing – seem to capture the most essential feature of what we mean by “public transportation”. That is an important point because it helps counter the implicit preconception that public transport must only be owned and operated by the government. This definition, offered by Ubbels *et al.*, (2001), will be used to refer to public transport throughout the research. What we mean by “public transportation”. That is an important point because it helps counter the implicit preconception that public transport must only be owned and operated by the government. This definition, offered by Ubbels *et al.*, (2001), will be used to refer to public transport throughout the research.

Profile Metro Mass Transit Limited

In their study of urban public transport conditions in Accra, IBIS (2005) portrayed MMT as a state-linked company charged with urban mass transportation in Ghana. The study argued that the creation of Metro Mass Transit was an attempt to address the constraints in Ghana's public transport delivery following the demise of the OSA and CES; however, it largely resolved New Patriotic Party's 2000 manifesto commitment. The IBIS's (2005) report divulged that the Metro Mass Transit is owned by the Government of Ghana (45%) and indigenous six financial institutions (55%), thus; Ghana Oil, Social Security National Insurance Trust, National Investment Bank, Agricultural Development Bank, State Insurance Company and Prudential Bank.

In the Company's Strategic Plan document (2014), the principal authorised business of Metro Mass Transit are; carry out the business of Mass transportation in Ghana , undertakes contract bussing and undertake school bussing services. Further, the government of Ghana established Metro Mass to provide reliable, safe and efficient mass transport services by road in the sub region and to be a world class mass transport company in the sub region as its vision. The company has as part of its core values; safety been their number one priority, cherishes the passengers who board their buses, respect and value each other's contributions and confront bad practices that will undermine the future of the company. Metro Mass Transit operates in all the Sixteen (16) regions of Ghana with fifteen depots and three hubs with 324 routes nationwide.

The Communication/ Public Relations Unit

The Communications Unit was until 2013 a joint Marketing/Communications Unit with one Head and reports to the Managing Director and as per the new organogram of the Company, the Unit Head reports to the Administration Manager. The Unit has four staff including the Head with some of the staff having Marketing and Communications background, and is responsible for; Media Relations, Public Relations, Crisis Communications, Employee Communications and Managing the Company's website content.

Chapter Summary

The chapter provides the theoretical framework upon which the whole research is positioned, and how it helps in understanding and explaining the phenomenon which is being investigated. The chapter has so far looked at some debates of the role of public relations practitioner, corporate image, customer loyalty and the transportation sector in Ghana. The next chapter of this research will detail the Research Methods to be employed to capture the empirical data, including details on the research strategy to be adopted, data collection techniques, and framework for data analysis.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the detail of the research strategy adopted to implement the empirical research. It also covers the means of collecting data, the sample selection and the framework for data analysis employed. The methodology provides the philosophical framework and the fundamental assumptions that relate to the entire process of research and equips the researcher with the necessary procedures and tools needed to evaluate theories, propositions and review work of others (Creswell, 2003). This chapter describes the methodology used in conducting the study. It covers the study area, research design, target population, data sources and collection methods, sampling procedure, research instruments, and pre-testing of data collection instruments. It also outlines the ethical considerations, fieldwork and challenges encountered in the study and data analysis.

Study Institution

The study area is the Head Office of Metro Mass Transit Limited in Greater Accra region including all the five Depots, namely; Kaneshie, Laterbiokorshie, Adenta and Tema. These Depots serves operational zones and was established to complete the operations from the Head Office. The Kaneshie Depot is the oldest among these Depots and situated within the Head Office of

Metro Mass, whilst, Adenta and Tema are located in Adenta and Tema respectively.

Research Design

Burns and Grove (2003:195) define a research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings”. Parahoo also (1997:142) describes a research design as “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed”. Creswell (2003) defines research design as the plan of action that links the philosophical assumptions to specific methods. There are various research designs, so the researcher should justify the approach chosen since each technique is associated with specific advantages and disadvantages as well as distinctive means of collecting and analyzing data. The research design provides complete guidelines for data collection and enables a researcher to select the relevant research approach, design the sample plan, and the questionnaire (Sarantakos, 2005).

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery. Qualitative research is also described as an unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences (Creswell, 2003). One identifier of a qualitative research is the social phenomenon being investigated from the

participant's viewpoint. There are different types of research designs that use qualitative research techniques to frame the research approach. What constitutes qualitative research involves purposeful use for describing, explaining, and interpreting collected data.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) alleged that qualitative research is less structured in description because it formulates and builds new theories. Qualitative research can also be described as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research is conducted within a poststructuralist paradigm. There are five areas of qualitative research: case study, ethnography study, phenomenological study, grounded theory study, and content analysis. These five areas are representative of research that is built upon inductive reasoning and associated methodologies.

