

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE IN THE GHANA POLICE SERVICE

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**A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA
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JULY, 2017

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I Justice Abudulai Issah declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and dully acknowledged, it is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE.....

DATED.....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR:.....

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my entire family especially, my beloved mother Mrs. Rosina Timbila Dokurugu, my dad, Inspr. Charles Abudulai Kariwoni (Rtd), my wife and children, not forgetting my lovely sisters Linda, Juliana, Irene and Rachael for their love, support and encouragement. My little brother Albin is also not forgotten. May the Almighty God continue to keep us together as one great lovely and prosperous family.



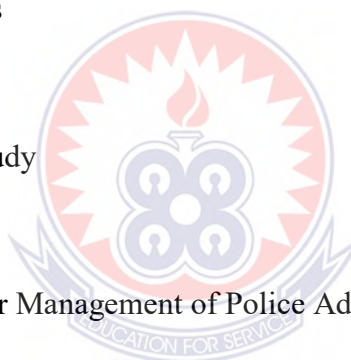
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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate and describe the nature of Public Relations practice in the Ghana Police Service. This followed the limited assessment of the nature of Public Relations practice within the Service by previous studies. The study is qualitative in nature and data was taken from interviews using a semi-structured interview guide while the coorientation theory and Public Relations roles theory were employed for the analysis of the nuances of Public Relations practice in the Service. Findings of the study reveal that even though Public Relations is visibly seen to be located at management on the organisational chart of the Police Service, the practitioners sit in management meetings merely as “observers” since the management function role of the Public Relations practitioners has been relegated to the background. The study confirmed that although the Public Relations practitioners employed both two-way and one-way methods of communication, the practitioners were gradually gravitating more towards the use of two-way communication which is seen in Public Relations as the best approach to engaging the publics of an organisation. The study concludes that although the Public Relations units of the Ghana Police Service have been fraught with huge challenges, the police Public Relations officers have always been at the fore-front in communicating the rules of engagement of the service to its numerous publics.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the introductory components of the study are provided. These include the background to the study, Research Problem, Research Objectives, Research Questions, significance of the study, Scope of the study and finally, organisation of the study.

1.2 Background to the Study

Many scholars in Public Relations (PR) believe that effective communication is the best and surest way to maintaining and sustaining relationships. Tench and Yeomans (2006) maintain that public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and co-operation between an organisation and its publics. The scholars (Tench & Yeomans, 2006) state further that effective Public Relations practice helps management to deal with issues regarding their internal and external publics. However, Cutlip, Center and Broom (2009) postulate that Public Relations as a profession is often either misunderstood or deliberately misinterpreted; and therefore used in a pejorative way associating it with propaganda, economy of the truth, or evasion.

In what appears to reinforce the assertions of Tench and Yeomans (2006) and Cutlip, Center and Broom's (2009) claim, Amoakohene (2002) points to the fact that the nomenclature of most organisations' Public Relations units have always been a source of controversy with all manner of designations being used interchangeably as either a directorate, department or a unit. Again, titles such as Public Relations, Public

Affairs, Corporate Communication, Investor Relations, Community Relations among others are examples of titles and designations that most organisations normally use to describe their Public Relations Units (Seitel 2007). Heath and Coombs (2006) support the views of Seitel (2007) and argue that the development makes the concept of Public Relations even more difficult to explain because the profession may mean differently to chief executive officers (CEOs) of organisations and their publics.

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2009) stress further that because most organisations don't attach much importance to the Public Relations units, they only acknowledge the importance of Public Relations when things go wrong and in times of crisis. Public Relations therefore works to build and maintain a good image through acceptable organisational practices aimed at fostering good neighbourliness, rapport and support for the organisation concerned (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2009).

Similarly, Gyan (1991) notes that Public Relations both as a profession and an academic discipline has received very little attention in our part of the world. The situation could be attributed to the relative newness of the concept in Ghana. The scholar maintains that Public Relations practice has been negatively perceived by those who profess to practice it as well as those who are supposed to benefit from its practice. Again, while management seem not to appreciate the importance of Public Relations, the numerous publics do not also appear to understand the profession, and the practitioners themselves have for the most part been incapable of explaining to both management and their various publics what the profession entails (Gyan, 1991).

However, scholars such as Grunig (1992) and Seitel (2007) insist that Public Relations is essential to all organisations irrespective of its nature or size because

effective communication helps organisations to maintain a positive image and reputation as well as communicating its social philosophy. Again, Public Relations is an important function of every organisation because it provides the avenue for organisations to effectively monitor and interact with its key groups within and outside the organisation. The scholars (Grunig, 1992; Setiel, 2007) maintain that Public Relations manages communication between an organisation and its publics by building and enhancing relationships that benefit both parties.

While this is the case, “many studies reveal problems in Police-civilian relationships not only in the developing world but also in more developed economies. The Police in most cases are viewed with suspicion and mistrust. They are disrespected, accused of various crimes and misdemeanours, abused, attacked and often denied of public support. Attempts towards changing the usually adversarial relationship between the police and civilians into one that is co-operative and mutually-beneficial are often uncoordinated and unsystematic” (Amoakohene, 2002, p.71; Crew, 1999 & Dunlap, 2000). For example, the work of Ofori (2009) on public perception of policing in Ghana found that the relationship between the Ghanaian Police and their external publics was very poor as most of the activities of the Police were always misconstrued by the external public to be negative. The scholar notes that because of the poor relationship that exists between the police and civilians in Ghana, Public Relations practice becomes very difficult especially when the public perception about the Police is always seen as negative. Again, information in most security agencies especially the Police is classified, so this situation makes it difficult for the media to always access detailed information on security matters and that always affects the police-media relationship (Ofori, 2009). Earlier, Aning (2002) had made similar

observations. He noted that several reasons accounted for the almost love-hate nature of Police-Public Relations in Ghana – the public has an underlying sense of mistrust and discomfort about how the Ghana Police always handle security issues in the country. The scholar points out further that the Ghana Police Service performs one of the most essential and key services to the state, and yet it is also one of the most misunderstood and misperceived state organisations (Aning, 2002).

Historically, policing in Ghana – then Gold Coast - was introduced by the British Colonial authorities in 1821. Prior to that, policing or maintenance of law and order was the responsibility of traditional authorities such as local chiefs and herdsmen who employed unpaid messengers to carry out such functions in their respective communities (Sedame, 2011). By 1952, a number of Africans were enlisted into the Ghana Police Force as junior officers. Then in 1958, the first Ghanaian police commissioner, Mr. E.R.T Madjitey was appointed to head the Police Force, now the Ghana Police Service which ended the British leadership of the Service (Ofori, 2009).

Amoakohene (2002) notes that the image of the Ghana Police Service has been created largely through public perception rather than a conscious effort by the service to build a positive image for itself. The Ghanaian media has reported and continues to report negatively about the activities of the Ghana Police service which creates a bad image for the Service. For example, acts and omission of the Police personnel such as involvement in armed robbery, corruption, unlawful shooting of civilians, and unlawful arrests among others are traditional behaviour of the personnel which does not promote a positive image for the police service (Amoakohene, 2002). Similarly, Ofori (2009) further observes that a vibrant Public Relations Department is critical to the Ghana Police Service because their activities are often misconstrued by members

of the public as negative. Donkor (2010) corroborates Ofori's (2009) view and argues that in the 21st Century world, policing duties must emphasise fostering and maintaining good relationship between it and the civilian populations. The scholar (Donkor, 2010) further avers that the police-public relations practitioners have always been at the forefront in communicating the actions of the police to the public. The scholar laments on what is described as the "master-servant" relationship that exists between senior police officers and their subordinates which has a ripple effect on how the police relates to the civilian population in Ghana.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana captures the status of the Ghana Police Service under chapter 15 and clearly states inter alia as follows:

1. There shall be a Police service of Ghana
2. No person or authority shall raise any Police service except by or under the authority of an act of parliament.
3. The Police service shall be equipped and maintained to perform its traditional role of maintaining law and order. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana also empowers the Ghana Police service to perform the following functions;
 - Protect life and property
 - Prevent and detect crime
 - Apprehend and prosecute offenders
 - Duly enforce all laws and regulations with which it is directly charged.

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP) is the head of the Ghana Police Service and controls as well as directs all operational and administrative functions of the Ghana Police Service.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Amoakohene (2002) carried out a general assessment of the Public Relations activities within the Ghana Police Service and found that Public Relations practice had received very little recognition and credibility and therefore activities of the Public Relations Department of the Ghana Police Service had been relegated to the background of policing activities. Her study further revealed the following findings;

- The nature of communication at the Public Relations department was one- way.
- The functions and roles of the Public Relations department were not clearly defined by the Police administration
- Image and reputation management of the Police organisation was being poorly handled by the Public Relations department.
- The Public Relations practitioners in the Ghana Police Service did not possess the requisite qualification in Public Relations or communication and therefore their performance fell below expectation.

Since Amoakohene's (2002) studies, minimal research has been conducted on the nature of Public Relations practices in the Ghana Police Service. This is in spite of the fact that new dynamics have emerged within the Public Relations profession, in regard to technology (laptop computers, smart phones, projectors, tablets) as well as the use of social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram) to engage their numerous publics in two-way communication and the development of new strategies and techniques of communication management with both internal and external publics. Most of the literature available on Public Relations practices within the Service have concentrated heavily on issues relating to corruption in the police service, public perception of policing in Ghana, and police personnel's perception of the Public

Relations department. Not surprisingly, these studies had been quite discrete and limited in scope. For instance, Baffoe-Antwi (2008) investigated the perception of Police personnel about Public Relations practices in the Ghana Police Service while Ofori (2009) studied public perception of policing in Ghana. These were somewhat sporadic attempts to describe or assess the nature of Public Relations in the Service which, however, did not seem to provide a clearer picture of the issues in a broader perspective. Again, these researchers had heavily restricted their studies to the Public Relations Directorate at the Police Headquarters, without incorporating Public Relations practices in other regions. This study therefore sought to comprehensively examine Public Relations practices within the Ghana Police, with focus on the Public Relations directorate as well as some regional Public Relations Units.

1.4 Research Objectives

Public Relations is concerned with effective communication which is the surest way to build and maintain relationships among the organisation and its critical publics or stakeholders. These stakeholders are always interested in what the organisation is doing to meet their needs and concerns. In order to understand Public Relations practice in the Ghana Police Service, this study sought to:

1. Investigate the position of Public Relations in the Ghana Police Service.
2. Assess the roles played by the Police Public Relations officers.
3. Investigate and describe the communication strategies employed by the Public Relations Department of the Ghana Police Service.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions are posed;

1. What is the position of Public Relations in the Ghana Police Service?
2. What are the roles played by the Police Public Relations officers?
3. What are the communication strategies employed by the Public Relations Department of the Ghana Police Service?

1.6 Significance of the Study

As established earlier in the background of this study, public relations as a profession has negatively been perceived by most organisations and their Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) because the concept of Public Relations has not been adequately explained, understood and accepted as a profession. The study will afford the Police Public Relations practitioners the opportunity to develop new strategies for communication, relationships building as well as image and reputation management. Additionally, the study will bridge any gap that may exist between theory and practice in Public Relations.

Furthermore, it will help the Public Relations Department of the Police Service better explain the actions and the rules of engagement of the Police to its numerous publics which can go a long way to enhance the Police-Public Relations. Also, the study will help the practitioners map out new strategies to counsel management on communication issues as well as collaborate with management to address the grievances emanating from its publics with regard to complaints against police personnel.

