

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**PUBLIC RELATIONS MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING AT THE MINISTRY OF  
RAILWAYS DEVELOPMENT, GHANA**

**BY:**

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**(MAPR20026)**

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**DECEMBER, 2021**

**CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own research and that no part of it has been presented for another award in this institution or elsewhere. All already existing literature employed for this work have been cited appropriately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kuleape', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is enclosed within a hand-drawn circle.

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**SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that I supervised this dissertation in accordance with the guidelines on the supervision of research works as laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

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7<sup>th</sup> December, 2021

Date



## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my family whose love, care and support have seen me through the successful completion of my second degree in Public Relations. Having you has been a blessing to me.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Monitoring and measurement has dominated the writings of scholars such as Grunig and Hon (1999), Grunig & Grunig, and Dozier (2002) Watson and Noble (2014) among others. The concept seems to be portrayed in literature as an integral part of Public Relations practice in both the public sector and the private sector. Evidence from literature show how relevant monitoring and measurement are to organizations. With a focus on the Public Relations Unit of Ghana's Ministry of Railways Development, this study gathers qualitative data from three officials from the ministry and the Ghana Railways Development Authority to explore the Public Relations monitoring and evaluation tools they employ in their organization. With the use of thematic analysis within the framework of the Excellence Theory and the Systems Theory, findings are analyzed in themes and further discussed with reference to theories and scholarly literature. The findings show that research, media monitoring and social media analytics are the major tools employed by the Public Relations Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development. However, the findings further reveal a conflict of roles between the Ministry and the Railways Development Authority. The study therefore recommends Public Relations efforts to establish the disparities between the two institutions in terms of roles.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.0 Background

Harlow (1976) considers Public Relations (PR) to be a distinctive management function which helps organizations to establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between itself and its publics. Marton (1963) also opined that public relations is a planned, persuasive communications designed to influence significant publics. The concept has also been seen by Grunig and Hunt (1984) as the managed communication behavior of an organization. Also, according to Cutlip, Center, and Broom (1994), public relations is the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends.

Kazokiene and Stravinskiene, (2009, p.92) describe PR measurement and evaluation as the determination of the value of PR decisions to the company, usually expressed through the effectiveness of PR programs (comparing the set target to the obtained result) as well as the progress of company's relationships with their strategic audiences. Jakus (2018) looks at PR measurement in two spectacles; the short term and the long term. According to him, in the short term, PR measurement and evaluation involves assessing the success or failure of specific PR programs, strategies, activities or tactics by measuring the outputs, outtakes and/or outcomes of those programs against a predetermined set of objectives. In the long-term, PR measurement and evaluation involves assessing the success or failure of much broader PR efforts that have as their aim seeking to improve and enhance the relationships that organizations maintain with key constituents. In essence, public relations measurement and monitoring are concerned with the

employment of various strategies to ascertain the returns of a firm's public relations activities to the organization.

Public Relations (PR) measurement and evaluation practices have been major subjects for practitioner and academic research from the late 1970s onwards (Likely and Watson, 2013). In 2008, an international Delphi study of academics, practitioners and professional association leaders found that the top three research topics for public relations were all connected with measurement, expressions of value and the contribution of public relations to an organization (Likely and Watson, 2013). The management function of public relations is most frequently expressed in definitions (Watson and Noble, 2007). Most definitions define the role of public relations and hence serve as the pivot of the evaluation of activities related to the practice.

According to Watson (2005), as early as 1920, US public relations practitioners were discussing the role of evaluation of public relations activity. Noble (2007) asserts that forty years ago, writers predicted that evaluation practices would move from informal judgement to scientifically derived knowledge. At the beginning of the next century, Public Relations evaluation is still earnestly discussed (Watson and Noble, 2007). In the current era of the domination of corporate entities whose activities now largely rely on the internet, public relations measurement, monitoring and evaluation have been at the core of these activities (Olatunji, 2016).

The writings of scholars such as Harlow (1942), Tedlow (1979), Cutlip and Center (1994), Broom and Dozier (1990), Griese (2001) show the transmogrification of the concept of PR measurement and monitoring indicating its relevance within the field of Public Relations. From early times, PR practitioners and organizations had monitored press coverage of their own and others' activities (Harlow, 1942). Most books on public relations across the initial 40–50-year period discussed measurement of the volume of coverage, its length in column inches and whether it was positive

or negative (Halter, 2015). The creation of the clippings or cuttings book became an art form with thick card paper on which clippings were mounted. Plackard and Blackmon gave this advice in 1947: ‘The publicist must learn the art of “pepping up” publicity results. Publicity clippings as such are not sufficiently interesting to show to a client. However, they can be dressed up or dramatised in unusual ways’ (p. 299). Examples given included ‘trick photography’ by blowing cuttings up and then printing large sheets of folded card on which they were placed; graphic presentation of cuttings beneath newspaper mastheads; and displays on large display boards, especially in hall corridors to emphasise the volume.

According to Halter (2015) “today, in both the public and private sectors, accountability and, therefore, measurability are key principles of leadership. In a relentless news environment, leaders are increasingly answerable to new organizational reputation KPIs (a Key Performance Indicator; a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively a company is achieving key business objectives). Communication professionals have not met the growing need to provide an accurate measurement of our work in response to industry requirements. In today’s world of public scrutiny, measurement and evaluation of communication actions need to be more than anecdotal and informal by aligning more similarly to other professions within organizations” (p. 18).

According to Jakus (2018), there is no question that demand for accountability is growing in all marketing disciplines, including public relations. Clients want to measure public relations programs in order to gain insights that will enable them to refine and improve programs, to assess cost effectiveness of different approaches, and to assure a good return on these investments. Organizations are in for yields and as mentioned earlier, Public Relations is concerned with the establishment and maintenance of relationship between an organization and its publics. The achievement of an organization’s PR objectives is hence a success to the overall progress of the

organization. In concert with growing demand, public relations measurement and evaluation is growing in sophistication. Jakus (2018) further opines that “today, there is recognition that public relations programs can be measured and that there is value in doing so” (p. 140). This gives a hint of the relevance of monitoring and measurement to organizations in these contemporary times.

Although recent years have borne witness to a surge in efforts to demonstrate the value of public relations as one of the leading indicators both financially and non-financially for organizational performance (Meng and Berger, 2012; Stacks and Michaelson, 2014), the need to further establish professional standards for measurement and evaluation in public relations practice and enforce the application of such standards is still very much needed (Buhmann, Macnamara and Zerfass, 2019). The Institute for Public Relations Commission on PR Measurement and Evaluation (2003) mentions the employment of Research and media monitoring within the scope of audience attitude, preference and behaviour measurement. And, despite 40 years of research and extensive industry discussion (Volk, 2016), practitioners are still concerned that public relations efforts lack adequate standards and the ability to demonstrate the value of public relations as a professional discipline that supports business excellence (Macnamara, 2014).

Anani-Bossman (2019) also opines that the discussion on the need for accountability in the field of public relations (PR) using research has been a major issue since the 1990s. Bajalia (2020) mentions the need for employees trained in data analytics, the need to develop more creative ways to measure (beyond outputs) and the need to integrate measurement and evaluation across departments as key challenges facing PR monitoring and measurement in firms.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Intensive discussions have taken place among communication practitioners and scholars on challenges related to how to demonstrate the value of public relations for businesses and organizations, how to measure the impact and effectiveness of communication, and how to evaluate the contribution of communication to organizations' business performance (e.g., Gregory and Watson, 2008; Macnamara, 1992, 2014; Meng and Berger, 2012; Van Ruler et al., 2008; Watson, 2012; Watson and Noble, 2014). This is reflective of Grunig (1992)'s statement that PR people continue not to do evaluation research. Consequently, communication practitioners and scholars are constantly exploring effective measurement to validate the contribution of communication to improved organizational performance (e.g., Buhmann et al., 2019; Macnamara, 2015; Meng and Pan, 2012).

While debates on the subject continue in the developed nations, the situation in developing nations, including Ghana, is different. The Ministry of Railways Development has been popping up in the news lately following various railway development projects in the country. The Deputy Minister for Railway Development, Hon. Kwaku Asante-Boateng (Member of Parliament) on Tuesday 14th September, 2021 inaugurated the newly appointed eleven (11) Member Board of Directors for the Ghana Railway Development Authority at the Ministry of Railway Development. In the course of the work of the ministry, there have been the employment of numerous PR tools such as pressers, community engagements, town-hall meetings among other. However, there is very little documented evidence that the practice of public relations by the ministry is guided by systematic monitoring and measurement. Kwansah-Aidoo (2008) even doubts that such a discussion dominates among practitioners and academics in Ghana. He further posits that any evidence of discussion on the subject is undocumented anecdotal support for the

idea that monitoring and evaluation grounded in research within the Public Sector gets little attention in developing countries. This situation depicts the gap in literature regarding Public Relations measurement and monitoring at the Ministry of Railways Development and to a large extent, the public sector in Ghana. In the light of the paucity of research evidence on the PR monitoring and measurement, the goal of this study is to investigate the monitoring and evaluation of PR activities by PR practitioners at the Ministry of Railways Development in Ghana and their relevance to the advancement of the ministry's projects.