Qualitative research is much more subjective and uses very different methods of collecting information mainly individual, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (Cormack, 1991). Furthermore, the researcher spends more time with the subject to build a relationship crucial for obtaining data and genuine understanding of the dilemmas (Babbie, 2007). A weakness of qualitative methodology is the possible effect of the researchers' presence on the people they are studying as the relationship between the researcher and participants may distort the findings (Bryman, 2008). In addition, it relies on the texts and discussion of participants and involves small numbers of participants in the

research process as a result of the process of gathering in-depth information (Gilbert, 1993; Grun, 1994).

Quantitative Approach

Quantitative research emerged around 1250 A.D. and was driven by investigators with the need to quantify data. Since then quantitative research has dominated the western cultural as the research method to create meaning and new knowledge. What constitutes a quantitative research method involves a numeric or statistical approach to research design. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) alleged that quantitative research is specific in its surveying and experimentation, as it builds upon existing theories. The methodology of a quantitative research maintains the assumption of an empiricist paradigm (Creswell, 2003). The research itself is independent of the researcher. As a result, data is used to objectively measure reality. Quantitative research creates meaning through objectivity uncovered in the collected data. Quantitative research can be used in response to relational questions of variables within the research. Quantitative researchers seek explanations and predictions that will generate to other persons and places.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001, p.102), quantitative research is intents to establish, confirm, or validate relationships and to develop generalizations that contribute to theory. Quantitative research begins with a problem statement and involves the formation of a hypothesis, a literature review, and a quantitative data analysis. Creswell (2003) states, quantitative research “employ strategies of inquiry such as experimental and surveys, and collect data

on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data” (p. 18). The findings from quantitative research can be predictive, explanatory, and confirming. The next section focuses on quantitative research methodology

Jick (1979) argued that quantitative research method is weak in understanding the context in which people talk. A weakness of the quantitative approach, is that random selection is time – consuming, with the result that many studies are more easily obtained through opportunistic sample (Duffy, 1987). If this is too small it inhibits the degree of generalization. In quantitative research, the investigators maintain a detached, objective view in order to understand the facts. However, another criticism levelled against quantitative research method is that, the scientific approach denigrates human individuality and the ability to think (Massey, 2003). Babbie (2005) notes that the researcher spends considerable amount of time in the research setting in order to, collect data, aggregate, analyze and interpret activities of subjects.

Mixed Methods Approach

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) discussed the mixed methods approach to research, which emerged in the mid-to-late 1900s. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) hoped that the mixed methods approach to research provided researchers with an alternative to believing that the quantitative and qualitative research approaches are incompatible and, in turn, their associated methods cannot and should not be mixed. With the mixed methods approach to research, researchers incorporate methods of collecting or analyzing data from the quantitative and

qualitative research approaches in a single research study Creswell (2003). That is, researchers collect or analyze not only numerical data, which is customary for quantitative research, but also narrative data, which is the norm for qualitative research in order to address the research question(s) defined for a particular research study.

The mixed methods approach to research provides researchers with the ability to design a single research study that answers questions about both the complex nature of phenomenon from the participant's point of view and the relationship between measurable variables. Proponents of the mixed methods approach to research advocate doing what work within the precepts of research to investigate, to predict, to explore, to describe, to understand the phenomenon (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). That is, in relation to the mixed methods approach to research, pragmatic assumptions govern claims about what is knowledge (Creswell; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Study Design

The study adopted descriptive and cross sectional study designs. Cross sectional design was adopted because the study collected data at a single point in time. According to Creswell (2007), cross sectional study design is appropriate in that it involves observations of a cross-section of population and phenomenon that are made at one point in time. The process involves the collection of data in order to answer questions concerning congruence of local government policies, plans,

services and outputs to people and community preferences and needs as well as users perceptions of satisfaction with public services and performance to achieve the study's objectives.

Descriptive study design was also used because the researcher intends to obtain information concerning the current status of responsiveness of the local government to household and community needs, and to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation (Babbie, 2005) and use statistical methods to analyse information and make inferences about the research objectives. Sarantakos (2005) reports that methods involved in descriptive study design vary from the survey which describes the status quo, correlational studies which investigate the relationship between variables, to developmental studies which seek to determine changes over time.