Finally, the study will definitely elucidate the understanding of Public Relations practice in the Ghana Police Service and also augment the frontiers of knowledge

other researchers have already done on Public Relations practice generally as well as the Ghana Police Service.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study focused on Public Relations practice within the Ghanaian context. Specifically, the study centred on Public Relations practice within the Ghana Police Service. The study therefore examined the roles and functions of the Police Public Relations practitioners in the Ghana Police Service as well as the nature of communication and the position of Public Relations within the organisation. For the purpose of this study, six Police Public Relations officers, representing five regions which include Greater Accra, Tema Region, Ashanti, Eastern, Western as well as the main headquarters in Accra were interviewed by the researcher and the necessary information was elicited. The main justification for the choice of these six Public Relations practitioners is because they are the spokespersons for the organisation in the various regions and therefore possess a wealth of knowledge on Public Relations practices within the organisation.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the background to the study, statement of the research problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and finally organisation of the study.

Chapter two deals with literature review, theoretical framework, and review of related and relevant literature.

Chapter three deals with methodology, approach, research design, population, sampling method, sample size, data collection instruments and finally data analysis.

Chapter four analyses the findings of the research while chapter five summarises the findings, draws conclusions, and provides suggestions for further studies.

1.9 Operational Definition of Concepts

Public Relations: In this study, Public Relations means using communication to maintain cordial relationship between an organisation and its publics.

Publics: In this study, publics means individuals or groups who have interest in an organisation's activities and can also impact on it.

Boundary-spanning role: In this study, boundary spanning role means a function that a Public Relations practitioner must perform by ensuring constant interaction between an organisation and its internal and external publics.

Corporate Image: In this study, corporate image is a term used to describe how a whole organisation's overall performance is measured either positively or negatively.

Ethics: In this study, ethics refers to the concepts of right and wrong behaviour by Public Relations practitioners.

Public Opinion: In this study, public opinion means the aggregate views held by the publics of an organisation on a particular issue at a particular point in time.

Management: In this study, management means the policy making body of an organisation who are also the topmost personnel of that organisation.

Position: In this study, position means the location of Public Relations practitioners on the organisational chart which indicates his or her level in the hierarchy of the organisation.

Educational levels: In this study, educational level refers to the highest qualification that a Public Relations officer holds in an organisation.

Practitioner: In this study, practitioner means anybody who is engaged by an organisation for Public Relations practice.

Communication strategy: In this study, communication strategy means channels used by Public Relations practitioners to effectively communicate with their publics.

Media Relations: In this study, media relations means cultivating a lasting relationship with the various media that an organisation engages for their programmes.

Community Relations: In this study, community relations means Public Relations practitioners using two-way communication to frequently interact with the various communities that the organisation operates.

Two-way communication: In this study, two-way communication means engaging in an open communication by Public Relations practitioners and getting feedback from their publics.

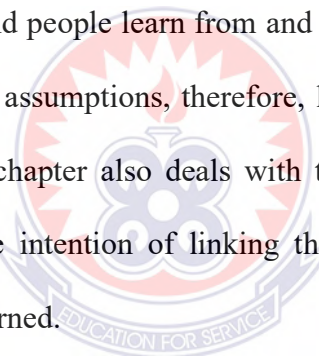
Crisis: In this study, crisis means when an organisation is engulfed with serious problems that can threaten its continuous survival.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This aspect of the study is a review of secondary data that is relevant to the study. According to Taylor (2008), a review of literature is basically an evaluation of what accredited scholars or researchers have already written on a topic. The scholar argues that the review consists of an overview, a summary and evaluation or critique of the existing knowledge about a specific area of research. Baxter and Babbie (2004) contend that a review of literature is simply a comprehensive survey of what researchers have already done on a topic area. Neuman (2003) points out that knowledge accumulates and people learn from and build on what others have already done. Based on the above assumptions, therefore, literature was reviewed on related works on the topic. The chapter also deals with the theoretical underpinnings that guided the study with the intention of linking theory to practice as far as Public Relations practice is concerned.

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a cross and a sunburst above it. The shield is surrounded by a wreath. Below the shield, the motto "EDUCATION FOR SERVICE" is written in a banner. The entire emblem is set against a background of radiating lines.

2.1.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1.1.0 Defining Public Relations

Public Relations (PR) as an academic discipline and a profession within the Social Sciences has been given different definitions by various scholars. For instance, Seitel (2007) defines Public Relations as “a planned process to influence public opinion, through sound character and proper performance, based on mutually satisfactory two-way communication” (p.4). Center and Jackson (2003) define Public Relations as communication with various publics because Public Relations helps in managing organisational relationships with internal and external publics whose support is crucial

to the achievement of organisational goals. The scholars argue that the heart of Public Relations is in communication and therefore any good policies and programmes of an organisation are not beneficial if they are not well communicated to the various publics of whom they are meant.

Broom and Dozier (1990) argue that Public Relations practice is all-embracing because public relations stretches out to all the publics of an organisation which helps to maintain and sustain relationships. Similarly, Dozier, Grunig and Grunig (1995) maintain that public relations has a significant role to play for organisations because, the public relations practitioner has the ability to play the role of a mediator between an organisation and its publics. Again, the public relations practitioner is also able to evaluate and interpret opinions, attitudes and aspirations of the publics of an organisation. This therefore makes the role of the public relations practitioner significant since he or she can help the organisation achieve its goals.

Dozier and Broom (1995) assert that public relations plays a management function role. The scholars stress further that public relations involves the management of issues in an organisation as well as counselling management on the best ways to resolve issues that arise in an organisation.

In the opinion of Kitchen (2006), effective Public Relations requires the following; communication skills, expertise in dealing with various groups of publics, dealing with different media, knowledge of communication channels, knowing the dynamics of public opinion, and sustaining relationships with various publics of an organisation among others.

Tench and Yeomans (2009) notes that Harlow (1976) found 472 different definitions of Public Relations coined between 1900 and 1975. According to Tench and Yeomans (2009), Harlow (1976) built his own definition of Public Relations from these findings:

Public Relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organisation and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinions; defines and emphasises the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; help management to keep abreast of and effectively utilise change; serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Harlow, 1976, cited in Tench & Yeomans, 2006, p.4-5).

According to Grunig (1993), public relations is a management function because the public relations practitioner has the responsibility of collaborating with management to diagnose communication problems and also find solutions to them. Grunig (1993) notes further that the public relations practitioner must function as a conveyor of ideas, and a tool for providing information as well as explaining the impacts of such information to both management and the publics of an organisation.

The obvious tasks of Public Relations practitioners are clearly spelt out in the numerous definitions advanced by the various scholars in the Public Relations

discipline. It is in this breath regarded as a science and/or as an art; and running through these definitions is the fact that Public Relations practice is essential in providing mutual understanding, rapport and goodwill between an organisation and its many publics.

A critical analysis of most of these definitions of Public Relations reveals that Public Relations encompasses two-way communication which is seen as the best way to maintaining and sustaining relationships between organisations and their publics. Secondly, the counseling role of the PR practitioner is very important because Public Relations aims at ensuring a positive image and reputation for the organisation which at the same time can enable it to communicate its social philosophy.

2.1.1.2 The Position of Public Relations in Organisations

Talking about organisations and the importance they attach to Public Relations, what immediately comes to mind is the exact position that the Public Relations Officer occupies or should occupy in his or her organisation. In other words, where Public Relations is located on the organisational hierarchy is a very important issue that cannot be ignored as far as Public Relations practice is concerned (Gyan, 1991). Gyan (1991) further explains that the location of Public Relations on the organisational chart of institutions is sometimes influenced by how the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) understands what Public Relations stands for. This is because Public Relations means differently to individuals and organisations which automatically influences the exact placement of Public Relations on the organisational hierarchy (Gyan, 1991).

Scholars such as Cutlip, Center and Broom (2009) note that some Public Relations practitioners may not immediately enjoy the position of management function because

the person concerned may not qualify to participate in top management decisions due to various factors such as low educational levels, inexperience or how much contributions Public Relations has made in achievements of organisational successes in the past. A critical analysis of most definitions of Public Relations emphasise that Public Relations must occupy a management position.

Grunig (1992) points out that some conflicts may occur between Public Relations officers and some heads of department due to friction especially if Public Relation is not placed at the management position. Cutlip et al (2009) corroborate Grunig's (1992) assertion and state that, staff of marketing, human resource, legal or advertising departments may clash with Public Relations practitioners if Public Relations is not placed at management position or when they are subsumed under any of such departments.

Although Public Relations may not enjoy automatic membership of the top management, most Public Relations scholars note that no matter the levels of Public Relations officers, they must have easy access to top management and preferably the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). In the case of the police Public Relations practitioners, they must have easy access to the Inspector- General of Police (IGP) and other top management members as well as influence the policies and programmes of the Service.

2.1.1.3 Models of Public Relations

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), one of the most useful ways of thinking about Public Relations has been through the description of Public Relations models that identify the central ideas of Public Relations and how they are related to each other.

Grunig and Hunt (1984) therefore produced four models of Public Relations based on communication, research and ethics. However, with the passage of time, Dozier, Grunig and Grunig (1995) later proposed new models that have enriched our understanding of how Public Relations is practiced. The original four models of Grunig and Hunt (1984) are discussed briefly below:

The Press Agency Model: This is a model where information is one-way. That is from the organisation to its publics. This model is described as the oldest form of Public Relations and it is synonymous with promotion and publicity. Public Relations practitioners operating under this model are always looking for opportunities to get their organisation's name favourably mentioned in the media. They do not conduct research about their publics. Practitioners of this model normally use propaganda tactics such as use of celebrity names and attention-gaining devices such as giveaways, parades and grand openings to attract attention. The louder the noise, the more attention-getting the story, whether it is true or false. The practitioners mostly use entertainment to communicate with their publics. Once the desired goal is achieved, it is okay for them (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The Public Information Model: This model differs from Press Agency because the intent is to inform rather than to press for promotion and publicity. However, the communication is still one-way. Grunig and Hunt (1984) point out that this type of model is normally used by Public Relations practitioners in Government, Educational Institutions, non-profit organisations, and in some corporations. Those who practice Public Relations under this model do very little research about their publics beyond testing the clarity of their messages. Grunig and Hunt (1984) describe practitioners

under this model as “Journalist-in-residence” who value accuracy but decide what information is best to communicate to their publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The two-way asymmetrical model: Practitioners of this model see Public Relations to be scientific persuasion. This model employs social science research methods to increase the persuasiveness of messages. Public Relations practitioners use surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions to measure public relationships so that the organisation can design Public Relations programmes that will gain the support of key publics. Even though feedback is considered, the organisation is always interested in having the publics adjust to the organisation rather than the reverse (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Two-way symmetrical model: This model is described as the ideal for Public Relations practice because it depicts an orientation in which organisations and their publics adjust to each other. It focuses on the use of social science research methods to achieve mutual understanding and two-way communication rather than one-way persuasion. This model aims at dialogue for building healthy relationships. The feedback that the organisation gathers is used to change organisational practices. Negotiations, resolution of conflicts, mutual understanding, and mutual respect between the organisation and its publics are the desired results of this model (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

In 1995, Dozier, Grunig and Grunig presented a new model for Public Relations that came from their research on excellence in Public Relations and communication management project. The scholars (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995) conducted their study on 321 organisations in three countries (India, Greece and Taiwan). They argue

that Public Relations practitioners who exhibited the most effective or excellent Public Relations practices used a new model called symmetry as two-way practice where organisations and their publics would seek to persuade each other as much as possible.