### **1.3 Justification for the Study**

The body of knowledge on this subject has increased ever since Jim Grunig made his famous *cri de coeur* (cry from the heart) about the lack of evaluation of PR in 1983 (Starčič & Jakopovič, 2016; Watson & Noble, 2007). This has given rise to numerous papers regarding PR monitoring and measurement as cited many a time in this study. However, the situation in Ghana is different. There is very little literature on PR measurement and evaluation in Ghana. The concept seems not to be given very little attention within the Ghanaian public relations context.

The body of knowledge on the use of research and other monitoring and evaluation tools by practitioners has therefore been on the increase since the 20<sup>th</sup> century when PR began to take shape (Watson, 2012). A lot of these studies have looked at the nature of PR evaluation while others have focused on the challenges of PR measurement and monitoring in firms. However, most of the studies on public relations practice, including how practitioners use research and other measurement and evaluation tools, has mainly been from western perspectives. Lindenmann (2005) gives the historical literary antecedent to the concept of PR measurement and evaluation and all literature cited are of western origin. Thus, models, recommendations and frameworks

developed have naturally been conceptualised to suit western perspectives (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2002; Mersham, Skinner, & Rensburg, 2011; Rensburg & Van Heerden, 2005; Verčič et al., 2001).

Ghana over the last three decades, has undertaken several administrative reforms in the public sector, designed mainly to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and enhance productivity (Mathis & Jackson, 2006; Gulick, 1993; Woode, 2000; Ayee, 2000;). This ranges from meritocratic recruitment, capacity training and staff development, motivation and proper compensation, performance contracts, flexible management, promotion of high ethical standard, restructuring or reengineering, deregulation, introduction of provider-purchaser arrangement, right span of control, re-orienting personnel, and public service ethics among others as implemented by various governments over the years. In the area of Public Relations, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to establish higher values of return on investments (Public Services Commission).

With a focus on the Ministry of Railways Development, this study intends to examine the existence and nature of Public Relations measurement and monitoring within the public sector. This study will serve as one of the very few studies on the topic and hence serve as a reference and employable study whenever the issue of PR measurement and monitoring is put in focus.

#### **1.4 General Objective**

The aim of the research is to examine the tools and methods of PR evaluation at Ghana's Ministry of Railways Development and how they contribute to advancing the work of the ministry.

#### **1.5 Specific Research Objectives**

1. To identify the common Public Relations measurement and monitoring tools employed by PR Department of the Ministry of Railways Development

2. To ascertain the relevance of PR measurement and monitoring to the Ministry of Railways Development

### **1.6 Research Questions**

1. What are the common Public Relations measurement and monitoring tools employed by the PR department of the Ministry of Railways Development in Ghana?
2. How relevant is PR measurement and monitoring to the Ministry of Railways Development?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Public Relations has gradually become an integral and necessary department within a lot of corporate institution worldwide. As a management function, the practice is usually measured and monitored often with a focus on the relevance of Public Relations to the general work of the organization. This study will contribute to literature on the subject. The study will also serve as documented evidence of the various PR measurement tools employed by the PR department of the Ministry of Railways Development indicating the relevance of Public Relations to the ministry/ The study will again fill the gap in literature regarding the measurement and monitoring of Public Relations within the public sector.

### **1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study will focus mainly on Public Relations measurement and monitoring at the Ministry of Railways Development in Ghana with the aim of uncovering the importance of PR activities to the ministry. The Ministry of Railways Development (MoRD) was established by His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo, the President of the Republic of Ghana, in February, 2017, per Executive Instrument (E.I.) 28, 2017, in accordance with section 11 and 13 of the Civil Service

Act, (PNDCL 327). The Ministry is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the rapid development of a modern rail network and associated infrastructure in Ghana. The Vision of the Ministry is to develop a modern, robust and integrated railways system as well as associated infrastructure to serve as a catalyst and a backbone for the transformation of the economy and make Ghana's rail transport system the lead transport system in Africa. The Ministry of Railways Development exists to provide leadership and guidance for the development and modernization of Ghana's railway system and associated infrastructure through; effective policy formulation, investment promotion, market regulation, oversight responsibility, sector development including research & development, asset management and responsive service delivery (Ministry of Railways Development Annual Report, 2018).

The research is a case study of the Ministry of Railways Development. The study shall not go beyond the Ministry of Railways Development thereby limiting the findings to the sector and not the public sector in general.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

This study will be structured into five chapters. Chapter one will be made up of the introduction, statement of problem, research questions and objectives, scope of the study, significance of the study and chapter disposition of the study. Chapter will capture the theoretical foundation, review of related and relevance literature, assumptions, conceptual definitions of terms, operational definitions of concepts and importance of the study. Chapter Three will provide the methodology, methods, research design, population, sampling technique and sample frame and size, sources of data collection and data collection and data collection instruments, techniques of data analysis limitations and de-limitations. Chapter Four will bring to bear the analysis and discussions of key

findings, while Chapter Five will finalize the key findings, draw conclusions and makes some recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of research works related to the subject under study. These studies include analysis of the use of Public Relations monitoring and measurement tools by the institutions including public sector organizations. The chapter also includes definitions and discussions of concepts that help broaden the scope of knowledge on the topic. Finally, this chapter presents the theoretical framework underpinning this study, which is made up of the Excellence Theory of Public Relations and the Systems Theory.

#### **2.2 PR Effectiveness**

Kazokiene and Stravinskiene (2009) posit that interpretation of the general idea of PR effectiveness depends on the selected PR object and aim of research. After summarizing scientific approaches based on different theories, PR effectiveness is described as the value of PR decisions to the company, expressed through the effectiveness of PR programs (comparing the set target to the obtained result) as well as the progress of company's relationships with strategic audiences.

The scholars further opine that the suggested notion of PR effectiveness: emphasizes the value of PR decisions to the company in terms of relationships, names the main features of PR effectiveness such as multiplicity and hierarchical composition of results, stipulates the evaluation method; integrates PR effectiveness on different levels program and corporate (thus permitting to perceive PR activities as the entirety of programs). The stated insights permit suggesting that the presented PR effectiveness notion complies with the changed evaluation paradigm, highlighting the need for complex evaluation of PR effectiveness that is based on a chain reaction of the results of different process stages. Supporting the view that PR effectiveness evaluation should be of a complex

nature, the need to identify elements comprising this complex becomes obvious. The identification is made more difficult due to the absence of the uniform terminology of elements.

The identicalness of elements in PR effectiveness evaluation constructs can be derived from submitted examples or explanations of individual elements. In the mentioned constructs, the following elements are designated as predominant ones: PR objectives, quality of communication messages, PR outputs, outtakes and outcomes (Kazokiene and Stravinskiene, 2009).

PR objectives determine a further direction of an action, and a suitably formulated objective, therefore, guarantees the success of the entire program. The necessity for the evaluation of PR objective is also included in PR effectiveness evaluation principles. Quality of communication messages is associated with the message content and its suitability for the audience (Swinehart, 1979; Bissland, 1990; Gregory, 2001). Phillips (2001) observed that the notion of communication messages' quality is significantly broader than the clarity of messages and suitability for audience. It may also include linguistic assessment (e.g., morphologic, syntactic or semantic).

Despite intense efforts, the development of linguistic evaluation methods is still in an experimental stage. Due to the absence of adequate measures for establishing the quality of communication messages, it has been restricted to the content of communication message. According to Cutlip et al. (2000), Seitel (2001), the dissemination of communication messages represents some of the efforts for coordinating the communication program with the audience, helping to establish the adequacy of messages to the set objectives and having impact on the outcomes of PR programs. Janonis et al. (2007) noted that the selected method of communication is descriptive of the sender, source, recipient and relationships to be created between them. The belief expressed by the authors leads to the assumption that communication messages and their presentation should be included in the complex of PR effectiveness evaluation.

Other mentioned elements of evaluation – PR outputs and outtakes – are reflected in interpretations of PR effectiveness evaluation notion suggested by many scientists (Bissland, 1990; Gregory, 2001; Lindenmann, 2003). This implies that there is a consensus between scientists on PR outputs and outtakes. The need to evaluate PR outputs is predicated on the possibility to establish the outputs of PR specialists and to characterize the PR tactics (Cutlip et al., 2000). Evaluation of PR outtakes is the initial stage of PR impact evaluation, linking the PR actions and the target audience. It reveals the suitability of implemented tactical actions. PR outcomes are focused on deeper cognition that forms beliefs, attitudes and finally conative behavior. These represent an important datum level when assessing the attainment of the set objective.