Study Population

Jennings (2001) defines population as all the study subjects that are the focus of the research work. In this study, the target population consisted of junior staff, senior staff and management of the study institution, that is, Metro Mass Transit Limited. The study population was 986 which included staff from the Head Office, Adenta, Kaneshie, Laterbiokorhie and Tema Depots respectively.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The main purpose of sampling is to achieve representativeness and the sample should be assembled in such a way as to be representative of the population from which it was taken (Jennings, 2001). To achieve this, the

sampling units were randomly selected. According to Cohen et al (2005), a survey sample size of about 100 or 10% of the study population will be representative enough, so with the study population of 986, 100 was selected as the sample size to achieve representativeness.

Data Sources and Methods of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data for the study were obtained through survey of senior staff, interviews with selected managers and focus group discussions with the junior staff. Qualitative data was collected by using two types of qualitative research methods namely focus group discussions and management interviews. The focus group discussions were used to collect detailed information from the junior staff on their understanding of public relations role, the impact of the public relations practitioner on customer loyalty and if indeed the organization needs a public relations officer.

Data Collection Instruments

Structured questionnaires, interview guides and focus group discussion guides were the main instruments used to collect quantitative and qualitative data for the study. Kerlinger (1973) contends that interview schedule is used in quantitative studies because it allows the respondent to share his/her personal experiences and views with the researcher instead of the closed and pre-coded items. The questionnaire was administered to senior staff, interview guides for management and focus group discussion guide to the junior staffs.

Pre-testing of Instruments for Data Collection

The interview schedule for senior staff, the interview guide for managers and focus group guide for junior staff were pre-tested in the Head Office, Accra. The pre-testing of the instruments helped in the restructuring of the questionnaires, because, it was observed that, the questionnaires were many and took respondents more time to respond. This I believe will deter respondents from answering and same time will spend more time in the data collection.

Data Processing and Analysis

Kumar (1996) is of the view that, data processing involves editing, coding, developing a frame of analysis and analyzing the data. Hence, the data gathered through were edited to check spelling, grammatical errors, and consistency of responses as well as validity of answers before coding. The quantitative data collected were coded into numerical representations so that a series of statistical analysis could be performed using the software package, Statistical Product and Service Solutions, version 21. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyses the data into percentages, frequencies, cross tabulation, graphs, charts and other illustrations. Chi-square and statistical inferences were employed to test the associations and relationships among the variables used in the study. The final stage in the data analysis was the interpretation of results. With the help of the themes the qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in conformity to ethical codes in social science research. According to Babbie (2005), the ethical considerations include ensuring voluntary participation, causing no harm, anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents' data. The purpose of the research was explained to all respondents and respondents were interviewed based on their informed consent and voluntary participation. Anonymity and confidentiality were adhered to by assuring respondents that their identities in relation to their responses would not be disclosed unless with their expressed otherwise.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the details of the research methods (and their justifications) employed in this study. It has also addressed the potential limitations of this research and clarified the steps used to minimize such potential limitations.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the results presented and analyse the data gathered from the field. The results and discussion of the study are done under the research objectives and questions. The first section of this chapter focuses on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The importance of presenting the demographics of the population is in two folds. First, it establishes the context within which the responses were elicited, in terms of the differences in the respondents' sex and age status. Secondly, it focuses on the research objectives and questions.

Characteristics of Respondents

In order to appreciate, understand and contextualize the respondents' the some demographic characteristics such as sex and age were analyzed.

Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Frequency (<i>n=86</i>)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	39	45.3
Female	47	54.7

Source: Field Survey, Kodua-Boateng (2019)

The sex distribution of respondents indicates that more females (47%) responded, as compared to their male counterparts (39%). This demographic

observation reflects the structure of the Ghanaian society which has more women than men as per the Ghana Statistical Service Population and Housing Census (2010), which has females, constitutes 51.2 percent of the population and males 48.8 percent. This also indicates more females employed in Metro Mass Transit Limited. Figure 3 presents the sex distribution of the respondents.