Again, in 1996, Grunig and his team further developed two models of Public Relations which included cultural interpreter model and personal influence model. The scholars argue that although these two models fall into the asymmetrical category, they provide the practitioner more to think about in his or her bid to better understand the practice of Public Relations (Dozier Grunig and Grunig, 1995).

A brief summary of the two models is discussed below:

The cultural interpreter model: This type of model depicts the practice of Public Relations in organisations that do business in other countries where there is the need for one to understand the language, culture, customs and political system of the host country. Globalisation has played a significant role in shaping the field of Public Relations through international relations. Public Relations practitioners in organisations must have knowledge of the culture that pertains in various organisations at the international level that they can effectively build relationships. Even among organisations, organisational culture may not be the same because of possible differences in activities, practices and norms. However, since organisations operate within a particular socio-cultural setting, it is possible that societal culture can affect organisational culture while organisational culture can in turn affect societal culture. This therefore brings to the fore the need for Public Relations practitioners to understand the cultural implications in their dealings with society.

The personal influence model: The model depicts the practice of Public Relations in which practitioners try to establish personal relationships with key publics or individuals and through such contacts, are able to establish sustained relationships. Again, the Public Relations practitioner must be known by almost everybody in the organisation and should have personal skills of influencing policies and programmes within the organisation through persuasive communication. This role becomes even more important especially when Public Relations Officers are confronted with issues of labour agitations within the organisations.

Many scholars such as Watson and Noble (2005), Wilcox and Cameron (2009) and Cutlip, Centers and Broom (2009) have all pointed out that most organisations practice a combination of the four models rather than practising just one of them exclusively. However, these scholars maintain that excellent organisations are those who seek to build mutually beneficial relationships with their publics and are the ones that use two-way symmetrical model. Again, Wilcox and Cameron (2009) further argue that the media are the conveyors of messages to the publics of various organisations so it is important to choose a channel that is appropriate to communicate your messages to your publics. It is obvious from the above discussions that the four traditional models propounded by Grunig and Hunt (1985) as well as those that he later developed have shaped the practice of Public Relations all over the world. This is firmly supported by Kitchen (2006) who describes communication as a two-street process and emphasized the “**boundary spanning**” role of the Public Relations practitioner as being a liaison or mediator between an organisation and its public as crucial for organisational successes.

2.1.2.0 The Functions of Public Relations

According to Heath and Coombs (2006), Public Relations is a management function, and being part of management in an organisation means Public Relations managers should be intimately involved in selecting and implementing the organisation's strategic goals by working alongside other managers who lead the organisation. The scholars (Heath & Coombs, 2006) insist that because Public Relations practitioners must work closely with other managers, they need to have a broad knowledge of the organisation and all its operations, as well as an interest in public policy and public opinion issues that are likely to affect the plans, activities and outputs of the organisation. The scholars therefore maintain that Public Relations has five main functions and these include strategic planning, research, publicity, promotion, and collaborative decision-making. They point out that in any organisation, functions are the strategic actions that a person or an entire unit perform, including the day-to-day operations as well as long term planning (Heath & Coombs, 2006).

In the view of Seitel (2007), several functions emerge as far as Public Relations as a profession is concerned. He notes that there is a fundamental difference between the functions of Public Relations and that of marketing and advertising. Marketing and advertising promote a product or a service but Public Relations promotes an entire organisation. The functions associated with Public Relations works are numerous. Among them are writing, media relations, planning, counseling, researching, publicity, marketing communications, community relations, consumer relations, employee relations, government affairs, investor relations, special public relations, and website development among others (Seitel, 2007).

There is no doubt that the Ghana Police Service is a very important state organisation because they are supposed to ensure the general safety and security of the citizenry. Although the functions of public relations may vary from organisation to organisation, the ideal situation envisaged is that practitioners in the Police Service should be given the necessary boost and support to collaborate with management to perform any of the Public Relations functions espoused by most Public Relations scholars. The expectation is that the Police Public Relations officers must exhibit the needed skills and expertise in the field of practice to enable them perform any function that their job as public relations officers in the service requires them to do. Again, considering the diverse range of functions that the practitioners are supposed to perform, they must have the ability to communicate well and effectively. Public Relations functions such as counselling, research, media relations among others should be done with some professional touch and the practitioners in the service must have the needed expertise to do so.

2.1.2.1 Public Relations as a Management Function

Public Relations as a management function has been supported by many scholars in the discipline of communication. For example, Skinner, Mersham and Von Essen (2001), Cutlip, Center and Broom (2009) and Seitel (2007) all maintain that the Public Relations practitioner must be the interpreter of an organisation's philosophy, policy and programmes which emanate from top management. The practitioner, therefore, must report to those who run the organisation. However, scholars like Kitchen (2006) and Dominick (1996) argue that it is not in all organisations that Public Relations is recognised as a management function. They note that sometimes

Public Relations is subordinated to departments such as marketing, advertising and administration as well as other departments within the organisation.

The debate as to whether Public Relations is recognised as a management or technician function is further articulated by Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg (1996) who support the view that Public Relations is a management function. In emphasising this position, the scholars argue that Public Relations practitioners should have the ability to evaluate internal and external opinions, attitudes and needs of the publics of the organisation, advise management and also act as instruments for bringing about policy changes as well as directing new courses of action among others. From the aforementioned, it is evident that Public Relations plays an integral role in the management of an organisation. The need for organisations to recognise Public Relations as part of management therefore cannot be overstated. In order to achieve maximum effectiveness, therefore, it is important for the organisation's chief executive officer (CEO) and other top management to fully support the organisation's Public Relations programmes for optimum results.

2.1.2.2 Public Relations and Educational Levels of Practitioners

Seitel (2007) argues that having a good educational background in communication or Public Relations guarantees excellent performance in the field of Public Relations. The scholar points out that the ability of a Public Relations officer to conduct frequent research must be seen as an important hallmark of Public Relations officers. In other words, the basis for embarking on a Public Relations programme must be grounded on empirical evidence. Seitel (2007) believes that practitioners with good educational background are most likely to have research skills and expertise to effectively practise Public Relations. Center and Jackson (2008) note that the competence of the Public

Relations practitioner is measured by management to ascertain whether the practitioner knows his or her work well. It is therefore vital for practitioners to constantly upgrade themselves through higher educational institutions as well as embarking on professional courses in the field through workshops and seminars (Center and Jackson 2008).

Heath (2001) supports the view of Seitel (2007) and makes the point that today's Public Relations practitioner must exhibit a high sense of wisdom and intelligence which can be gained partly through education. Again, Public Relations practitioners must have good educational background if they want to progress rapidly in the field. However, too much emphasis should not be placed on only educational or academic qualification because working experience for successful career in Public Relations is equally important for practitioners in the field (Heath 2001).

Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman and Toth (2004) note that there is a strong demand for better qualified and trained Public Relations managers and decision-makers in the field of Public Relations. This is because Public Relations is multi-disciplinary in nature and therefore needs a broad-based kind of education and training. Public Relations is a specialised area which demands that practitioners undergo formal training in the profession. This can boost their morale and also enable the practitioners fit well into management (Lattimore, Baskin and Tooth 2009). For practitioners in the Ghana Police Service, it is important that they undergo frequent seminars and workshops to get themselves acquainted with modern and contemporary Public Relations practice especially in the area of technology and new techniques of information gathering and dissemination. There must be basic qualifications for all

police Public Relations practitioners with recognition for higher qualification in either journalism or Public Relations.

2.1.2.3 Public Relations and Issues/Crisis Management

According to Seitel (2007), the term issues management was first coined in 1976 by Public Relations counselor Howard Chase. An issue is a gap between corporate action and public expectation. In other words, an issue is a matter awaiting future deliberation. Issues management is seen as a very important area that concerns Public Relations practitioners because when issues are ignored, crises are most likely to occur. The Public Relations practitioner is therefore expected to scan the environment of its publics and identify potential issues that can impact negatively on or have consequences for organisation decisions (Seitel, 2007).

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2009) point out that two points capture the essence of issues management. These are early identification of issues with potential impact on an organisation, and a strategic response designed to mitigate or capitalise on their consequences. Coombs (2007) sees crises management as a critical organisational function. Failure to handle crisis well and timely can result in serious harm to stakeholders, losses for an organisation, or end its (organisation's) existence. The scholar (Coombs, 2007) thinks that Public Relations practitioners should be an integral part of crises management team whenever they occur because crises can have negative consequences on the operations of the organisation if not handled properly. Coombs (2007) proposes four steps as the best way to deal with the media during crisis. These are;

1. Avoid the phrase “no comment” because people will think the organisation is guilty and trying to hide something.

2. Present information clearly by avoiding jargons and technical terms.
3. Appear pleasant on camera by avoiding nervous habits that may be interpreted as deception.
4. Brief all potential spokespersons on the latest crisis information and the key message the organisation wants to convey to its publics.

Whenever there are crises in an organisation, a team must be constituted to deal with the issue (Barton, 2001). Public Relations officers must be at the forefront but can be assisted by other members in the organisation such as legal, security, operations, finance and human resources. The scholar postulates that the constitution of the team to deal with a crisis should normally be based on the nature of the crises, for example, information technology expertise would be required if the crisis involved the computer system. Lerbinger (1997) also argues that a very key component of crises team should be a trained spokesperson because organisational members must be prepared to talk to the news media during a crisis.

Organisations do not operate in a vacuum. They are most likely to be hit by issues which can easily result into crisis. The Public Relations practitioners in the Ghana Police Service must have expertise in issues and crisis management. This is especially so as it is a regimental institution with rigid rules and regulations. Secondly, the organisation has numerous publics to deal with and they come with different issues and concerns which demand some form of expertise from the Public Relations practitioners in order to effectively deal with such issues (Ofori 2009).

2.1.3.0 The Publics of Public Relations

Public Relations is mostly concerned about effective communication with the various publics of an organisation and also maintaining or sustaining relationships (Kitchen, 2006). This is because Public Relations helps in managing organisational relationships with internal and external publics whose support is crucial to the achievement of organisational goals. Good policies and programmes of any organisation will not be beneficial if they are not well-communicated to the various publics for whom they are meant. For this reason, Center and Jackson (2003) suggest that organisations must categorise their publics because the various publics may have different needs that the organisation has to address from time to time. In this regard, Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg (1996) insist that research is a very important component of Public Relations practice. The scholars (Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg, 1996) note that systematic research helps organisations in many ways such as identification of publics; media and trend analysis; issues monitoring and provision of essential data for policy directions of organisations among others. Seitel (2007) however asserts that although research is a very important duty of Public Relations practitioners, most organisations do not always attach much importance to such programmes. Center and Jackson (2003) therefore categorises the publics of an organisation into three: primary, intervening and special. Primary publics are usually the target of any organisation's activity or event. The intervening publics are those publics within an organisation who normally send messages to the primary publics\ or other publics and are therefore referred to as gatekeepers – media practitioners, politicians, activists, pressure groups, civil society organisations among others. The final category according to Center and Jackson (2003) is special publics. They are normally an organised group of publics that have a set of bye-laws and whose

members hold regular meetings to discuss issues pertaining to the organisation. In Ghana, examples of such groups include *Occupy Ghana*, *Let My Vote Count Alliance* (LMVCA), and *Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining* (WACAM). Grunig (1992) categorises the publics of an organisations into four (4). These are All-issues publics who always want to know everything in an organisation; Apathetic publics who are normally inattentive to all issues; Singular issues publics who are normally interested in a small aspect of an issue and finally Hot issues publics who will normally talk about an issue when it is hot or topical. They will cease talking about the issue when it loses currency (Grunig, 1992).