More so, it may lead to the creation of new PR programs or further development of those already implemented. This belief is formed considering that the PR objective is formulated based on the results of environment studies as well as on the results of previous periods. It is noteworthy that no element describing financial expenditures has been included in the complex of PR effectiveness evaluation. This decision is explained by the fact that financial assessment of PR does not always permit evaluating its effectiveness (Macnamara, 1999).

Again, transmission of messages via cheap, but not always effective means encourages morally irresponsible behavior of specialists (Macnamara, 2000). Efforts to suitably familiarize with the PR effectiveness evaluation process and find out the consistency of the identified elements of evaluation are based upon examples of recommended PR effectiveness evaluation models. It has been observed that known models by Cutlip et al. (2000), Macnamara (1999) distinguish between the stages of input, implementation and impact evaluation. Following logical consistency, it is to be believed that the first stage is described by PR objective, the second, by communication messages and their presentation. The last, impact stage, should encompass all possible PR results,

thus, PR outputs, outtakes and outcomes. Following the defined consistency, further in the article criteria for PR effectiveness evaluation are theoretically substantiated.

### **2.3 The Challenges of PR Evaluation and Management**

The barriers to the more widespread evaluation of public relations activity are many. Dozier (1983) points to several reasons: previous working experience of practitioners, lack of knowledge of research techniques, the manager/technician dichotomy, and the practitioners' participation in decision making. Lindenmann (1990) believed that practitioners were 'not thoroughly aware' of research techniques. He also found that respondents to his survey complained of a lack of money, with 54 per cent spending 3 per cent or less (often much less) on evaluation (Watson & Noble, 2007).

Across studies on public relations measurement and evaluation, professionals commonly cite similar obstacles that prevent them from measuring outcomes, such as cost, time, and lack of expertise (Buhmann et al., 2018; Macnamara, 2014). However, Nothhaft and Stenson (2019) argued that there may be other barriers to measurement and evaluation, and scholarly research that repeats these same barriers may signal "functional stupidity." It is true that professionals have said public relations measurement has become increasingly complex with the rise of social and digital media. In a qualitative study of 25 public relations and communications executives, DiStaso, McCorkindale, and Wright (2011) found that participants felt they had more questions than answers about social media measurement.

Specifically, participants questioned how they should measure "behavioral outcomes, not just reach" and how to "get concrete and meaningful measures of impact...influence behavior" (DiStaso et al., 2011). Ethical issues further complicate the evaluation process. In a qualitative

study of 22 public relations professionals in the United States, Place (2015) found that while some professionals prioritize truth and fairness in their evaluation practices, others have felt the need to selectively represent data to save an organization's reputation or relationships.

The challenge of incorporating measurement and evaluation into communications programs has also been noted in industry reports. In the 2017 Global Communications Report, 54 percent of respondents who worked at agencies and 57 percent of respondents who worked in-house said lack of quantifiable measurement was preventing growth. And in a Cision and PR Week (2018) global survey of communication professionals, 77 percent of respondents indicated that professionals could be better at measuring and demonstrating impact on business objectives.

“Ask any group of PR practitioners around the world to list the major issues facing their discipline, and it is almost certain that evaluation of PR activity will be ranked highly, if not the number one topic” (Watson & Noble, 2014). Public relations measurement and evaluation have long been discussed and debated. In the early days, professionals compiled press clippings and put them into books (Watson, 2012). Today, measurement and evaluation require strategic planning, setting measurable objectives, and interpretation of results that can be used to improve communication strategy (Bajalia, 2020).

Bajalia (2020) references Buhmann, Likely, & Geddes (2018) and Macnamara (2014) who posit that Public Relations professionals recognize the importance of measurement and evaluation; however, research revealed common challenges they face including cost, lack of time, and lack of expertise). Additionally, research indicated that professionals tend to focus on output-level metrics rather than outcomes (Schriner, Swenson, & Gilkerson, 2017; Wright & Hinson, 2016; Global Communications Report, 2016). Though professional organizations have developed guidelines and standards for measuring and evaluating public relations, unlike other professions like

marketing or advertising, “Public relations professionals have consistently failed to achieve consensus on what the basic evaluative measures are or how to conduct the underlying research for evaluating and measuring public relations performance” (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011, p. 1).

## **2.4 The Nature of PR Evaluation**

Several scholars have conducted research to ascertain the nature of Public Relations measurement and evaluation. To a large extent, some of these studies have been advanced into uncovering the scope of PR evaluation. Such research have been reviewed from earlier ones to latest ones in this study.

Lindenmann’s 1988 survey of research activity among PR professionals in the United States suggests a mixed result. According to his research, the majority of the respondents believe that PR evaluation is and can be an integral part of PR programming. More than half agreed it is possible to measure PR outcomes, impact, and effectiveness precisely. Most respondents allocate funds for PR research such that the number of research projects has increased. However, Lindenmann (1990) also found that more than 90% of the respondents believe that PR research is still more talked about than actually done. About 70% felt that most PR research is still “casual and informal rather than scientific and precise” (Watson, 2007).

To Hon (1998) research on PR evaluation can be divided roughly into several main categories. The first category analyses the effect (cognitive, attitudinal, or behavioural) of PR activities on its target public. This method according to Reeves (1983) claims that evaluation must include information on the following – content, persons exposed, desired changes or effect and when and how the effect occurs. Dozier and Ehling (1992) have also conducted a review of literature extensively on communication effects and its implications for PR evaluation. In their view, the

domino model – which posits that communicated messages will cause changes in knowledge, attitude, and behaviour among target publics has limited impact. As the objectives move from message exposure to behavioural change, the likelihood of achievement of objectives decreases. The next category is prescriptive research, whose main goal is to outline the process and importance of evaluation for PR (Hon, 1998). Weiss (1972) strongly supports PR evaluation, but notes constraints such as organizational resistance to change and the tendency of evaluation to show little or no effect.

Broom and Dozier (1983) reiterated that PR evaluation should measure impact rather than process. Dozier (1985) discussed the tendency of PR practitioners to confuse communication products with end results. Organizational resources are focused on measuring output such as the number of news releases and amount of media coverage rather than measuring if the PR program or activity has achieved the desired effects and end result.

Another case study is that of the Armstrong Cork Company, which developed a systematic program for evaluating the value of its product publicity (Marker, 1977). Previously, the success of PR efforts was judged by the volume of press generated. But Marker was forced to develop more meaningful measures when a marketing executive asked him how much the publicity was really worth. One type of PR measurement he developed was the “return-on-investment” model. Marker would calculate by taking the dollar value of print space and broadcast time generated and dividing it by actual project expenditures”.

Some case studies of evaluation have attempted to measure relationship indicators (Hon, 1998). Broom et al. (1997) noted that many scholars and practitioners claim PR is about “building and maintaining an organization’s relationships with its publics”. Thus, relationships between organizations and publics should be a primary focus in PR theory building (Ferguson, 1984).

However, finding a useful definition of relationships in PR is difficult. Academics assume readers know and agree on the meaning and measurement of relationship, but this is not supported by evidence.

## **2.5 Research and PR Practice in Ghana**

Anani-Bossman (2019) mentions that many have argued that the value of what a practitioner does can only be determined through research, measurement and evaluation. Public relations practitioners are required to show return on investment (ROI). Scholars therefore argue that research plays a pivotal role in demonstrating accountability and effectiveness (Austin & Pinkleton, 2008; Jugenheimer et al., 2014; Michaelson & Stacks, 2011, 2014; Xavier, Mehta, & Gregory, 2005). Bowen, Rawlins, and Martin (2012) describe the importance of research in public relations by contending that three-quarters of PR activities are based on research alone.

To Anani-Bossman (2019), these authors point out that public relations management can only be realised through formative and evaluative research. Stacks (2011) and Macnamara (2008) acknowledge that PR has evolved from a technical role to a management role, which is focused on building and maintaining relationships with an organisation and its stakeholders, and it is therefore essential for practitioners to adopt standards that meet the requirements of modern professional management.

Anani-Bossman (2019)'s results give a clear indication that PR practitioners in Ghana have a high regard for research in their daily activities. Although the use of research in public relations has not been widely investigated in Africa, or for that matter Ghana, his study confirms that practitioners do understand the need for research and use research as well. For instance, the majority (87.9%) believed that PR activities require research and that research should be made an integral part of

any PR activity. Grunig (2014), in an interview as part of the Thought leaders in PR measurement series, acknowledged the critical role that research plays in strategic PR: “Without it, the public relations function will continue to serve only in a messenger role and not a strategic role.” Grunig draws a strong correlation between the amount of research a PR department does and the respect and value senior managers have for the communication function.