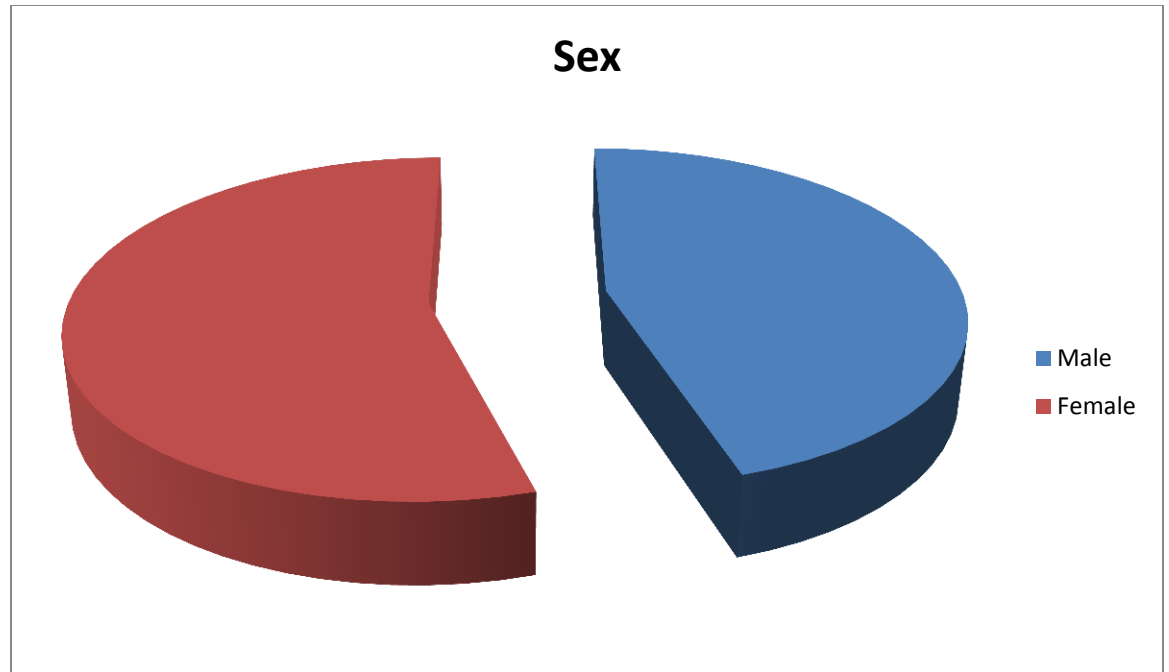


Figure 3: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Source: Field Survey, Kodua-Boateng (2019)

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Frequency(<i>n</i> =86)	Percentage (%)
Age		
18-30	43	50.0
31- 40	41	47.7
51-60	2	2.3

Source: Field Survey data, Kodua-Boateng (2019)

The age distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 2. The age distribution of the respondents indicates youthful staff strength of Metro Mass Transit Limited. This means there is fresh perspective and a different way of thinking within the company, if not so, then the company can capitalize on the youthful staff strength to build strong workforce which will equally bring out productivity. Most young workers are eager to learn, build their experience and apply their skills in the workplace. Figure 4 presents the age distribution of the respondents.

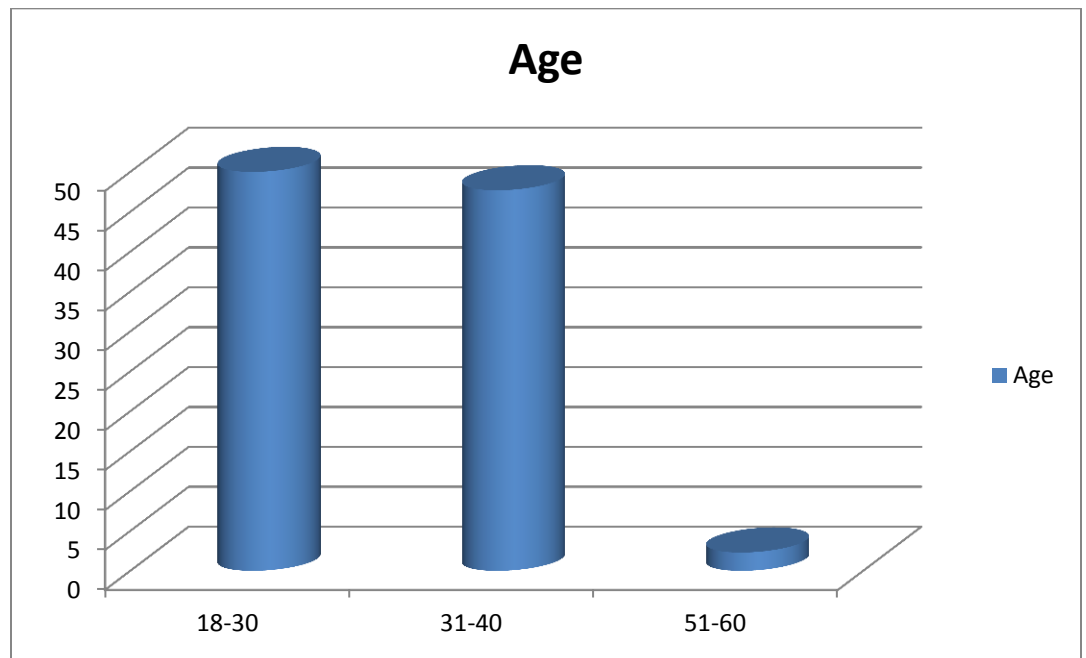


Figure 4: Age Distribution of Respondents

Source: Field Survey, Kodua-Boateng (2019)