According to Cutlip (1995), publics are stakeholders who become active on an issue of an organisation. They take a first step of knowing the activities of the organisation. Some Publics normally arise on their own and choose an organisation for attention. Public Relations practitioners and their organisations therefore have a responsibility to respond to the publics who choose their organisation for attention. This is because publics are usually organised around issues of which some of these publics may be seeking redress, looking for information, or simply exerting pressure on the organisation. Therefore, Public Relations practitioners need to identify their publics through research and address their needs whenever they arise (Cutlip 1995). With regard to the Ghana Police Service, the practitioners are expected to always conduct research on their publics and work towards finding solutions to their needs.

2.1.4.0 Public Relations Departments

Seitel (2007) argues that Public Relations professionals generally work in one of two organisational structures: as a staff professional in a Public Relations Department of a corporation, university, hospital, religious institutions and so on, whose task is to

support the primary business of the organisation, or as a line professional in a public relations agency, whose primary task is to help the organisation earn revenue. Seitel (2007) observes that there has been an improvement in the status of most Public Relations practitioners in the organisations they work. Most corporate communication departments now report to the chairman, president or chief executive officers (CEO) directly unlike in the past when most Public Relations practitioners reported to other departmental heads.

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2009) highlight on Public Relations departments and functions, and observe that in most commercial and non-commercial organisations, separate Public Relations department may be set up under the leadership of Public Relations officers. Sometimes, such an officer is also designated as the Public Relations manager who has specialised knowledge and skills in dealing with the publics. The scholars observe that these Public Relations Officers are often seen performing the roles of managers as well as operative functions. Meanwhile Cutlip et al (2009) hold the view that the Public Relations department is one of the important functional areas of management because the main objectives of the Public Relations department are to promote mutual understanding, build goodwill and reputation as well as design a communication system to maintain good press relations (Cutlip, Center and Broom 2009).

In their study, Lock and Seele (2016) outlined three types of departments - the single-headed type, the two-headed type and infused type. They also identified the reporting relationships between the single organisational bodies and found that the single headed Public Relations Officer reported directly to the board of management. This is

because they also found that the tasks of strategy and policy formulation are in the hands of the governance body.

The Two-Headed Department Public Relations does not report directly to management but there is still a dedicated body in place as the head where the Public Relations Officer reports to. This supervisory board is referred to as the second head and serves as the direct link to the executive board.

The infused type of Public Relations Department refers to the same type of governance structure as the single-headed type with a dedicated body reporting to the board of management. However, there is an operational body which is in charge of implementation and management of policies and programmes. In the infused typology of departments, there is a clear division of labour between the operational and governance body although the governance body is more concerned with strategy formulation. Furthermore, the Public Relations team reports directly to the governance body which makes the governance body the centre of activities in the organisation.

The Ghana Police Service as an organisation does not operate in the vacuum. The typology of departments outlined by Lock and Seele (2016) fall in line with what happens in most organisations which include the Ghana Police Service. Baffoe-Antwi (2008) had earlier pointed out that the Ghana Police Service operates the single headed type which is similar to what has been outlined by Lock and Seele (2016). Whatever the case is with regards to the Public Relations Departments in the Ghana Police Service, the police public relations practitioners must report directly to

management and should have smooth access to the Inspector-General of Police who is the head of the Ghana Police Service.

The Public Relations practitioners should not have any difficulty in operating as a result of rigid rules and regulations within the Ghana Police Service. The practitioners should be given the opportunity to participate in all management meetings and also take part in decisions that affect the Ghana Police Service as an organisation.

2.1.4. 1 Public Relations and New Media/Technology

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2009) point out that technology has changed the face of Public Relations practice and practitioners are struggling to adjust to the internet's impact on Public Relations. Specifically, the new media environment offers at least three (3) challenges for Public Relations practitioners:

1. Staying abreast with technological development in the age of new media.
2. Conducting media relations with non-traditional journalists such as Citizen Journalists, bloggers, and social media commentators.
3. Representing organisations in the new media environment.

An important technology that is impacting the work of Public Relations practitioners in recent times, according to Latimore et al (2009), is social media. The scholars define social media as a group of web-based technologies used to create social interaction through words or visual material. One key nature of social media that has contributed positively to Public Relations' practice is its collaborative nature which helps in sharing information among the audiences. Again, social media depend on the audience to build a shared-meaning using technology as the tool. Technologies such as email, instant messaging, voice-over internet protocol and photo-sharing are the

tools often used (Latimore et al, 2009). Otu (2015) adds that the ease of internet access worldwide has made it one of the most popular medium of seeking information and for communication. The internet is now very vital in the modern world because it is an instrument in education so almost all organisations are taking advantage of it to engage their numerous publics (Out, 2015). Otu (2015) notes further that social media has now become a global phenomenon and a very important means of communication among peers, families and organisations. This is because social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Mobile Viber, and Imo as well as video calling services like Skype have all become popular means of communication. Cutlip et al (2009) argue that social media commands a significant number of users all over the world because it has transformed the way information is received and sent. This phenomenon has greatly bridged the geographical gap that exists between people and organisations. Also, most Public Relations Practitioners agree that advances in technology such as email and the internet have changed how they do their jobs because they now have to stay in touch with more publics in their businesses and professional environments than they did before the advent of technology (Cutlip et al, 2009). Again, the ability to send instantaneous written communication and to access real-time information via the internet has accelerated decision making in the Public Relations profession and journalism. While this is the case, Gyan (1991) observes that only a few Public Relations officers have access to technology and modern equipment for Public Relations practice. So this situation has forced most Public Relations practitioners to continue to practice in the old fashion which does not promote modern Public Relations practice.

Technology has obviously changed the face of Public Relations practice in most organisations. This development has naturally forced most Public Relations practitioners to stay abreast with the new information technology. Most public relations practitioners in organisations have had to take steps to acquire the needed technological skills to enable them fit into the new technological era in line with modern practice of public relations. The practitioners in the Ghana Police Service cannot afford to continue to do things in the old fashion. The use of modern gadgets such as laptop computers, smart phones, pen drives, projectors and engaging the organisation's public on social media platforms such as facebook, whatsapp, instagram among others requires the practitioners to have training in information communication technology (ICT). The Police Public Relations practitioners therefore need to acquire skills that can keep them abreast with the new technological society that is becoming a global phenomenon. Secondly, modern gadgets should be acquired by the Police Administration to enable the practitioners have easy access to the gadgets on a daily basis in order to improve on their practice.

2.1.4.2 Managing Organisational Reputation and Image

Public Relations is concerned about managing reputation and image of organisations. Image is a mental picture that people form when they come into contact with organisations. Image is immediately formed and it is transient. This image could be positive or negative (Cutlip, 1995). Reputation on the other hand, is the perception that people form about the organisation but this is built over a long time. It is a societal memory of the activities of the organisation. Reputation is the larger picture that is formed about an organisation overtime (Cutlip, 1995). Grunig (2011) sees corporate reputation as a very important issue that Public Relations must always

address. All organisations, irrespective of their nature or size, must maintain a positive image and reputation at all times.

The scholar (Grunig 2011) further posits that reputation management involves the monitoring of the reputation of organisations using public feedback to try to solve problems before they damage the reputation of the organisation. The Ghana Police Service an organisation has an image and reputation that ought to be well managed. The police public relations officers are those who must be at the forefront working to maintain a positive image and reputation for the service.

2.1.4.3 Ethics in Public Relations

According to Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg (1996), the field of ethics, also called moral philosophy, involves issues regarding right and wrong behaviour. In Public Relations discipline, ethics includes values such as honesty, openness, loyalty, fair-mindedness, integrity, respect and forthright communication.

Ethics and responsibilities are Public Relations concerns because the behaviour of the individual practitioner can have a negative impact on the organisation he or she represents. Heath (2001) notes that the field of ethics in Public Relations is a very important area. However, Public Relations is always associated with all manner of unethical behaviours such as lying and spin-doctoring. The scholar (Heath, 2001) points out that many Public Relations practitioners have questioned their ability to strictly adhere to ethical issues because the profession itself is akin to manipulations and propaganda.

In the view of Tench and Yeomans (2006), five (5) reasons account for why ethics and professionalism should characterise Public Relations Practice. These are Trust,

ethical guardian, social responsibility, community building and conflict resolution, as well as power and obligation. The scholars believe that ethics means the formal study and codification of moral principles into systematic frameworks so that decisions can be made about what is right and wrong in a reasoned and structured way. This is because ethical reasoning in Public Relations is growing in responsibility, demand and importance (Tench and Yeomans 2006).

The police public relations practitioners have a responsibility to adhere to strict ethical values. This is important to win the trust and confidence of the general public to support the activities of the police.

2.1.5.0 Brief History of Public Relations Practice in Ghana

A study by Ansah (1990) on the history of Public Relations practice in Ghana reveals that the Public Relations industry in Ghana has seen a remarkable move of journalist into the Public Relations profession in the country without further training in Public Relations. This according to the study has made the Public Relations industry in Ghana to be regarded as publicity-oriented industry than one that builds and manages reputations of corporate entities (Ansah 1990). Until recently, many organisations regarded the Public Relations profession in Ghana as protocol officers who run errands for organisations. Again, the practice of Public Relations has changed from a more traditional form of communication management function to a press cutting and event management type. As a result, the Public Relations industry in Ghana is faced with numerous challenges. Organisations such as advertising agencies, marketing research institutions, management consultants and many other auxiliary institutions are delving into areas that are traditionally seen as Public Relations functions (Ansah, 1990).

The scholar (Ansah, 1990) buttresses his claim with arguments that schools of journalism in most African countries including Ghana, teach Public Relations as an adjunct of the basic journalism and communication course. He argues that Public Relations as an academic discipline ought to be independent of other disciplines in communication (Ansah, 1990).

In a similar study, Gyan (1991) notes that the development of Public Relations and its practice in Ghana has a chequered history because very little has been documented on Public Relations practice in Ghana. This is because of the relative newness of Public Relations practice in the country so attempts at precisely locating when Public Relations commenced in Ghana are often met with frustrations probably because of the initial lack of appreciation and knowledge of the field. The problem is further compounded by the fact in many organisations – both private and public – the functions of Public Relations practitioners were being carried out by officers in such departments as administration, Human Resource Department, marketing department, among others. Even where the need to employ a Public Relations officer was felt, organisations usually settled on press or information officers thereby reducing the essence of Public Relations to publicity or Press Relations which in fact is a component of Public Relations. In reality, however, marketing is a component of Public Relations practitioners' responsibility (Gyan, 1991).

Gyan (1991) explores further that Public Relations had started in Ghana long before Ghana attained independence. Multinational companies like United Arab Company and Barclays Bank among others hired mostly expatriate-practicing journalist with a few Ghanaians from the Information Services Department who communicated on behalf of such organisations. After independence, more journalists moved from

mainstream journalism into Public Relations without any formal training in the profession. Sometimes, practitioners were even referred to as “glorified messengers” (Gyan, 1991)

Mr. Macmillan, a British expatriate, started the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) to train early Public Relations practitioners. These were mostly journalists and some personnel from the Information Services Department formerly known as Ghana Information Service which was the mouthpiece of the Government. However, as time went on, the school of communication studies in Legon also gave further training to practitioners in Public Relations as well as Journalism (Gyan 1991).