Overall, the results of Anani-Bossman’s study provide a sound basis for looking at the overall contribution of research to PR efforts. The findings show that studies on research in Ghana focus more on the general use of research. It would therefore be appropriate to focus specifically on the use of evaluation to measure research outcomes. The result is an indication that research in PR practice in Ghana has progressed since the findings of Kwansah-Aidoo (2008). Moreover, research is clearly recognized as important for practitioners in Ghana.

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework**

It is worth noting that Public Relations as a discipline does not have enough original theories (Ihlen and Ruler, 2007). Most theories employed within the discipline have been borrowed from other disciplines. However, Grunig et al.’s Excellence Theory of Public Relations stands out as one which serves as the foundation of the practice of Public Relations across the world. For this reason, it is the pillar on upon which this research is embarked on and shall serve as the framework of the conduct and analysis of the findings in this research.

### **2.6.1 The Excellence Theory of Public Relations**

The excellence theory is a general theory of public relations that resulted from a 15-year study of best practices in communication management funded by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation. Three books were published from the research

(Grunig 1992; Dozier et al. 1995; L. A. Grunig et al. 2002). This general theory incorporates a number of middle-range theories of public relations, including theories of publics, public relations and strategic management, models of public relations, evaluation of public relations, employee communication, public relations roles, gender, diversity, power, activism, ethics and social responsibility, and global public relations.

The excellence theory first explained the value of public relations to organizations and society based on the social responsibility of managerial decisions and the quality of relationships with stakeholder publics. Grunig (2008) opines that the term “excellence” was not chosen to suggest the superiority of the theory or its universal acceptance. Rather, the term was chosen because it was fashionable; and it placed the research in the mainstream of management research. Instead of “excellence,” the Grunig (2008) mentioned that terms such as “best practices in public relations;” “benchmarking public relations practices;” or, descriptively but blandly, “characteristics of an organization’s public relations functions that contribute to organizational effectiveness.” For an organization to be effective, according to the theory, it must behave in ways that solve the problems and satisfy the goals of stakeholders as well as of management. If it does not, stakeholders will either pressure the organization to change or oppose it in ways that add cost and risk to organizational policies and decisions (Grunig et al. 2012).

To behave in socially acceptable ways, organizations must scan their environment to identify publics who are affected by potential organizational decisions or who want organizations to make decisions to solve problems that are important to them. Then, organizations must communicate symmetrically with publics (taking the interests of both the organization and publics into account) to cultivate high-quality, long-term relationships with them.

Based on this theoretical premise about the value of public relations, the excellence theory derived principles of how the function should be organized to maximize this value. First, the research showed that involvement in strategic management was the critical characteristic of excellent public relations. Public relations executives played a strategic managerial role as well as administrative manager role. Public relations also was empowered by having access to key organizational decision-makers who are considered the dominant coalition (Grunig et al., 2008; 2012).

This study is conducted in light of the Excellent Theory of Public Relations. Usually, the essence of Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation is to employ results of PR practices over a period of time in enhancing PR activities of firms and/or organizations in order to improve PR returns on investments. Since the Excellence Theory of Public Relations points to how firms can achieve higher standards and excellence in their PR activities, it will aid in explaining how the Public Relations Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development employs monitoring and measurement to improve upon their successes and attain higher heights.

### **2.6.2 The Systems Theory**

The system theory describes an organization as a set of parts or subsystems which impact on each other and which together interact with the organization's environment. Cutlip et al (2000, P. 229) describe it as: "A system is a set of interacting units which endures through time within an established boundary by responding and adjusting to change pressures from the environment to achieve and maintain goal states". Systems theory provides a useful theoretical underpinning for thinking about the role of PR since it notes that the wellbeing or otherwise of organizations is dependent on establishing and maintaining relationships both within itself and with its environment. It has to adapt and adjust to changes in its environment.

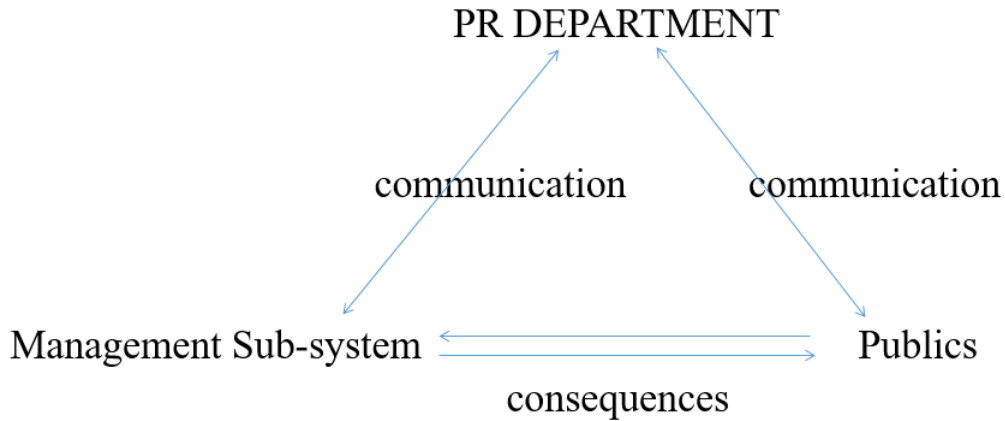
Organizations are part of a social system which comprises of individual groups or publics such as employees, suppliers, distributors, etc. who are involved in it. PR works to initiate and maintain relationships with these groups to enable the organization to achieve its goals.

### **2.6.2.1 Sub-Systems**

Grunig & Hunt (1984) note that organizations have five sub systems which are all interdependent on one another:

1. Production sub-systems: produce the goods or services of the organization
2. Maintenance system: with human resources department which encourages employees to work hard
3. Disposal system: distribute the goods and services and is the marketing department
4. Adaptative sub-systems: helps the organization to adjust when the working environment changes such as the research and development, strategic planning departments
5. Management sub-systems: control the other sub-systems, manage conflicting demands among them and negotiate with others internal and external to the organization often the board and senior management perform this function.

# THE PR FUNCTION IN AN ORGANISATION



*The PR function in an organization as noted by Grunig & Hunt (1984)*

Systems theory emphasizes the interface between an organization and its environment as well as sub-systems within the organizational system and between sub-systems and the organizational whole. The systems perspective underlies the definition of PR as the discipline that maintains mutually beneficial relationships with an organization and its publics. The systems theory is also called the natural systems theory and is the basis for determining efficiency of the various part/sub-systems of an organization.

Due to the fact that the systems approach implies that the organizational whole is composed of interrelated sub-systems, the performance of these sub-systems can affect the entire system or whole. In particular, the PR sub-system contributes to the success or failure of an organization. Management relies on the PR practitioner to initiate and sustain relations with all the various groups of publics. The systems theory is hence employed in this research to examine the relevance of monitoring and measuring the activities of the Public Relations department of the Ministry of

Railways Development. This will aid in examining how the PR Unit of the ministry contributes to the general progress of the various projects embarked on.

Whereas the Systems theory focuses on how Public Relations units in organizations play their part towards the success of the entire organization, the Excellence Theory of Public Relations looks at best practices that will aid an organization to reach higher heights in PR. The employment of these two theories is to be able to explore and explain how the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development in Ghana which is a part of an organization manages to make use of the evaluation of their activities to attain excellence in the field of Public Relations.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the theoretical foundation of the study has been established. The Excellence Theory of Public Relations and the Systems theory will be employed in analyzing the findings of the study. Various concepts related to the topic of the study have also been explored in the bid to establish what other scholars have said about PR measurement and monitoring. However, available literature on Public Relations monitoring and measurement is quite scanty in Ghana. Available studies cover the scope of the Western and European world. Again, there seems to be the absence of a comprehensive Public Relations measurement and monitoring road map which is of public knowledge. It is for this reason that this research seeks to uncover how public relations is monitored and measured at the Ministry of Railways Development in Ghana.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The general aim of the research was to examine how PR monitoring and measurement is done at the Ministry of Railways Development. This study documented all PR evaluation tools available to and employed by the ministry in the bid to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of their PR activities. The qualitative research method will be employed for the study. The use of this method follows the nature of the study which is quite limited to the PR department of the Ministry of Railways and Development; a limited number of persons in the office and the need for detailed information about the PR practices within the department.

#### **3.2 Study Area**

The Ministry of Railways Development (MoRD) was established by His Excellency, the President, in February, 2017, per Executive Instrument (E.I.) 28, 2017, in accordance with section 11 and 13 of the Civil Service Act, (PNDCL 327). The Ministry is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the rapid development of a modern rail network and associated infrastructure in Ghana.

The Ministry is also mandated to ensure the development and formulation of policies, plans, and programmes to guide the development of the rail transport sector for movement of passengers and goods, facilitate trade, industrial development and stimulate economic growth. The overall objective of the railway development programme is to build a modern railway network from the South to the North of Ghana with associated infrastructure to address the imbalance between transport modes for long distance transit and domestic freight movements.