Correlation between public relations and corporate image

This section discusses the first research objective, correlation between public relations and corporate image. The findings cover the views of respondents including staffs and management. Data received from the study, revealed a positive significant relationship between public relation role and corporate image development ($r=.319$, $sig=.003$) at the 0.05 level of significance. This shows that the role of public relations officers in Metro Mass Transit limited is of high importance as they influence how the company is viewed by external individuals. This has proven arguments raised by other researches Martenson (2007), Chang and Tu, (2005), Park et al., (2004), Zins (2001), Abdullah et al. (2000), Ishaq et al. (2014) claimed the positive and significant impact of public relations on corporate image. This is presented in table 3 below;

Table 3: Public Relations and Corporate Image Correlation

Variable	Mean	SD	R	P
Public relation Role	44.1512	14.77798	.319**	.003
Corporate Image Development	17.2093	4.96367		

Source: Field Survey data, Kodua-Boateng (2019)

Correlation between public relations role and customer loyalty

This section discusses the second research objective, that is, the correlation between public relations role and customer loyalty. It was discovered that, there is a significant positive relationship between the role

of public relations and customer loyalty ($r = .247$, $\text{sig} = .022$) at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings show, the role of public relations practitioners have positive impact on the loyalty customers have towards the company services. This conforms to Ishaq (2012) who argues that; corporate image plays a critical role in consumer buying behaviour, hence having a strong customer loyalty. This is presented in table 4 below;

Table 4: Public relations role and customer loyalty correlation

Variable	Mean	SD	R	P
Public Relation Role	44.1512	14.77798	.247*	.022
Customer Loyalty	28.9884	4.23013		

Source: Field Survey data, Kodua-Boateng (2019)

Aspect of public relations role significantly affects customer loyalty

Table 5: Aspect of Public relations role

Variable	Frequency($n=86$)	Percentage(%)
Social Media	28	32.6
Broadcast Media Relations	8	9.3
Newsletter	8	9.3
Advertorials	10	11.6
Corporate Social Responsibilities and Scholarships	32	37.2

Source: Field Survey data, Kodua-Boateng (2019)

The aspect of public relations role significantly affect customer loyalty from the respondents is presented in Table 5 above. The third research objective identifies the aspect of public relations role that significantly affects customer loyalty. From the responses, it was observed that thirty-two (32) representing 37% of the respondents believed the major aspect of the role of the public relations was Corporate Social Responsibility. Whilst Social Media, Broadcast Media Relations, Newsletter and Advertorials representing 32.2%,9.3%,9.3% and 11.6% respectively.