2.1.5.1 Brief History and Origins of the Ghana Police Service

Aning (2002) notes that there seems to be lots of controversy over when formal policing started in Ghana. Real police work was started in the Gold Coast, now the Republic of Ghana, in 1921. Before then, the Executive and Judicial powers were in the hands of local chiefs and herdsmen who employed unpaid messengers to do the work of the police (Aning, 2002).

Pokoo-Aikins (2002) points out that in 1871 when Great Britain had taken full control of the country, it became necessary to provide a strong force. For this reason, one Captain Glover organised a force of 700 Hausa men from Northern Nigeria to Ghana to take part in the Ashanti wars on behalf of the British. In 1876, this body was organised into what was known as the Gold Coast Constabulary. The Gold Coast Police Force now known as the Ghana Police Service was formed in 1894 with 400 out of the 700 men who formed the Gold Coast Constabulary, and was under the

supervision of six European Officers. The remaining 300 men became the Gold Coast Regiment and second battalions (Pokoo-Aikins 2002).

Pokoo-Aikins (2002) points out further that, the Gold Coast Police was later organised into separate branches of General and Escort Police in 1902. In 1907, the Northern Territories Constabulary was formed from the Second Battalion of the Gold Coast Regiment but it was later incorporated into the Gold Coast Police now known as Ghana Police Service. The report indicates that the Police College now Ghana Police Academy was established in 1959. The marine police was formed in 1916 but was disbanded in 1942 and its duties were taken over by the department of customs and excise. The Police Band was formed in 1918 while the Criminal Investigations Department was formed in 1921 (Pokoo-Aikins 2002).

2.1.5.3 Brief History of Public Relations Practice in The Ghana Police Service.

A study by Amoakohene (2002) on Police-Public Relations in a democratic environment reveals that Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Mr. J.W.K Harlley established the Public Relations Unit at the Police Headquarters in Accra with no clearly defined functions. Before then, efforts had been made immediately after the 1966 Coup d'etat to set up a bureau to monitor information about the police in order to improve its relations with the public. Initially, activities of the unit dealt primarily with grievances from members of the public about police personnel only in Accra, the national capital (Amoakohene, 2002).

Baffoe-Antwi(2008) in a study on the Public Relations Department of the Ghana Police Service notes that a more serious attempt at re-organising the Public Relations

Department was in 1978 and the department was redesignated as a Directorate and given the following functions:

- Evaluate public opinion towards the police service and its personnel
- Evaluate the effectiveness of policies and action of the police on issues involving public opinion
- Make recommendations to the Inspector-General of police and to Regional, Divisional and Units Commanders concerning policies and actions that have effect on public opinion.
- Conduct programmes on information designed to keep the public duly informed within limitations of security and policy actions of the Ghana Police Service. The Directorate comprised the following departments:

- ✓ Editorial; cater for all matters relating to publications.
- ✓ Printing; in charge of all publications of journals, calendars, brochures etc.
- ✓ Films/photography; to print and develop films and for video coverage
- ✓ Research; undertakes opinion polls and also monitor mass media reports about the Ghana Police Service.
- ✓ Administration; handles correspondences and welfare of personnel among others.
- ✓ Technical; handles vehicles and other logistics (Baffoe-Antwi2008).

2.1.6.0 Public Relations Practices in the Ghana Police Service Today

Many studies have been conducted on public Relations Practices in the Ghana Police Service. For instance, in examining the role of communication in the Police Administration, Donkor (2010) found that communication within the Ghana Police

Service was mainly one-way and poor due to what the researcher termed “Master-Servant” form of communication which did not allow for free flow of information either internally or externally.

The study employed a qualitative research approach, mainly interviews, with personnel of the Public Relations Directorate as well as other staff at the Police Headquarters. The study confirmed that effective communication is crucial to the Ghana Police Service due to the nature of the profession which involves dealing more with the general public and also maintaining law and order in the country.

In what appears to have corroborated Donkor’s (2010) study, Ofori (2009) argues that the activities of the Ghana Police Service have always been misconstrued by its external Publics to be negative so the Public Relations Department must be proactive by constantly communicating its policies and programmes to the general public to avoid misconception.

In a similar study, Baffoe-Antwi (2008) investigated the perception of Police personnel about Public Relations practice in the service. The researcher employed the mixed method approach and sampled the opinions of his respondents on how the attitude and behaviour of the Public Relations Directorate personnel impact on the image of the Police Service. Using a sample size of 100 respondents which comprised both senior and junior officers of the police service, the findings of his study revealed that some personnel of the service held negative perception about the public relations department personnel in general and their ability to manage the image of the service well. Again, the study found that Public Relations was not recognised as a management function because the activities of the Public Relations Department were

relegated to merely publicity and media relations or responding to press enquiries on activities of the service (Baffoe-Antwi, 2008). Earlier, Tse (2007) conducted a similar study on the Public Relations Department of the Ghana Police Service focusing mainly on its Headquarters. The researcher undertook a qualitative approach mainly face-to-face interviews to investigate the perception of police personnel on Public Relations practice within the Service. The findings suggested that Public Relations had not been fully recognised as a management function because even though the Director of Public Affairs sits in management meetings and coordinates police-media activities, the role of the Director of Public Affairs is relegated to the background because he is not directly involved in critical decisions that are taken about the Police organisation. This notwithstanding, Public Relations is visibly seen as occupying management position on the organogram of the Service. This is because the Director of Public Affairs reports directly to the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) who is the head of the Police service (Tse, 2007).

The assertions by Baffoe-Antwi (2008) and Tse (2007) reinforce the position by Cutlip et al (2009) that it is not at all times that Public Relations Practitioners will occupy the management function position in organisations due to many factors such as experience, educational level of the practitioners, as well as Public Relations contributions to organisational successes, top management perception of Public Relations, among others.

In examining the roles played by Police Public Relations officers, Mottchall and Cao (2002) stress that for nearly four (4) decades, police agencies of all sizes have established public Relations officer functions to communicate with a variety of audiences, particularly the media. Although in most cases, the role of the Police

Public Relations officers were always described as media-oriented and reactive, some police public Relations officers used management - oriented and proactive techniques that were consistent with established Public Relations models. The scholars argue that these police public Relations officers also perform a wide array of traditional public relations activities and they have been instrumental in moving law enforcement from a closed to a more open system of communication (Motschall & Cao 2002). In reinforcing the assertions by Motschall and Cao (2002), Sesen (2015) elaborates further that Public Relations is a rapidly developing field or practice. In the view of Sesen (2015), there is no one theory that may explain all Public Relations practices so practitioners must combine both theory and experiences to develop theories. The scholar argues that the most important theory building that has been developed in Public Relations is about the roles of practitioners in organisations and society. Again, Public Relations Practitioners need new strategies to respond to organisational, social and environmental demands at the same time; and in this process they must use both of practical and theoretical models and methods from different fields such as communication, sociology, organisational behavior among others to help to create a better understanding for the Public Relations Practitioners' multifunctional roles (Sesen, 2015).

Ofori (2009) adds that the task of maintaining law and order is one of the core mandates of the Ghana Police Service. In view of the reality of sophisticated crime and more complex and globalised society, the Police Public Relations officers should have clearly defined roles and also be proactive in information dissemination to their various publics. This can be done through outreach programmes that can bring them

closer to the citizenry. Such outreach programmes will enable the practitioners constantly interact with their publics and assess their problems better.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.0 Introduction

Dozier, Grunig and Grunig (1995) insist that Public Relations Practitioners must use theories to provide a perspective about why and how Public Relations is practiced. More importantly, theories help to explain how to make Public Relations more effective for organisations and society. The scholars point out that theories can help to predict the way things work or happens because they provide an understanding of the relationship between actions and events. This study employs the Coorientation and Public Relations Roles theories in analysing the findings.

2.2.1 The Coorientation Theory

The coorientation model originally developed by McLeod and Chaffee (1973) provides a framework for identifying the relationships between groups and individuals in a communication process. The Coorientation model has been modified by many scholars in Public Relations. The model suggests that people must have some mental and cultural reference points in common to begin to understand each other even if they disagree. Public Relations (PR) is a strategic management function responsible for the cultivation of good relations between an organisation and its constituencies (Publics/Stakeholders). The ultimate goal of Public Relations is to ensure that there is harmony and peaceful co-existence between an organisation and its publics. The Co-orientation theory allows individuals and small groups to relate well to each other and also considers each other viewpoints. For instance, it is important that Public Relations Practitioners have a rough idea or understanding of what their target public

will think or already think about a programme or policy that the organisation intend to implement or their perception generally about the organisation should be known by the Public Relations Practitioner. In most cases, there may be the need to map out the understanding of the target or public in a coorientation basis to find out what thinking does or does not correspond between the publics and the organisation. In an organisational setting, the co-orientation theory advises organisations to identify areas of agreement and disagreement with their publics. This could be done by employing effective two-way communication and interactions to ensure peace and harmony.

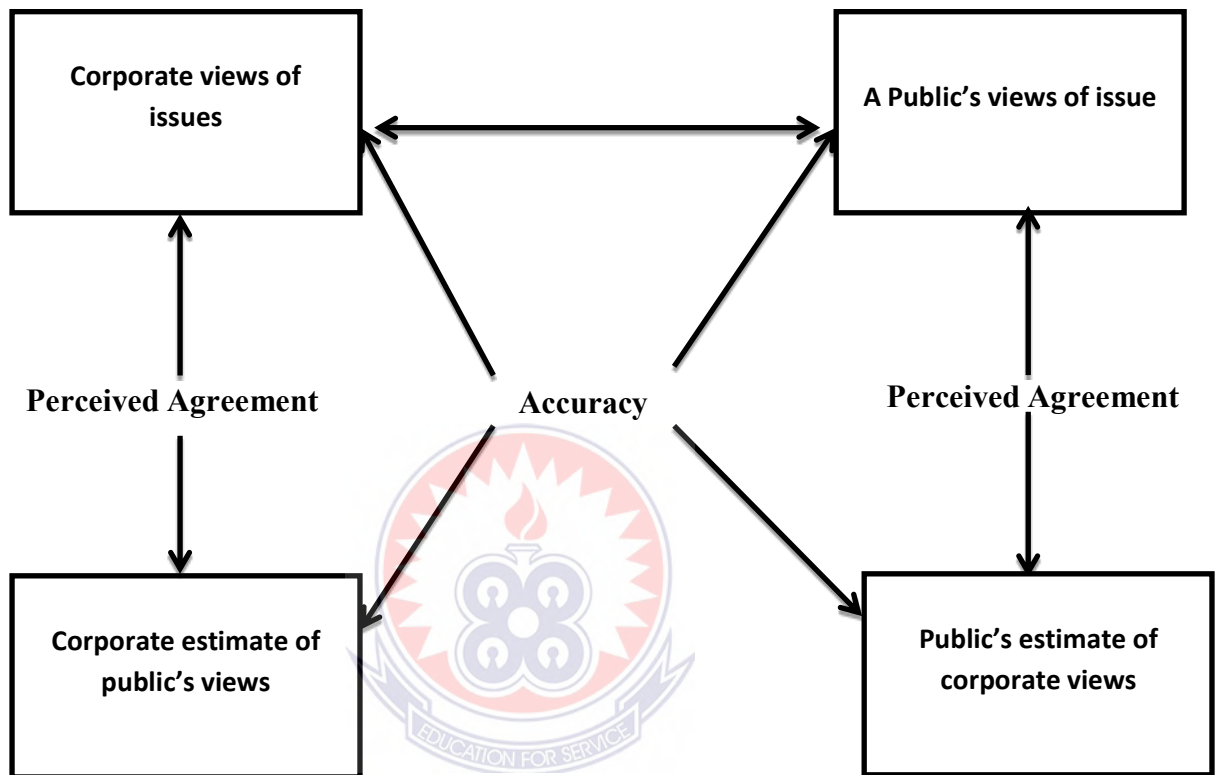
The coorientation theory has some grounding in psychology and emphasizes attitudinal change and the need for mutual adjustment in relationships to ensure consensus building. One party has to adjust their attitude towards the other to achieve internal peace through attitudinal change. Conflicts always occur when people or organisations do not change.