In the area of public relations, two major functions of the ministry stand out; provision, facilitation and supervision of research and dissemination of information within and outside the railway sector

as well as monitoring and evaluation of plans, programmes and projects within the sector. According to the Ministry's Annual Report (2018), due to the increased activities in the sector, the Ministry, in 2019, sought to increase its monitoring of the various projects. There is also the need for increased interaction with the various communities which the rail line will be passing. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Railway Development, in the 2021/2024 budget created a whole section for public sensitization, the writing of press releases and community engagement. This is indicative of the relevance of this research.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

The study employed the qualitative research approach. According to Neuman (2014), qualitative research method examines individuals, organizations, movements, events, and geographic units through detailed, varied, and extensive studies. Yin et al, (2011) indicates that qualitative studies can be used to study social phenomenon under real world conditions by representing the views and perspectives of participants. Again, the qualitative research approach is prevalent in the study of social science research where data collected is developed from small groups of research units and results analyzed without statistical representation. Creswell (2009) asserts that the use of the qualitative approach is one that helps researchers make claims and inquires based on primary knowledge on the constructivist perspective (that is the multiple meaning of individual experiences). It uses comprehensive, verbal descriptions of characteristics, case study and setting dimensional themes. This approach helped to get a deeper understanding of participants' personal knowledge, experiences and practice Public Relations measurement and monitoring at the Ministry of Railways Development and their opinions on how return on investment can be improved. The nature of the topic required that a deeper understanding and detailed information is gathered for analysis. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to do so.

### **3.4 Research Design**

A research design is the ‘procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies’ (Creswell & Clark 2007, p.58). It is the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems with the pertinent (and achievable) empirical research. In other words, the research design sets the procedure on the required data, the methods to be applied to collect and analyze this data, and how all of this is going to answer the research question (Grey, 2014). The research design describes the techniques and the nature of the study. It can be referred to as the overall strategy that is chosen to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring an effective address for the research problem and it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis for data (De Vaus, 2008). In other words, the research design describes the various methods that the researcher uses to go about the overall research process.

This study was hence exploratory in nature as it centered on PR monitoring and measurement within the public sector, specifically, the Ministry of Railways Development on which very little documentation exists. The use of this design follows the fact that no earlier studies existed on the topic under study. The focus was to gain insights and familiarity with the PR monitoring and evaluation methods employed by the PR unit of the ministry.

### **3.5 Population of the Study**

According to Dulock (1993), population as an aggregate of totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. In other words, the population of a study includes all the subjects in the region or locale of the study from which the study group is selected. The study population is the world of units from which the sample size is to be selected for the research (Bell and Bryman, 2007). Since the focus of this study was to examine Public Relations

monitoring, measurement, and evaluation tools and methods in Ghana, the targeted population comprised of all staff who were stationed at the Public Relations Directorate of the Ministry of Railways Development and the Ghana Railways Development Authority. Consequently, the target population for this study was a total of six persons. This number was made up of the Immediate past Head of Public Relations, the Head and Deputy Public Relations Officers, Right to Information Officer and the National Service personal at the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development as well as the Head and Deputy Corporate Affairs Managers of the Ghana Railways Development Authority.

### **3.6 Sampling Technique**

The researcher could not study the entire population; it was therefore necessary to select an aspect of the population to study. The nature of the study required that only persons who wielded enough and accurate knowledge and experiences about the operations of the Public Relations Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development be employed for the study. Additionally, the heads of the unit were unwilling to let their subordinates take part in the study. For these reasons, only persons who were available and willing to participate in the study were sampled. A sample is derived from the population. In other words, the sample is a subset of the population and it involves the actual participants or interviewees in the study. The study is a Qualitative study hence it made use of the non - probability sampling technique. The sampling technique used was the Purposive / Judgmental sampling technique. This is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. It is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Bernard 2002, Lewis & Sheppard 2006). Since this study had the PR Department in

focus, not every staff or worker at the ministry would have an idea of the rudiments of public relations at the Ministry of Railways Development. For this reason, the researcher considered the use of the key persons who were involved in the Public Relations decision making at the ministry hence the employment of the purposive sampling technique.

### **3.7 Sample Size**

A sample is a proportion or subset of a larger group called a population. A good sample is a miniature version of the population of which it is a part – just like it, only smaller.’ (Fink, 2003). Two Public Relations practitioners were selected from the Ministry of Railways Development in Ghana and 1 person from the Ghana Railways Development Authority as a sample for the study. These 3 persons included the immediate past Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Ministry of Railways, the current deputy PRO of the ministry, the head of corporate affairs of the Ghana Railways Development Authority. The senior officers were selected following their involvement in decision making at the ministry whereas the former PRO was expected to offer their experiences working while working with the Ministry in previous years. Additionally, the two officers and the former officer were selected following the realization that they are the ones who are capable of providing the wealth and depth of information needed for the study.

### **3.8 Data Collection Approach**

Any research begins with certain questions, which need to be answered. Data collection is the process of gathering the desirable information carefully, with least possible distortion, so that the analysis may provide answers that are credible and stand to logic (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006).

According to Kabir (2016), data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated

research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. The goal for all data collection is to capture quality evidence that then translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of a convincing and credible answer to questions that have been posed.

The Public Relations practitioners were interviewed based on a list of questions to which follow-up questions were inclusive. The questions were aimed at identifying the relevant issues which will address the research objectives and questions. The interview guide, which was the data collection instrument, included both open ended and close ended questions. The close ended questions usually required participants to answers from among options provided by the researcher. Open-ended questions are questions that ask respondents to provide unstructured or spontaneous answers or to discuss an identified topic (Simmons et al, 2017). Although participants were allowed to express themselves, the interview guide, helped moderate the conversation, and where necessary, follow up questions asked for clarity. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed by the researcher.

### **3.9 Sources of Data**

Two types of data were collected for the study; primary data and secondary data. The data gathered by researcher first-hand is primary data. The researcher collects such data on purpose, because no previous records of the data exist to be accessed by public. In-depth interviews were used to collect the primary data for the study. The data that have been collected and compiled by someone, and are accessible to the public, are known as secondary data. It is the data used by the investigator from previous studies and other sources. The primary data collected for one research study, becomes secondary data when it is further used for another research. Generally, secondary data includes government reports, census data, departmental records, etc. Using such data is less expensive and faster in comparison to primary data (Parveen and Showkat, 2017). In this essay,

the literature review section was done primarily with secondary data. Most of the documents employed are online scholarly articles, journals, research reports and government reports.

### **3.10 Data Processing and Analysis**

Qualitative data from interviews were presented and analyzed using words under the three levels of coding which are open coding, axial coding and selective coding. In qualitative research, the goal of coding is not to count things, but to "fracture" the data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts" (Strauss 1987, p. 29). Gallicano (2013) explains the three levels of coding. For open coding, she explains that basically, you read through your data several times and then start to create tentative labels for chunks of data that summarize what you see happening (not based on existing theory – just based on the meaning that emerges from the data). Record examples of participants' words and establish properties of each code. Axial coding consists of identifying relationships among the open codes. What are the connections among the codes? This will be easier to understand when you see the last chart of this blog post. Then in selective coding, you figure out the core variable that includes all of the data. Then reread the transcripts and selectively code any data that relates to the core variable you identified. The analysis will be in the form of written descriptions of respondent's responses from interviews.

### **3.11 Thematic Analysis (TA)**

The researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data collected for the study. Braun and Clarke (2012) defined thematic analysis as a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into, patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset. Through focusing on meaning *across* a dataset, TA allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. Identifying unique and idiosyncratic meanings and experiences found only within

a single data item is not the focus of TA. This method, then, is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about, and of making sense of those commonalities.

However, what is common is not necessarily in and of itself meaningful or important. The patterns of meaning that TA allows the researcher to identify need to be important in relation to the particular topic and research question being explored. Analysis produces the answer to a question, even if, as in some qualitative research, the specific question that is being answered only becomes apparent through the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2012). Participants' responses from the interviews were analyzed and coded in themes. An interpretive analysis was done, and the findings presented in the form of a research report.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are very vital aspect of research which must not be disregarded, the consent, confidentiality and consequence for the respondents should be of great concern to a researcher (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). The conduct of research requires not only expertise and diligence, but also honesty and integrity. Crewell (2009) argues that ethical consideration must be an integral aspect of research. The right self-determination, anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent must be observed to render the study ethical. In this regard, research participants were assured of the confidentiality of both general and personal information that the research sought to solicit from them. Permission and approval were sought from them. They were told that the research is solely for academic purposes and the outcome of the study would be exclusively based on the analysis of the data collected from them. The participants voluntarily agreed and took part in this study.