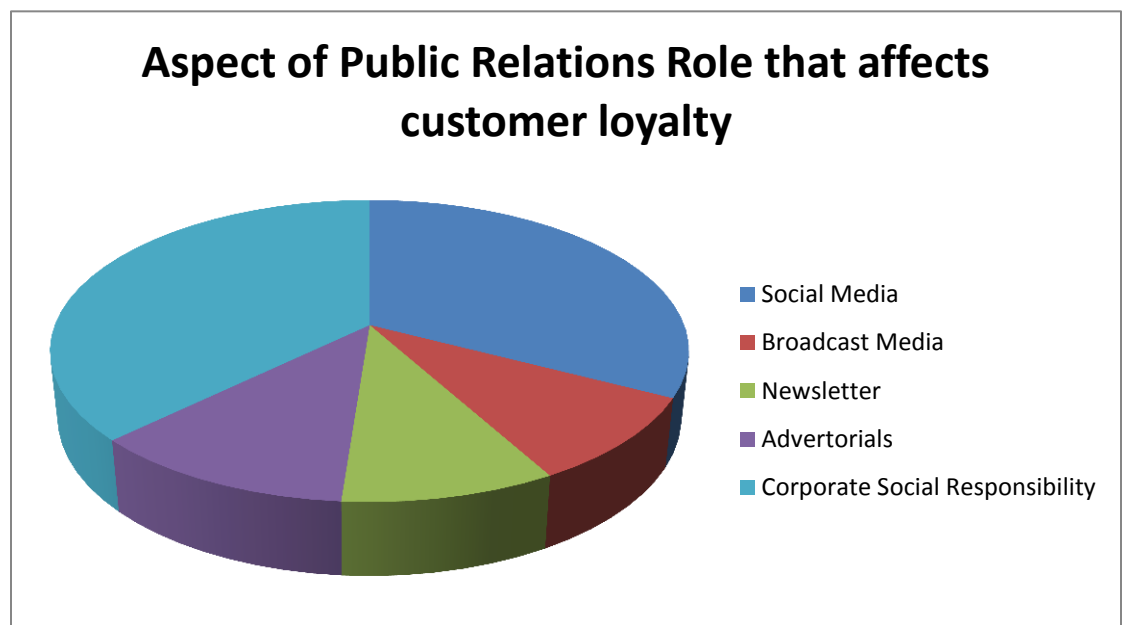


Figure 5: Aspect of Public Relations Role that affects Customer Loyalty

Source: Field Survey, Kodua-Boateng (2019)

Ways the public relations officer role could be enhanced in the transport industry.

The section discusses the last research objective, which is, exploring ways in which the work of the public relations practitioner could be enhanced. To enhance the effectiveness of the role of public relations in the transport industry, it was observed that, continuous training and refresher courses through capacity building and stronger, more effective media relations were needed for the public relation practitioner.

Key Informant Interview

This section discusses with themes responses from managers interviewed on the roles Public Relations practitioners play linking it with roles the practitioner plays in Metro Mass Transit Limited and the correlation between the public relation role and corporate image.

Grunig and Grunig (2002) identified four major roles of a Public Relation practitioner namely; the Communication technician, the Communication facilitator, the expert prescriber and Problem solving facilitator. The communication technician role of public relations is mostly conceptualized as the beginning of professionalism (Grunig & Grunig, 2002). The Communication technician practitioners are often responsible for the communication tactics of news releases, organizing press conferences, employee newsletters, position papers, designs brochures and media placements (Castelli, 2007).

The communication facilitator of public relations is a boundary spanner who listens to and brokers information between the organization and its key

publics (Theaker, 2004). The expert prescriber's on the other hand theoretical role of the public relations is associated with the responsibility to handle consultation function or participation by other senior management. It is the role where the practitioner is responsible for describing and solving public relations problems independently. Finally the problem-solving facilitator's roles of public relations, according to (Dozier cited in Castelli, 2007), is the role where the practitioners are assumed as problem solver, decision-maker and planner. They are expected to be knowledgeable about innovations in public relations and expected to demonstrate leadership approach to solve problems.

This role as discussed above was seen in the role played by the public relations officers in Metro Mass Transit. They were seen more of playing the role of Communication Technician and depending on the issue, their advise are require in planning or during media decision making.

Corporate image is explained as the result of an aggregate process by which customers compare and contrast the various attributes of organizations (Kim et al., 2012; Ishaq et al., 2014). Johnson et al., (2001) argued that corporate image is considered as attitude which is directly associated with customer satisfaction and loyalty because of its functional components. Nguyen and Leblanc (2001) posited that, corporate image is positively linked with customer loyalty and this has endorsed this study, because management believes there is a positive correlation between public relation role and corporate image.

Response from the Focus Group Discussion

This section discusses responses from the focus group discussions of junior staff of Metro Mass Transit under these three themes;

- A. Role Public Relations practitioners play
- B. Public Relations officers role has enhanced the corporate image of Metro Mass Transit Limited
- C. Ways Public Relations Officers role can be improve in Metro Mass Transit Limited

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CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The objective of this research was to examine public relation practitioner's role: effect on corporate image and customer loyalty in the transport sector. This chapter summarises the research findings derived from the implementation of this study. The chapter will revisit the specified research objectives, summarise the research findings and submit conclusions founded on the findings. Recommendations are made and discussed for the future progression of this research.

Summary of findings

The study set out to examine the role of public relations practitioner, its effects on corporate image and customer loyalty in the transport sector; Greater Accra Metro Mass Transit Limited being the study area. To achieve the purpose of the research, there was first the need to examine the correlation between public relations role and corporate image. Secondly, to examine the correlation between public relations role and customer loyalty, again, identifying the aspects of public relations role that significantly affects customer loyalty and lastly, explore ways by which the work of the public relations practitioner be enhanced.

Mixed-methods approach and descriptive design were adopted for the study. Administration of questionnaires, Interviews and focus group discussions

were the main methods of data collection while interview schedules, interview guides, focus group discussion guide and observation checklist were the instruments used for data collection. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data while the qualitative data employed content analysis, transcription and interpretation.