Broom and Dozier (1990) utilised the co-orientation theory to suggest ways that symmetrical goals and objectives can be set for communication by organisations and how the impact of such programmes can be evaluated. The theory therefore directs communications managers or publics Relations Practitioners to examine perceptions that the dominant coalition (top management) and the publics hold on common issues about each other.

Grunig (2006) modified the coorientation theory and came out with the stakeholders theory which also postulates that Public Relations Practitioner must use two-way communication and identify potential areas of conflict, and create internal harmony between the organisations and their publics. The practitioners must frequently use the

symmetrical communication programmes where both management and the publics can adjust and adopt to the other party. In that case, there must be a level of agreement between corporate views of issues and public views of issues.

Figure 1: The Coorientation Model



Source: The Broom and Dozier (1990) coorientation model cited in Grunig (1992)

The model above, developed by Broom and Dozier (1990), cited in Grunig (1992), provides a framework for identifying the relationship between groups in a communication process. These groups relate to each other and consider each other's viewpoint. The concepts in the model above talk about how organisations perceive their publics and vice versa. There is a level of agreement and disagreement between the organisation and its publics which can lead to conflicts or consensus building.

Accuracy is key in information dissemination within and outside the organisation. It also encompasses the similarity of opinions held by the organisations and its publics.

The dominant coalition or top management who are the decision makers of an organisation and their publics act and react to each other based on perceptions each has for the other. Often, perceptions are misperceptions and Public Relations problems may be resolved using the Co-orientation communication processes. Traditionally, two major questions are often raised with regard to the application of the coorientation model. The first is, how accurate is the public perception of the organisation? The next is, how accurate is the dominant coalition's perception of the publics view on an issue? In sum, Public Relations programmes can set goals and objectives that focus on improving perceptual accuracy of publics and the dominant coalition. This does not necessarily mean that disagreements about issues are resolved as a result of the programmes. Such communication programmes, however, would help reduce conflicts based on misperceptions on the other party's view. This is what the co-orientation theory seeks to achieve.

2.2.2 Relevance of the Coorientation Theory to Current Study

The coorientation theory emphasises on two-way symmetrical communication. Scholars such as Grunig and Hunt (1984) postulate that two-way symmetrical communication is the best approach for organisations because it helps to build bridges and consensus between organisations and their publics. Also, the two-way communication process helps Public Relations Practitioners in organisations to constantly interact with both the internal and external publics as well as help the practitioners in their counselling role. The Ghana Police Service is a state organisation and has various segmented publics all over the eleven (11) administrative regions.

The assumptions in the co-orientation theory will enable Public Relations officers of the Ghana Police Service carry out their boundary-spanning role which requires the practitioners to play the role of mediators between their organisations and various publics. The practitioners are also expected to evaluate and interpret opinions, attitudes and aspirations of their publics through dialogue between the organisation and its publics. It is worth noting that Public Relations has to play the crucial role of a detector of problems in an organisation, an interpreter, as well as an effective communicator because as organisations grow, more groups or publics may emerge and these groups come with different demands which the public relations manager must execute successfully with much professionalism. Therefore dealing with diversity of publics and interest demands greater skills and knowledge as well as highest professional touch to achieve success for the organisation. This is what the co-orientation theory espouses. There is no doubt that the Ghana Police Service has diverse publics in the country. These publics come with different demands regarding security, safety and law and order. The Public Relations practitioners in the police service ought to be at the forefront by constantly explaining the actions of the Ghana Police to the citizenry. The duty of the security apparatus is to always ensure the general security and safety of the citizenry and their properties. It is therefore the Public Relations practitioners' duty to always provide surveillance information on how the public can avoid the activities of criminals. The practitioners should always liaise with management on issues that threaten the security of the country. The coorientation theory also postulates that organisations must employ two-way communication to engage their publics. In this regard, the police Public Relations practitioners should create the opportunity to always interact with their publics using outreach and community relations programmes. This is one of the best ways through

which consensus building with key publics can be achieved as firmly espoused by the tenets in the Coorientation Theory.

2.3.1 Roles Theory of Public Relations

Broom and Smith (1979) systematically studied the different roles in which Public Relations practitioners could operate. The research was based on a laboratory experiment which tested practitioners' impact on client perception. They came out with four main roles played by Public Relations practitioners (expert prescriber, communication technician, communication facilitator and problem-solving facilitator).

Cutlip et al (2009) also note that over time, Public Relations practitioners adopt patterns of behaviour to deal with recurring situations to accommodate others' expectations of what they should do in their jobs. The scholars confirm the four roles earlier outlined by Broom and Smith (1979). At one time or another, practitioners play all these roles and other roles to varying degrees even though a dominant role emerges as they go about their day-to-day work and dealings with others (Broom & Smith, 1979; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2009).

2.3.2 Brief Highlights on the Roles

Expert/Authority Prescriber

Here, the practitioner is seen and recognised as an expert in Public Relations, and is best qualified to handle Public Relations issues. He/she diagnoses and proposes solutions to Public Relations problems. Management usually play a passive role in Public Relations matters and it is only when there is a crises that management engages in Public Relations matters (Broom & Smith, 1979; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2009).

Communication Technician

Most Public Relations practitioners enter the field as communication technicians (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2009). They are mostly hired to write speeches and edit organisational newsletters, write news releases and feature stories, develop website content, media relations and any other role that may arise. Practitioners in this role are usually not present when management defines problems and proposes solutions. Even though they are not part of the meetings where critical decisions are taken by management, they are the ones given the task of explaining these decisions or policies to the employees of the organisation and to the press (Broom & Smith, 1979; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2009).

Communication Facilitator

The communication facilitator role sees the Public Relations practitioners as sensitive listeners and information brokers. They serve as liaisons, interpreters and mediators between an organisation and its publics. They maintain two-way communication and facilitate exchange of information by removing barriers in relationships and also by keeping channels of communication opened. They occupy the “boundary spanning” roles and serve as links between organisations and their publics.

The overall aim of practitioners of this role is to provide management and the publics with the information they need to make decisions of mutual interests.

Problem-Solving Facilitator

When practitioners assume the role of problem-solving facilitator, they collaborate with other managers to define and solve problems. They become part of the strategic planning team. Problem-solving facilitators get invited to the management team

because they have demonstrated their skills and expertise to help other managers to solve problems.

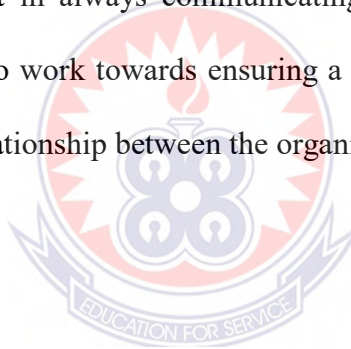
With regard to the Public Relations Roles Theory, Grunig (1992) maintains that two broad roles consistently emerge in Public Relations: the technician and manager. The technician role represents the craft side of Public Relations which include writing, editing, taking photos, handling communication production, running special events, and making telephone calls to the media. These activities focus on the implementation of the management's overall communication strategies. The manager role of the Public Relations practitioner focuses on activities that help identify and solve Public Relations problems. Public Relations managers advise senior managers about communication needs and are responsible for broad organisational results.

2.3.3 Relevance of the Public Relations Roles Theory to Current Study

Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg (1996) aver that the way a Public Relations practitioner applies his or her special skills depend on the role he or she plays in an organisation.

Latimore et al (2009) maintain that roles are the collection of daily activities that people perform. With regards to Public Relations roles, the scholars indicate that two roles emerge: the manger or Technician role. In this study, the roles theory helps to establish the roles Public Relations Practitioners are likely to play in their various organisations and how the placement of these Public Relations Practitioners role impacts on communication and Public Relations activities in the organisation that they work for. Grunig (1992) suggests in two of the principles of the excellence theory that Public Relations unit must be headed by a manager rather than a

technician, and that Public Relations Officers must be empowered by the dominant coalition in order to ensure direct reporting relationship to senior management. The tenets of this theory therefore suggest that the Police Public Relations Officers ought to consistently assess and understand their roles, and contributions in achieving organisational successes. Public Relations is a two-way street because it is seen as a conduit through which messages are communicated and therefore, the theoretical underpinnings of these roles are crucial in managing communication as well as human behaviour. The Police Public Relations Officers will definitely find themselves playing any one of these roles outlined by Cutlip et al (2009). Again, a dormant role may occur as they go about their daily activities. Whatever the case, the practitioners must be at the forefront in always communicating the action of the police to its publics. They should also work towards ensuring a positive image for the service by maintaining a cordial relationship between the organisation and its numerous publics.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

According to Powell and Connaway (2004), research methodology refers to the strategies surrounding the use of multiple methods of conducting a research study as required by different attempts to achieve a high degree of reliability and validity.

This chapter therefore examines the study's approach, design, population, sample size, sampling method/strategy, data collection methods/instrument, techniques for data analysis, validity and reliability of the study, ethical considerations as well as procedures for data collection.

3.1 Research Approach

The study employed the qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative research approach is an approach for exploring and understanding meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social phenomenon or problem. Similarly, Lindlof and Taylor (2002) assert that qualitative researchers seek to preserve and analyse the situated form, content and experiences of social action, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformation. Kreuger and Neuman (2006) also assert that, in a qualitative research, social reality is created in the form of meanings and interpretations, which are based on lived experiences of people. This therefore required that data was collected from individuals who had a depth of knowledge and expertise on the field to enrich the study; hence, the choice of a qualitative approach for this study. In her study on Police Public Relations in a democratic environment, Amoakohene (2002) employed the qualitative approach by examining documents at

the public relations directorate of the Ghana Police Service and a content analysis of some selected negative publications about the Ghanaian Police reported in the Daily Graphic for her analysis. The aim of the researcher was to undertake an in-depth analysis of Public Relations practices in the Ghana Police Service visa-a-vis the negative conduct of some Police personnel that create image and reputation problems for the service. A similar approach was adopted for this study by examining Public Relations practices in the Ghana Police Service. This study however expanded the scope and included Public Relations practices at the regional levels. Again, interviews were conducted to validate the data from documents that were analysed. This approach was aimed at comprehensively examining the issues regarding Public Relations practices in the Ghana Police Service.