Again, interviewees were guaranteed anonymity and informed fully of the study's scope and objectives. Before participating in the study, informants were given the opportunity to raise

questions and obtain more information. Similarly, Creswell (2009) emphasizes the importance of researchers protecting research participants, acknowledging all sources, developing trust with participants, promoting the integrity of the research, guarding against misconduct and impropriety that could reflect negatively on their organizations or institutions, and also coping with new challenging problems when conducting research. Pseudonyms were therefore used to conceal the identities of the participants. In order to conceal the identities of the participants, Participant 1, Participant 2 and Participant 3 are referred to as Mrs. Amina Manu, Mrs. Araba Gyan and Mr. Kofi King respectively. It is worth noting that these are not the real names of the participants.

In order to keep the data obtained from the participants confidential, all recordings and transcribed data obtained from the participants were put in a folder locked with a password know to only the researcher. The folder was further stored on an external hard disk and deleted from the main computer used for the study.

### **3.13 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the study methodology. The study adopted the explorative approach and was purely qualitative in nature. Three officers, 2 from the Ministry of Railways Development and 1 from the Ghana Railways Development Authority were sampled out for the study. An interview guide was used as the data collection instrument. The study made use of thematic analysis to analyze the findings in order to draw conclusions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The general aim of this study was to examine the nature of Public Relations monitoring and evaluation at the Ministry of Railways Development. Specifically, the study sought to identify the specific tools employed by the ministry's PR Unit to monitor and measure its activities as and the relevance of such measurement to the ministry. This chapter presents the results of the study on the basis of data gathered from the field. Participants' experiences and feedback about the monitoring and evaluation of PR activities by the PR unit of the ministry added insight to the research questions posed in this study. In all, three participants were employed for the study.

The three levels of coding in thematic analysis were employed; open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Strauss 1987, p. 29). Gallicano (2013) explains the three levels of coding. For open coding, she explains that basically, the researcher reads through the data several times and then start to create tentative labels for chunks of data that summarize what is seen happening (not based on existing theory – just based on the meanings that emerges from the data). Record examples of participants' words and establish properties of each code. Axial coding consists of identifying relationships among the open codes. What are the connections among the codes? This will be easier to understand when you see the last chart of this blog post. Then in selective coding, you figure out the core variable that includes all of the data. Then reread the transcripts and selectively code any data that relates to the core variable you identified. The analysis was done in the form of written descriptions of participants' responses from interviews.

Five major themes were arrived at during the analysis. The first, second and third theme address the first research question “what are the common Public Relations measurement and monitoring

tools employed by the PR department of the Ministry of Railways Development in Ghana?” The fourth theme responds to the second research question “how relevant is PR measurement and monitoring to the Ministry of Railways Development?” the fifth and sixth theme introduce new information that was not within the scope of the objectives of the research.

Two primary research questions guided this study. The first was “what are the common Public Relations measurement and monitoring tools employed by the PR department of the Ministry of Railways Development in Ghana?” and the second was “how relevant is PR measurement and monitoring to the Ministry of Railways Development?” The findings of the study have been presented in this section.

Analysis of the data gathered through the in-depth interviews conducted brought forth the findings that the Ministry of Railways Development is mainly concerned with policy making whereas the Ghana Railways Development Authority is the implementation agency in charge of implementing all policies drawn by the ministry. Evidence from the interviews again support the findings that the Public Relations Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development considers monitoring and measurement of their activities as the basis of progress and future planning. Again, the analysis revealed that the Ministry of Railways Development employs research, media monitoring and feedback from stakeholders as the key methods of monitoring and measurement. Finally, the thematic analysis showed that the inability to track bloggers who write non-factual stories about the railway industry is not only a challenge to the ministry but to the railway industry as a whole.

Thematic analysis as extensively written on by Braun and Clarke (2012) was employed to code the transcribed interviews and organize the coded data into themes. Each theme as identified in the responses of the participants address a specific research questions. For the purpose of anonymity,

Participant 1, Participant 2 and Participant 3 are referred to as Mrs. Amina Manu, Mrs. Araba Gyan and Mr. Kofi King respectively. These are pseudonyms and not the real names of the participants.

#### **4.2.1 The Use of Research as a Tool of PR Measurement**

In responding to the question regarding the PR monitoring and measurement tools employed by the Ministry of Railways Development, Mrs. Amina Manu mentioned that “we liaise with the Research Directorate”. This followed the Participant’s earlier revelation that the ministry of Railways has a Research Directorate that is in charge of all forms of research whenever the need arises. In effect, the PR Unit liaises with the Research Directorate to conduct research in the quest to ascertain the effectiveness and progress of their public relations activities. Mrs. Amina Manu cites an instance that

For instance, we went for a survey in Takoradi to find out the operation of the train system and we used questionnaires and spoke to those who patronize the things on a daily basis to find out their experience and all. That is what can also be done so sometimes we use questionnaires.

This is indicative of the realization that research seems to be play an integral role in the work of the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways. Research is usually employed to gather the thoughts and experiences of persons who patronize trains and are hence relevant publics to the policies developed by the ministry. With research, the ministry seems to be able to generate feedback in a bid to develop better policies for the railway industry.

The relevance of research as a PR monitoring and measurement tool was confirmed by Mrs. Araba Gyan who stated that,

Usually when the year is ending, and you have to do your end of year report, we do research so that we can be able to know how the year ended and how far our activities got to peak.

In essence, research is often times a necessity when it comes to the writing of end-of-year reports which are usually supposed to be backed by facts and figures. With the use of surveys in most cases, the ministry along with its agencies are able to generate information regarding their public relations activities and their impacts on the ground. However, Mrs. Araba Gyan stated that “frankly, I think we've only done that once or twice” indicating that although the ministry recognizes the contributions of research to its activities, the PR Unit does not frequently conduct research. Mr. Kofi King also affirms this by mentioning that,

Although research plays a key role as I have mentioned, it takes so much time to accomplish and looking at the volume of work at the ministry, it is quite difficult to put all things aside for it.

There is, therefore, the realization that research is one of the PR monitoring and measurement tools employed by the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways. However, regardless of the relevance of research to their activities, it is one that is not often employed.

#### **4.2.2 Media Monitoring**

From the data collected, Mrs. Amina Manu mentioned that media monitoring is the major PR measurement and monitoring tool employed by the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development. Mrs. Amina Manu was emphatic with her statement when she mentioned that “we do media monitoring.” The participant further explained that,

Basically, what we do is that after every program, if we have any event, if we call the media, then we make sure we look at the list that we have. Thus, the media houses that we invited to see if they will bring out the stories. We take the stories and we clip them, then go through to know which ones like reported the exact.... You know they all pick their angles but we also go through and see if everything goes well or maybe someone missed something or misreported and that's when you come out with a rejoinder. If there's nothing like that, you just keep them.

Mrs. Araba Gyan also mentioned newspaper clipping as a key factor in monitoring media reports about the railway industry. The participant further explained this by stating that

We do a lot of newspaper clippings as well. And what I've done for the past two years is I'm always making my assistant checking the dailies, whether there has been any railway news. And once that is, we either photocopy that page of the stories, or we clip and then we, we file them. So that's also another way of measuring, a sort of media monitoring.

The PR Unit of the ministry hence pays keen attention to what the media reports about the activities that the unit which is the intermediary between the ministry and its stakeholders embarks on. This is confirmed by Mr. Kofi King who states that “the media is a very powerful tool but if you don't monitor what is reported about you, your image will soon go down the drain.” This shows how keen the PR Unit is on what the media reports about the activities of the ministry.

Mrs. Amina Manu further indicates that “some of the media monitoring that we do, they are not from our stories. They are from some of the issues that go around that people report on.” In this case, the PR unit does not only monitor what the media houses they contact report about them but also what other journalists and bloggers say about them.

Mrs. Araba Gyan adds to the issue of media monitoring saying that,

In terms of media monitoring that I am talking about, let's say we call the media houses that, who came cover the programs.... I need to reach out to the editors or the writer to ask if it's been done. And if it has, then to know the extent to which it has.

Mrs. Araba Gyan further mentioned social media and general audience feedback as another key area of monitoring. The participant elaborated that

Sometimes we do when we have activities, okay. So for instance, if we have community engagements, or we have stakeholder meetings, and we put it out in the public domain, we need to measure to see where it reached, the number of people that saw that information, got back to us through our Facebook pages or whatever.

For GRDA, our Facebook is very active. Okay. So we get to know whether 300 and something or 1000 people have seen that post. Actually, we get to know that.

Mr. Kofi King concluded by stating that “by conducting these measurements or monitoring, you tend to know the number of people who got engaged by your activity.”

#### **4.2.3 Measurement and Monitoring; The Basis of Progress**

All three participants seemed to be in strong agreement that PR monitoring and measurement is very relevant to the progress of the ministry. For instance, Mrs. Araba Gyan explained that “talk about results, it does!” portraying how beneficial PR monitoring and measurement is to the ministry and the entire railway industry. The participant further states that

We do monitoring and measurement so that we will be able to ascertain the number of people that we've reached. By conducting these measurements or monitoring, you tend to know the number of people who got engaged by your activity.