Key Findings of the Study

The key findings are based on the research objectives. The findings were as follows:

Objective one examined the correlation between public relations role and corporate image.

1. It was established from the research that, there is a positive significant relationship between public relation role and corporate image development ($r=.319$, $sig=.003$) at the 0.05 level of significance. This shows that the role of public relations office in Metro Mass Transit limited is of high importance as they influence how the company is viewed by external individuals.

Objective two was to examine the correlation between public relations role and customer loyalty.

2. It was established from the research that, there is a significant positive relationship between the role of public relations and client loyalty ($r = .247$, $sig= .022$) at the 0.05 level of significance. This shows that role of public relations does have a positive impact on the loyalty customers have towards the company services.

Objective three was to find out which aspect of public relations role (namely social relations, broadcast media relations, newsletters, and advertorials) significantly affects customer loyalty.

3. It was established from the research that, the key role public relations officers plays that significantly affects customer loyalty is Corporate Social Responsibility, the least role been broadcast media relations and newsletters.

Objective four was to explore ways in which the work of the public relations officer could be enhanced in the transport industry.

4. It was established from the research that, to enhance the effectiveness of the role of public relations in the transport industry, there is the need of continuous training and refresher courses through capacity building and stronger, more effective media relations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings generated from this study, the following conclusions were drawn;

1. It was established from the research that, there is a positive significant relationship between public relation role and corporate image development.
2. Again, it was established from the research that, there is a significant positive relationship between the role of public relations and customer loyalty.

3. Further, it was established from the research that, the key role public relations officers plays that significantly affects customer loyalty is Corporate Social Responsibility, the least role been broadcast media relations and newsletters.
4. Lastly, It was established from the research that, to enhance the effectiveness of the role of public relations in the transport industry, there is the need of continuous training and refresher courses through capacity building and stronger, more effective media relations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings generated from this study, the researcher proceeds to offer the following recommendations to Metro Mass Transit Limited, Transport organizations and academia;

- Public Relations Officers play significant role in the transport industry. Hence, there is the need for transport organizations in Ghana to seek the services of public relations practitioners.
- Public Relations Officers in the transport industry are given periodic refresher programs to equip them with current public relations trends.
- There are other roles of the Public Relations practitioner aside the known ones, that is, expert prescriber, communication technician, communication facilitator and problem-solving facilitator as espoused by Grunig (1992). The other roles include social media, broadcast media relations, newsletters, advertorials, and corporate social responsibilities.

Suggested Areas for Further Research

Although thorough research has been conducted for this case study, there are other related areas of the study that were touched on only briefly in this thesis. Further research could focus on these areas public relations and the service industry. Other researchers are also encouraged to replicate this research using different case study or analytical tool/framework to validate the findings of this current study.

Limitations of the Study

This research, like any other study, is not without limitation and potential challenges. In the view of Osuala (2007), limitations are those aspects of the research process that, may limit the researcher in making generalizations. A key limitation that impeded the smooth implementation of the empirical study was the difficulty of getting access to some of the research subjects (interviewee) to participate in the study. The issue was that the respondents were mostly preoccupied with busy work schedules. Top administrative officials, and were preoccupied with busy work schedules. However, the researcher instituted measures to establish a close rapport with the respondents to ensure their cooperation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: Public Relations Practitioner's Role: Effect On Corporate Image and

Customer Loyalty in the Transport Sector

CASE STUDY: Metro Mass Transit Limited

PURPOSE; Information provided is purely for academic purposes and the researcher will treat details as confidential.

PART ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please tick (✓) the following as they apply to you

(1) Sex

- Male
- Female

(2) Age.....

(3) Academic Level:

- Secondary/A Level Education
- Tertiary Education
- Post-Graduate Education

(4) Religion:

- Christian
- Moslem
- Other:

(5) Number of years working with current company?.....

(6) Which level of Staff do you Belong to

- Junior Staff
- Senior Staff

PART TWO: PUBLIC RELATIONS ROLE

Please tick (✓) from the options below the extent to which public relations practitioner’s in your company play their role. Kindly use the rating below, where:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)
- 2 = Disagree (D)
- 3 = Not Sure (NS)
- 4 = Agree (A)
- 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Note: PRO stands for Public Relations Officers