3.2 Research Design

Zikmund and Babin (2007) assert that the purpose of research design is to present a master plan that will specify the methods for collecting and analysing information. Similarly, Creswell (2014) argues that research design refers to the procedures and strategies of enquiry. The scholar argues that the selection of an appropriate research design depends on the nature of the research, the research problem and the question, personal experiences of the researcher and the type of audience for the study. Research designs, especially in qualitative circles, include narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. In this regard, the study employed the case study design by investigating the current state of Public Relations practices in the Ghana Police Service.

3.3 Case Study

According to Kusi (2012), a case study is a form of qualitative research which is widely used by researchers in the social sciences. A case study is an in-depth study of one or more instances of a phenomenon. Similarly, Creswell (2014) states that a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon within a real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly defined. This study employed the single case design. Creswell (2014) indicates further that a case study is a design of enquiry found in many fields, especially the ones in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case. This case could be a programme, an activity, an event, process or one or more individuals.

This study sought to gain an in-depth knowledge of Public Relations practices within the Ghana Police Service. This was achieved through in-depth face-to-face interviews as well analysis of vital documents (such as memorandas, speeches, organisational newsletters, policy documents, and press release). Also, the interviews with the Police Public Relations officers were aimed at validating information that was gathered from documents within the various Public Relations units to ascertain their benefits and effectiveness.

3.4 Population

According to Bless and Higgon-Smith (2000), the population for a study refers to the entire set of objects or people which is the focus of the research and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics. Gravatter and Forzano (2006) explain that a population is the entire individuals of interest to a researcher. Burns and Groove (2003) also point out that the population of a study basically refers to all the

elements that the researcher believes meet the eligibility criteria to be included in a study.

The Ghana Police Service has 11 administrative regions. These are Greater Accra, Tema, Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Volta, Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, Western, Eastern and Central Regions. All these regions are manned by Public Relations officers who report to the Director of Public Affairs of the Ghana Police Service at the Police Headquarters in Accra. The study's population therefore included six public relations practitioners of the Ghana Police Service as well as documents analysis based on information gathered at the Public Relations Departments.

According to Nworgu (2006), a target population refers to the entire group, individuals or objects that the researcher is interested in studying. The target population usually has varying characteristics. The accessible population of a study on the other hand is the population that is defined in terms of those members in the group within the reach of the researcher. In this regard, the target population for this study was all Police Public Relations units. The accessible population was those participants who were readily available for the study. Five Police Public Relations officers from five regions namely Greater Accra, Ashanti, Western, Eastern and Tema Regions as well as the Director of Public Affairs of the Ghana Police Service were interviewed. The justification for selecting these participants is that these regions were the best in terms of top notch Public Relations practice within the police service following a study conducted by the police administration in collaboration with the Director of Public Affairs in 2016.

3.5 Sampling Method/Strategy

As Lindlof and Taylor (2002) indicate, sampling method or strategy guides the researcher as to the choices of what to observe or whom to interview. They assert that an intelligent sampling strategy enables researchers to make systematic contact with communication phenomenon with a minimum of wasted effort. This study employed the purposive sampling method. Kumekpor (2002) states that in purposive sampling, the units of the sample are selected not by random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for the study because they satisfy certain qualities which are of interest to the researcher.

The study employed the purposive sampling method to purposively sample 6 Police Public Relations practitioners from five administrative regions and the Director of Public Affairs of the Police Headquarters in Accra.

3.6 Sample Size

Kusi (2012) points out that in considering a sample size for a qualitative study, it is imperative for researchers to determine an aspect of the population to be used in the study and justify why they have chosen such a sample size. The scholar argues further that selecting a large number of interviewees for a qualitative research improves the validity and reliability of a research.

However, Silverman (2010) argues that although the validity of qualitative analysis depends on the sample size, the quality of the analysis is also significant. Based on these assertions by the above scholars, a sample size of six (6) was used. These included six Police Public Relations practitioners in the Ghana Police Service.

3.7 Data Collection Method/Instrument

The instruments for this study are interviews and document analysis.

3.7.1 Interviews

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), interviews are key features of qualitative research and help to provide understanding of the social actors' experiences and perspective through stories, accounts, and explanations. Most researchers normally select persons for interviews only if their experiences are central to the research problem in some way – especially due to their skills, expertise or wealth of knowledge that can answer the critical questions and satisfy the objectives of the research (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). For this reason, an interview guide was prepared based on the research questions with a number of questions critical to the study. The views of the respondents were sought on the various research questions with the aid of the interview guide. The interview was conducted with the interviewees using a recorder with the permission of the respondent. The interviews were later transcribed and the responses from the respondents were analysed. The emerging issues were transcribed and put into themes based on the most recurring issues.

3.7.2 Document Analysis

Bailey (1994) says document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by a researcher to give voice and some meaning about a phenomenon that is being investigated.

Yin (2003) is of the view that documentary information is very relevant especially when researchers are studying on case study topics. The scholar Yin (2003) believes

that document analysis can give detailed information about a phenomenon that can enrich a particular study.

Silverman (1993) provides a classification of documents as files, statistical records, records of official proceedings and images. The scholar, Silverman (1993) argues further that these documents can provide vital information to researchers who want to understand a particular phenomenon. Guba and Lincoln (1981) however, distinguish between documents and records. They define a record as any written statement that is prepared by an individual or agency for the purpose of attesting to an event or providing an accounting. They argue further that documents analysis is much more than recording facts but a reflective process in which a researcher engages in a social inquiry situated within a theoretical frame of reference in order that the content of the document can be understood.

Similarly, Cresswell (2009) is of the view that documents analysis is more convenient for studies because they can be accessed at a particular time that the researcher deems fit to do so and also saves the researcher the trouble of having to transcribe such information before they can make more meaning for analysis. Document analysis in the view of Cresswell (2009) saves the researcher time and expense of transcribing. The document analysis instrument was employed in this study to enable the researcher use it to investigate and also understand public relations practice in the Ghana Police Service. Documents such as speeches, memorandas, policy documents, organisational newsletters, and press releases were all analysed to validate the data gathered from the interviews granted by the police public relations officers.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

According to Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2015), when conducting research, especially with human subjects in particular, ethics are of utmost importance. Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2015) propose three principles that researchers must adhere to – informed consent, level of participant’s privacy and debriefing. The participants were therefore fully informed of the purpose of this study and they gave their consent before the study was carried out. Again, informants were assured of their utmost confidentiality and duly briefed on all aspects and purposes of the study. The informants were given the chance to ask questions and further clarifications before participating in the study.

Similarly, Creswell (2009) points out that when conducting research, researchers need to protect their research participants, acknowledge all sources, develop trust with the participants, promote the integrity of the research, guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organisations or institutions and also cope with new challenging problems. Based on the assertions by the above scholars, the researcher employed their ideas and also adhered strictly to the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) Code of Conduct.

3.9 Validity and Reliability of the Study

Creswell (2009) posits that validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research and it is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account. Creswell (2009) therefore suggests eight primary procedures/strategies that researchers can use to validate qualitative studies. They are triangulation of data sources, use member checking, use rich/thick description to convey findings, clarify biases, negative case analysis, spend

prolonged time in the field, use peer review and debriefing, and use an external auditor to review the project. Two of these verification procedures, namely using thick description to convey findings and clarification of research biases were employed in this study.

Creswell (2014) further observes that reliability in qualitative research is very important. Reliability means dependability or consistency and this is determined based on the researcher's approach as to whether it is consistent across different researchers and projects. Yin (2003) suggests that qualitative researchers must always document the procedures of their case studies as well as the steps of procedure as possible. In this regard, data collection methods such as interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed before being analysed. The transcribed data was sent back to the respective interviewees for cross-checking and validation. Official documents from the Public Affairs Directorate as well as the Regional Public Relations Units of the Ghana Police Service were also analysed and documented. An interview guide was used to guide the researcher to conduct the face-to-face interviews.

3.10 Techniques for Data Analysis

The researcher employed thematic analysis for this study. According to Frankel and Wallen (2003), analysing data basically involves synthesising the bulk information that the researcher has gathered from various sources into a logical description of what was set out to be investigated.

Cresswell (2009) posits that when a researcher collects data from the field, he or she must make "sense" out of the information that has been gathered.

In this regard, the data must be categorised into coherent units of information which the scholars refer to as themes and codes. Cresswell (2009) therefore proposes four

steps in which researchers can follow in thematic analysis. The study adopted Cresswell (2009) approach for thematic analysis which are outlined below:

1. First of all, the bulk data from the interview were transcribed by the researcher from the voice audio into written text for easy understanding of the issues discussed with the interviewees.
2. The second step involved reading through the transcribed data to make more meaning and appreciation of the issues under investigations. The researcher also noted and identified certain key points especially in areas where the respondents agreed or disagreed on a particular issue.
3. The third step involved assigning codes and generating themes. At this stage, the researcher meticulously segmented the text before bringing out the clear meaning of the information.
4. The final step was interpreting the meaning of the various themes as gathered from the data. The researcher then interpreted the themes using a thick description of the data and comparing the findings with information gathered from literature as well as the tenets espoused from the coorientation and public relations roles theories as underpinned by the study. Conclusions were then drawn.

3.10.1 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure commenced with introductory letters which were sent to the various respondents of the study for permission. The participants were informed of the purpose of the interview for their consent after which the interview data was collected for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents analysed data collected and discusses its findings as well. This chapter highlights the issues from the respondents and documents collected for the purpose of the study. Data was collected from six (6) Public Relations officers of the Ghana Police Service and these included one person from the Public Affairs Directorate of the Ghana Police Service, Headquarters and five (5) persons from the regional level which include Greater Accra Region, Tema Region, Eastern Region, Ashanti Region and finally Western Region.

Generally, the analysis was done under three (3) main research questions:

RQ. 1. What is the position of Public Relations (PR) in the Ghana Police Service?

RQ. 2. What are the roles played by the Police Public Relations Officers?

RQ. 3. What are the communication strategies employed by the Public Relations Departments of the Ghana Police Service?

For the purpose of ensuring the respondents anonymity, the researcher used specific codes to label the respondents. The following codes were used for each respondent.