In view of this evidence, it is realized that the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development is not only interested in being an intermediary but doing so while reaching a large number of audiences. In addressing the relevance of PR monitoring and measurement to the general progress of the Ministry of Railways and the Ghana Railways Authority, Mrs. Araba Gyan explained that it has so far been “positive.” The participant further narrated that

Some have been positive. Okay. Positive in the sense that you're able to really know the work you put in over the year. And that results, makes you fulfilled, okay, because you know you're working. It is because you're able to know your achievements, okay. You're able to also know whether you're working hard or not. Once you undertake those monitoring, it tells you whether your first quarter, you went better than your second quarter, or this year due to COVID-19 I wasn't able to do much it helps you improve on the following year by looking at the type of effort you put into your work.

In affirming the relevance of PR monitoring and measurement to planning towards the following year while the current year is exhausted, Mrs. Amina Manu added by an example that

Let's say at the community engagement, some of the conversations that went on, we were taking notes so we realized that these are some of the things that the people would need. So when we come back, in our report, we take the recommendation then go for further... so let's say for the first next community engagement, we make sure that the problems that we had in the first one, we make sure we work on that one. As PR, in our report, we recommend it to Management so that they will also look at that one.

Similarly, Mr. Kofi King agreed that

...for the ministry to be able to effectively plan its Public Relations activities in order to maximize gains in terms of the relationship between the ministry and its publics, we need to monitor and measure our activities. It does help because, let's say, if we were not monitoring our activities, we wouldn't better them.

It is evident from the data that the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development PR monitoring and measurement to be relevant in the area of planning by assessing progress in order to minimize failures in the coming year.

#### **4.2.4 Cooperation of the Ministry of Railways Development with the Ghana Railways Development Authority**

Data from the participants revealed that the Ministry of Railways Development is mainly a policy making body. In terms of the implementation of policies that are developed by the Ministry, the Ghana Railway Development Authority is in charge. Mr. Kofi King hinted that "the ministry mainly draws the policies and the agencies do the implementation." Mrs. Araba Gyan elaborated on the cooperation between the ministry and the Ghana Railway Authority that "truthfully, the work of the ministry is they are a policy-making body. Okay, right. And then the agencies are under them which we are part we do the development".

This explanation was further rehashed by Mrs. Amina Manu who added to the relationship between the two entities and how things work between them that

Sometimes our works are related so sometimes we have to work together. For instance, the community engagement that the lady at the Ghana Railways Development Authority told you about, they organized it then we had to go with

them. So even the minister is here and some other people are here so we have to work together to see to it.

However, in spite of the working relationship that is supposed to and seems to exist between the Ministry of Railways Development and the Ghana Railway Development Authority, there have been some conflicts over the years. Mrs. Araba Gyan stated while citing an instance that

It's unfortunate that sometimes we clash. We clashed in the sense that you thinking you are the developing party, you have to be the one to be out there speaking to people. But unfortunately, we have interferences from our mother body, which is the ministry. So there's a challenge.

The data implies that the Ministry of Railways Development does not work in isolation but rather with agencies and in the case of this study, the Ghana Railway Development Authority. According to Mrs. Araba Gyan “there's been a bit of a bigger challenge but in all I think that it's been good.”

#### **4.2.5 Setbacks to PR Monitoring and Measurement**

Mr. Kofi King stated that in the face of all the efforts that the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development puts in monitoring and measurement in order to ensure more efficiency,

...the ministry usually faces the issue of misinformation. Sometimes you come across some news stories and you just wonder how on earth they came about. For the want of views, bloggers twist stories into angles that are not true in any way. Look, it's a very terrible thing that the ministry faces.”

Mrs. Araba Gyan adds to this point by mentioning how demanding it is to conduct research and monitor

the media alongside. The participant stated that

...it can be tedious. It can be tedious in the sense that sometimes you need to do the research yourself. It's not a matter of picking up a phone to check but you need to also conduct your own research by speaking to people, by speaking to say bloggers who build up on your story. You've heard some news going on. Sometimes you don't even know the people who do your stories, but you get bad publicity, and tracking them to even find out is hard. So it really makes the measurement bid hard, because you can't track everybody down especially when most of these bloggers are not linked to you directly. And so finding them to do your research is difficult.

Citing a related example, Mrs. Araba Gyan narrated a recent happening within the railway sector that called for the work of the PR Unit. The participant recalled that

Recently, there was a story about somebody who had built a house on a railway line. If you saw the news, it was like two months ago, somebody had built, built a structure on a railway, so, for such a thing, and for PR persons, planning and doing renovation like the authority, you see, and you now have to check across the country whether it's in Ghana or where exactly it is. And so it's either you become reactive by putting a press release out there to know where it's coming from or to take yourself off that story. And once you do nothing, and it turns out that is a railway in Ghana, that is happening, then you have to go back again and then do damage control. And when you take time too it might not go in your favor. So those things, it brings a bit of a challenge, you know that the challenge is on those aspects. It has this possible effect.

The study, therefore, revealed that in their quest to improve upon their efforts by monitoring and measuring their activities, the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development is usually faced with the challenges of difficulty in obtaining all relevant data during the evaluation process and that of misinformation from anonymous media persons who are very difficult to track.

### **4.3 Discussion of Findings**

This study is partly underpinned by the systems theory of public relations which establishes that the wellbeing, progress or otherwise of an organization rests on the establishment and maintenance of working relationships both within the organization and with its external publics (Cutlip et al, 2000). The theory further postulates the crossing point of an organization and its environment as well as sub-systems within the organizational system and between sub-systems and the organization as a whole (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). The findings of the study seem to fall in line with this theory. Evidence from the analysis show that the Public Relations Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development is generally considered as an integral part of the entire ministry. In effect, the PR Unit is given the ultimate role of maintaining relationships between the ministry and

its publics. The results show that the PR Unit of the ministry is one whose contributions and recommendations are well recognized at the Management level; a functional part of the system.

More so, findings from the study indicate that PR decisions are of great value to the Management of the ministry (Kazokiene and Stravinskiene, 2009). The data portrays the inculcation of the annual reports produced by the PR Unit of the ministry in Management's decision making. As indicated in the literature review section of this study, Kazokiene and Stravinskiene (2009) consider PR effectiveness to be the value of PR decisions to an organization though the effectiveness of programs by comparing the set targets to the obtained results. This seems to play out in the work of the Public Relations Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development. The unit seems to be of value to the Management body hence the need for the unit to always measure targets against results; public relations monitoring and measurement.

Swinehart (1979), Bissland (1990), Gregory (2001) and Philips (2001) all opine that the evaluation of PR is a necessity for the development of more feasible objectives that contribute to the success of the entire program. For the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development, evaluation of PR activities is seen to be a recipe for further progress in subsequent years. As evident in the data, the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development annually monitors and measures the success and setbacks of its activities in view of the development of new objectives for the subsequent year. This happening is directly in line with the arguments of Swinehart (1979), Bissland (1990), Gregory (2001) and Philips (2001) who all shared a common thought on the relevance of PR evaluation to the development of organizational objectives. This finding further affirms the writings of Macnamara (1999) who opined that PR evaluation may lead to the creation of new PR programs or further development of those already implemented. With PR monitoring and

evaluation, the Ministry of Railways Development is hence able to develop new and better policies for implementation by its sister objectives.

The findings again reveal that media monitoring is one of the key methods employed by the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development. Although this seems to have paid off so well for the ministry, a major focus of this method makes the activities of the Ministry deviate from the position of Marker (1977) who advocated for the measurement of PR activities by “return-on-investment”. To Marker (1977), the monitoring of the volume and content of press generated is one that is past and posited that PR practitioners consider measuring their gains against their efforts and expenditure on their PR activities

According to Broom et al. (1997), many scholars opine that PR is centered on maintaining an organization’s relationships with its publics. Relationships between the Ministry of Railways Development and its publics should be a primary focus as Ferguson, (1984) opined that the relationship between an organization and its publics should be the primary focus. The PR Unit of the Ministry seems to have been keen on ensuring success in this area. Per the findings, the unit seems to have been able to build and maintain cooperative relationships between itself and the general public whose lives are in one way or the other affected by the railways. However, evidence from the data analyzed show that the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways seems to have clashes with the Ghana Railway Development Authority. In essence, the PR Unit has not been able to iron out the roles and obligations of the Ministry from that of the Authority. This seems to be having adverse effects on the work of both entities. Evidence from the data indicates a conflict and an interplay of roles between the PR Units of the ministry and the authority. This defeats the role of public relations as postulated by Ferguson (1984) that practitioners are supposed to ensure a working relationship between their organization and its publics.