		RATINGS				
No.	PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER’S ROLE	SD	D	NS	A	SA
SOCIAL MEDIA: Our company’s PROs						
1	Share information with customers and the general public through our Facebook wall.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Share information with customers and the general public through our tweeter handle.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Disseminate information to our customers through WhatsApp application	1	2	3	4	5
BROADCAST MEDIA RELATIONS: Our company’s PROs						
4	Use the Broadcast Media to channel information to customers.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Market our new products through Broadcast Media.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Market our organisation through Broadcast Media.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Receive customer complains through Broadcast Media.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Go to various media houses to explain the company’s new initiatives to the public	1	2	3	4	5
9	Treat with high sense of urgency Customer complaints received through Broadcast Media	1	2	3	4	5
NEWS LETTER: Our company’s PROs						
10	Release periodic print news letters to stay connected to customers.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Release periodic electronic news letters to stay connected to customers.	1	2	3	4	5
ADVERTORIALS: Our company’s PROs						
12	Engages in all kinds of advertorials to promote our products.	1	2	3	4	5
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SPONSORSHIPS: Our company’s PROs						

13	Undertake various corporate social responsibility activities to put us ahead of our competitors.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Sponsor programmes and events to maintain our presence in the market.	1	2	3	4	5

15. Which aspect of Public relation role affects customer loyalty?

Social media
 Broadcast media relations
 Newsletter
 Advertorials
 Corporate Social Responsibility

PART THREE: CORPORATE IMAGE DIMENTIONS

Please tick (✓) from the options below the extent to which you perceive your organization’s corporate image. Answer the following according to the rating where:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree**
- 2 = Disagree**
- 3 = Not Sure**
- 4 = Agree**
- 5 = Strongly Agree**

Q/N	Public Relations and Corporate Image	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The image of Metro Mass Transit depends on its public relations activities	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The public relations activities of Metro Mass Transit help to maintain existing customers.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The public relation activities of Metro Mass Transit attracts new customers	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Public relations activities of Metro Mass Transit build the trust of its customers.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Generally, the public relations activities of Metro Mass Transit has helped create a positive image for Metro Mass	1	2	3	4	5

PART FOUR: CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Please tick (✓) from the options below the extent to which you perceive the customers of your organization to be loyal to your organization. Answer the following according to the rating where:

- 1 = Very Rarely**
- 2 = Rarely**
- 3 = At times**
- 4 = Quite a lot**
- 5 = A lot**

No		Ratings				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Customers always want to seek our services	1	2	3	4	5
2	Customers believe we deserves their loyalty	1	2	3	4	5
3	Customers often encourage family and friends to stick to products/services	1	2	3	4	5
4	Customers learn to appreciate our services with every passing day	1	2	3	4	5
5	Customers will never stop using our products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Customers make attempt to provide feedback to us so that things can always get better	1	2	3	4	5
7	Customers are even likely to recommend us to someone who is not even their family or friend	1	2	3	4	5
8	Customers would love to see us stand the test of time successfully	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you

APPENDIX B

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR JUNIOR STAFF

TOPIC: Public Relations Practitioner's Role: Effect On Corporate Image and Customer Loyalty in the Transport Sector

CASE STUDY: Metro Mass Transit Limited

PURPOSE; Information provided is purely for academic purposes and the researcher will treat details as confidential.

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What role do public relations officers play in general?
2. What role do public relations officers play in this company?
3. Do you think the work of public relations officers have enhanced the corporate image of this company?
4. Do you think the work of public relations officers have enhanced the loyalty of customers to this company?
5. Do you think this company still needs public relations officers?
6. In what ways do you think public relations officers of Metro Mass Transit can improve?

APPENDIX B

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: Public Relations Practitioner’s Role: Effect On Corporate Image and Customer Loyalty in the Transport Sector

CASE STUDY: Metro Mass Transit Limited

PURPOSE; Information provided is purely for academic purposes and the researcher will treat details as confidential.

INTERVIEW FOR MANAGEMENT

PART ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please tick (✓) the following as they apply to you

(1) Sex

- Male
- Female

(2) Age.....

(3) Academic Level:

- Secondary/A Level Education
- Tertiary Education
- Post-Graduate Education

(4) Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Divorced/Separated
- Widowed

(5) Religion:

- Christian
- Moslem
- Other:

(6) Number of years working with current company?.....

(7) Which level of Staff do you Belong to

- Junior Staff
- Senior Staff
- Management

INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE

1. What role do public relations officers play in general?

- Social Media Broadcast Media Relation Newsletter Advertorials
 Corporate Social Responsibility Others, specify

2. What role do public relations officers play in this company?

3. Do you think the work of public relations officers have enhanced the corporate image of this company?

- Yes No

4. Do you think the work of public relations officers have enhanced the loyalty of customers to this company?

- Yes No

5. Do you think this company still needs public relations officers?

- Yes No

6. In what ways do you think public relations officers of Metro Mass Transit can improve?