For an organization to obtain excellence in public relations, the Public Relations practitioners within the firm should be part of the dominant coalition (Grunig et al., 2008; 2012). The Managerial framework of the Ministry of Railways Development permits the Public Relations officer to sit in decisions making meetings. The findings show that the head of Public Relations is a part of Management. The Excellence Theory of Public Relations, therefore, plays out in the ministry since the theory mainly advocates for best practices in Public Relations and is keen on making Public Relations part of the dominant coalition. This according to Grunig et al. (2012), the value of Public Relations will be better seen. Through the lens of the Excellence Theory, it is evident that the ministry is often in a comfortable position to solve the problems and satisfy the goals of both stakeholders and management. Additionally, by conducting regular monitoring and measurement of their activities, the PR Unit and the Ministry of Railways Development as a whole is seen to be striving towards attaining “excellence” in Public Relations.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The findings and the analysis of the data collected have been presented in this chapter. The use of thematic analysis led to the discovery of five themes out of the data collected. The findings reveal that media monitoring and surveys are mainly employed by the Public Relations Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development. The findings also show that in spite of the strive towards excellence in public relations, the PR Units of both the Ministry of Railways and the Ghana Railways Authority are usually faced with issues of conflict roles and responsibilities.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the data analyzed in the previous chapter. Some limitations of the study have also been captured here. This study sought to identify the tools and methods employed by the Ministry of Railways Development in monitoring and measuring their public relations activities and how relevant PR monitoring and evaluation is to the Ministry.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The general aim of the study was to examine the tools and methods of PR evaluation at Ghana's Ministry of Railways Development and how they contribute to advancing the work of the ministry. Specifically, to identify the common Public Relations measurement and monitoring tools employed by the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development and to ascertain the relevance of PR monitoring and measurement and monitoring to the Ministry of Railways Development. In order to achieve the primary objective of the study, the qualitative approach was employed for the study. The population of the study was made up of all PR officers at the Ministry of Railways Development and the Ghana Railway Development Authority. Three officers made up of the Deputy Head of Public relations of the Ministry of Railways Development, the former Head of Public Relations of the Ministry of Railways Development and the Head of Corporate Affairs of the Ghana Railways Development Authority were sampled for the study. The Purposive sampling technique was used in this study. An interview guide was used as the data collection instrument. Data gathered was transcribed, written out and analyzed using thematic analysis.

From the findings, it is evident that the Ministry of Railways Development mainly deals with policy development while the agencies such as the Ghana Railways Development Authority handle the implementation of policies. However, the ministry does not only concern itself with just the development of policies but partners with the agencies to get works done. For this reason, the work of the Public Relations Unit becomes very crucial. The Unit serves as the intermediary and the mouthpiece of the ministry safeguarding its image against disrepute.

The study identified media monitoring and research as the major tools used by the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development for the measurement of their public relations activities. Media monitoring in essence specifically refers to newspaper clippings, social media analytics and the observance of traditional media stories. By doing so, the findings reveal that by monitoring media reports, the PR unit of the ministry is able to correct wrong reports and track down journalists and bloggers who write false news about the ministry and its duties. However, the ministry along with its agencies are usually faced with the difficulty of tracking down bloggers since they are usually not close persons like professional journalists with whom the ministry and agencies deal.

The findings further showed that monitoring and measurement of public relations activities is of relevance and value to the Ministry of Railways Development as a whole. By evaluating the successes and failures of their activities, the ministry is able to properly plan, build upon the successes and minimize the failures. To the ministry, monitoring and evaluation of public relations activities is the backbone of proper planning and progress in subsequent years within the railway sector.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

It was revealed that the Ministry of Railways Development holds the work of its Public Relations Unit in high esteem since the unit is mainly in charge of safeguarding the image of the ministry. For the Public Relations Unit, monitoring and evaluation of their activities is relevant to directing the path of the ministry and regulating its activities. In doing so, the unit monitors what the media reports about it and conducts surveys to ascertain public perception about its activities. Since the ministry relies on the agencies when it comes to policy implementation, the Ghana Railways Development Authority also monitors the media, conducts surveys and analysis social media posts to measure the effectiveness of their public relations activities. This goes a long way to impact the mother body, the Ministry of Railways Development.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that the PR Unit of the Ministry of Railways Development and the Corporate Affairs Unit of the Ghana Railways Development Authority should meet to draw the lines between the roles of the two institutions. The conflict of roles between the two institutions should be addressed in order to foster stronger cooperation that will better advance successes within the railway sector.

It is again recommended that opportunities such as training programmes and seminars should be given to the PR officers at the Ministry of Railways Development to upgrade themselves in the area of Public Relations Monitoring and Measurement. With the advent of new media technologies, the PR Unit can find additional means of monitoring and evaluating the progress of their activities in order to attain excellence in public relations. This will enable the PR unit and the ministry as a whole to reach higher heights.

The study also recommends that future studies should consider examining PR monitoring and measurement in other public institutions. When necessary, PR monitoring and measurement frameworks should be developed for public institutions generally in Ghana. This will ensure proper and efficient monitoring and evaluation of PR activities within the public sector resulting in higher return on investments.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **TOPIC: PUBLIC RELATIONS MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING AT THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, GHANA**

This Interview Guide is to aid in gathering your knowledge, thoughts and experiences regarding Public Relations monitoring and measurement methods at the Ministry of Railways Development and how relevant monitoring and evaluation is to the work of the ministry. All information that you provide will be for academic purpose only hence a high level of confidentiality is assured. The final research work will be made available to you for your perusal. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Interviewer: Kezia Kuleape (Ghana Institute of Journalism M. A. Public Relations – Regular)**

#### **SECTION A: KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE WITH THE MINISTRY**

1. How long have you worked in the PR department at the Ministry of Railways Development?
2. What position do you occupy in the PR unit/department at the ministry?
3. How many officers work in PR unit or department?

#### **SECTION B: PR MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING TOOLS**

4. Does the PR unit/department do monitoring and measurement of their activities?
5. If yes, what is the purpose of conducting PR monitoring and measurement?
6. What tools and methods are used in monitoring and evaluating PR activities in the firm?

#### **SECTION C: RELEVANCE OF PR MEASUREMENT IN GHANA**

7. Does the monitoring and measurement of PR in your firm yield any results?
8. If yes, what are some of these results?
9. Do you personally consider PR monitoring and evaluation as relevant? Why?

#### **SECTION D: CHALLENGES REGARDING PR MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING**

10. What are some of the challenges that you face during monitoring and evaluation?
11. Any further thoughts or comments?

**THANK YOU!**

**APPENDIX 2**  
**CODING FRAME**

<b>THEME</b>	<b>CODES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<p><b>The use of Research as a Tool of PR Measurement</b></p>	<p>The Unit liaises with the Research Directorate</p> <p>Surveys play a key role in the monitoring and measurement process</p> <p>Conducting surveys involve the gathering of the experiences of passengers who make use of the railway lines</p> <p>But research is not often employed by both the Ministry and the Authority</p> <p>Research is usually difficult to conduct</p>	<p>The nature of research for evaluation and its relevance to monitoring and measurement of PR activities</p>
<p><b>Media Monitoring</b></p>	<p>Monitoring media reports helps to know what’s being reported about the ministry</p> <p>It involves newspaper clippings</p> <p>Media houses that cover stories for the ministry are contacted to follow the progress and accuracy of stories</p> <p>Inaccurate stories are either pulled down or corrected</p> <p>Bloggers who do random stories about the ministry are also monitored</p> <p>Social media monitoring is done to know the reach of posts and publications</p>	<p>How the Ministry of Railways Development and the Ghana Railways Development Authority monitors the media and the scope of media monitoring</p>

<p><b>Measurement and Monitoring; The Basis of Progress</b></p>	<p>Measurement and Monitoring is difficult but worth doing</p> <p>Social media monitoring helps to ascertain the number of people reached by posts</p> <p>Monitoring and measurement helps to know the number of persons who got engaged in the Ministry’s activities</p> <p>Positive feedback from monitoring and measurement brings fulfillment</p> <p>Tracking of achievements</p> <p>Informs future planning and action</p> <p>Maximizing gains</p>	<p>The importance of monitoring and measurement to the Ministry of Railways</p> <p>Development to planning and making progress</p>
<p><b>Cooperation of the Ministry of Railways Development with the Ghana Railways Development Authority</b></p>	<p>The Ministry is concerned with policy making</p> <p>The Authority deals with policy implementation</p> <p>There is usually conflict of roles between the two entities</p> <p>The need to work together</p>	<p>Joint action between the Ministry of Railways</p> <p>Development with the Ghana Railways</p> <p>Development Authority and conflict of roles that emerge</p>
<p><b>Setbacks to PR Monitoring and Measurement</b></p>	<p>Monitoring and measurement is tedious</p> <p>Some bloggers are difficult to track</p> <p>Correcting false news is difficult</p> <p>Misinformation is the major issue</p>	<p>The challenges faced by the Ministry of Railways</p> <p>Development during the process of PR monitoring and measurement</p>