R1PAD (Respondent 1, Public Affairs Directorate)

R2 AR (Respondent 2 Accra Region)

R3 TR (Respondent 3 Tema Region)

R4 ER (Respondent 4 Eastern Region)

R5 ASH R (Respondent 5 Ashanti Region)

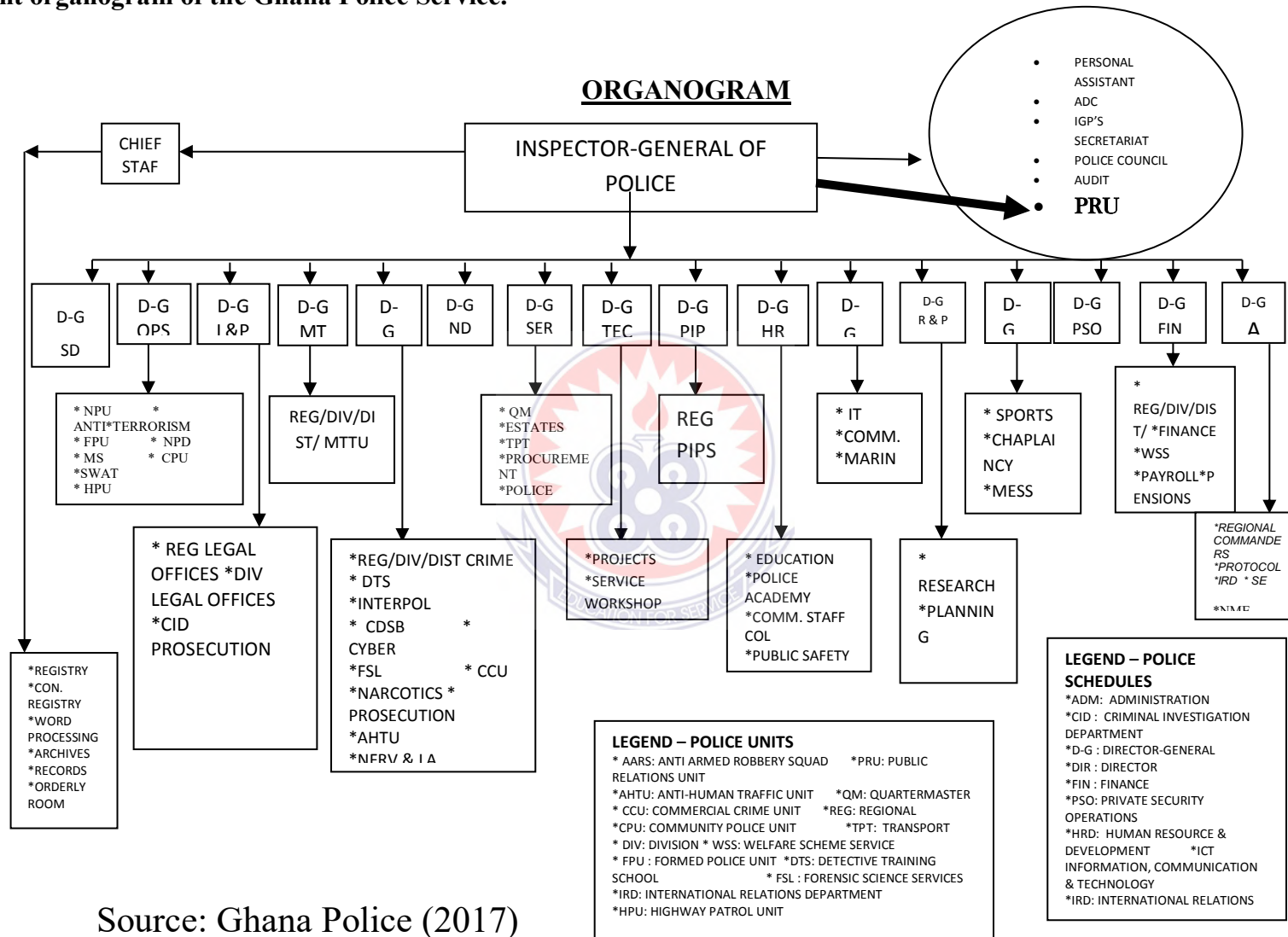
R6 WR (Respondent 6 Western Region)

4.1 Analysis and Discussions of the Findings on the Position of Public Relations in the Ghana Police Service

R.Q. 1. What is the position of Public Relations in the Ghana Police Service?

Public Relations as a Management Function

Figure 2: The current organogram of the Ghana Police Service.



Source: Ghana Police (2017)

On the extreme right of the organogram (figure 2) is boldened which shows the exact location of Public Relations on the organogram of the Ghana Police Service. As visibly seen, Public Relations is located at the management position and reports directly to the Inspector-General of Police who is the head of the Ghana Police Service. The study found that Public Relations is visibly located at the top management position. However, when it comes to policy formulation or decision-making processes, Public Relations is muted and cosmetic. This response from Respondent 4 ER summarises the assertion that the location of Public Relations at top management is cosmetic.

When it comes to the position of Public Relations in the Ghana Police Service, I can tell you that we are at management. I am saying so, because I always sit in management meetings and even coordinate the meetings but the only problem is that I don't have a voice when it comes to critical decision-making. Sometimes am only given the opportunity to suggest, and you know what it means to suggest something to somebody.

This response is consistent with the assertions of Cutlip et al (2009) that it is not in all instances that Public Relations officers will enjoy top management position. It is also in sync with the claim by Gyan (1991) that Public Relations means different things to different organisations. What Public Relations means and does depends on where the Public Relations officers find themselves; they could be playing a management function or a technician role. The data also confirms that the story is not different from the regional levels of Public Relations practice in the Ghana Police Service. In the Regions, the Public Relations officer is allowed into all management meetings but suffers the same fate as happens to his/her compatriot superior at the national level

when it comes to decision-making. The Public Relations officers coordinate the meetings but are only allowed to make suggestions to their bosses which are however not binding on the bosses. Another respondent R 2 AR remarks:

We know that in the police service too, we deal with lots of command and control and Public Relations may be part of management level of the regional policing or command but sometimes it is not always the case that your decisions or your suggestion are taken because of the ranking system; but they tend to forget that you are an expert in the field and you also have regimental training and experience. The commanders always feel they have gone through all the ranks to become a commander so you cannot dictate to him, and for that matter his decision is final because he thinks he knows it all.

This response reinforces the assertions by Gyan (1991) to the effect that Public Relations could mean something different to Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of organisations. The decision by the Ghana Police Service to establish Public Relations offices in the service can also be situated within the framework of the Excellence theory by Grunig (1992). The theory postulates that organisations must involve Public Relations in strategic management functions by empowering practitioners to work hand-in-hand with the dominant coalition (the highest decision-making body of organisations). Again, Public Relations should not be subordinated under any other department in an organisation, especially marketing and advertising because while publicity may emphasise on awareness creation of goods or services, Public Relations core role is to ensure a positive corporate image and reputations for the organisation. The finding also confirms the assertion of Broom and Dozier (1986) that Public Relations practitioners have important roles to play as far as the achievement of

organisational successes are concerned. The scholars, however, point to the fact that most Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of organisations often relegate Public Relations functions to simply communicating on behalf of the organisation, especially when problems occur without involving them in policy formulation.

4.1.1 Public Relations and the Educational Levels of Practitioners

Seitel (2007) argues that having a good educational background in communication or Public Relations guarantees excellent performance in the field of Public Relations. Center and Jackson (2008) believe that the competence of the Public Relations practitioners is measured by management if the practitioner knows his or her work well and is also respected and seen by management as an expert in his or her field. The practitioners can earn the respect from their bosses if they are highly educated and exhibit competence in their field.

In a follow up question to some of the respondents, the researcher sought to ascertain whether a practitioner who possesses a higher degree could automatically earn a seat at management and also take part in the decision making processes. The study gathered that most of the practitioners were highly educated with a minimum of a first degree while others even had postgraduate degrees. It was realised that the possession of higher degrees did not have a bearing on the position that the Public Relations officer occupied but rather the rank that the person holds. The data confirmed that even though most of the Public Relations officers were degree holders, they possessed very low ranks of Assistant Superintendent of Police which is the lowest rank in the officer's corps of ranking in the Ghana Police Service. As a result of the regimental nature of the Ghana Police Service, ranks play a very important role as far as command and control is concerned. This, therefore, appears to have led to the

marginalisation of the management function role of the Public Relations practitioner in the Ghana Police Service. The findings above are clearly at variance with the assertions of Heath (2001) that the Public Relations officer today must exhibit a high sense of wisdom and intelligence which can be partly gained through education. Again, Public Relations officers must have good educational background if they want to progress rapidly in their field. The situation in the Ghana Police Service looks different since the main emphasis is on rank.

4.1.2 Public Relations and Effective Communication

Kitchen (2006) says that, Public Relations practitioners must communicate with various publics and insist that effective communication is the best and surest ways organisations can nurture and maintain relationships between them (practitioners) and their publics. Grunig (1992) notes that Public Relations is a two-way street and therefore emphasis should be laid on two-way communication. Findings from the study which include document analysis and interviews from respondents show that the Public Relations officers use effective communication to communicate to both internal and external publics. The study gathered that more emphasis was laid on external publics than the internal publics. The job of the police Public Relations officers were mainly communicating to the external publics. However, internally, the police service has different channels of communicating to their publics. These include Durbars, welfare meetings, circulars and police wireless messages. One of the respondents, R2AR relates.

You know that in the past, it was very difficult to get information from regimental circles to members of the publics because we built our own world in which we operated and therefore it was difficult for anybody to give

information out; but with the practice of democracy and freedom of speech, the police need to respond to media enquiries like police brutalities, unlawful arrest, unlawful detention etc. so, there is always the need to adopt effective communication to explain issues to the media and even your bosses as well. Over here, in my region, we do more of external communication because of the vibrant media rather than internal communication.

The study also found that most of the police Public Relations officers act as masters of ceremony (MC) for special events organised by the police service and the practitioners employ effective communication strategies to their daily work.

4.2 Analysis and Discussions on Roles played by Police Public Relations Officers.

R.Q. 2. What are the roles played by the Police Public Relations Officers?

Cutlip et al (2009) argues that, over time, Public Relations practitioners always adopt patterns of behaviours to deal with recurring situations in their work and to accommodate the expectations of others about what they should do in their jobs. The scholars believe that four major roles describe much of Public Relations practice. However, Cutlip et al (2009) think that at one time or another practitioners may play all the four roles to varying degrees even though a dominant role could emerge as they go about their day-to-day work. These four roles are: Expert Prescriber, Communication Technician, Problem-Solving Facilitator and Communication Facilitator.

On the other hand, Grunig (1992) is of the opinion that two broad roles consistently emerge as far as Public Relations practice is concerned; these are the manager and a technician roles. The study found that the police public relations officers play all the

four roles as espoused by Cutlip et al (2009). These roles are played depending on the kinds of situations the organisation finds itself in. For instance, the study earlier found that the counseling role of the Public Relations practitioners was missing because practitioners were not allowed to take part when it comes to policy formulation or the decision-making processes in the Ghana Police Service. Again, the study also discovered that even though practitioners played all the four roles from time to time, the major role that emerged was the technician role. This comment from R5ASHR summarises it all.

Over here in my region, my roles are not static. I play all the roles depending on where I find myself. I say this because, whenever the region is hit by crisis and the media is putting pressure on us, my commander then sees me as an expert in my field but when everything is okay, then am seen as a technician because I will perform my daily duties as writing speeches, coordinating meetings and acting as master of ceremony and so on. But when we have a crisis, my commander will always seek for my counseling before speaking to the media or before taking any major decision. So my brother, you will realise that when the police organisation is fine, you are not regarded as an expert but let a problem come now and they expect you the P.R.O to do magic and turn things around.

The above response is consistent with the claims of Cutlip et al (2009) that the practitioners may play all the roles from time to time although a major role may emerge. It is also in tandem with the roles theory of Public Relations which says that two major roles which are technician or manager may emerge. These arguments are further supported by Seitel (2007) who believes that the situation in the organisation

can change, so the Public Relations practitioner must have the ability to evaluate problems and decide which role will best solve the problem in their respective organisations.

4.2.1 Daily Duties of Practitioners

SeiteI (2007) makes a case that several duties may emerge for an individual practitioner in the organisation. Among them are writing, media relation, planning, publicity, community relations, organising special events, website designs, attending meeting among others. The study found that the police Public Relations officers play all these roles to some extent from time to time. However the most popular duties were organising meetings for top Management, writing speeches, organising and planning special events and also supervising other ranks within the Public Relations unit to do daily media monitoring, public opinion evaluation and also responding to media enquiries, among others. Gyan (1991) maintains that Public Relations practitioners must have the needed skills and the abilities required to carry out their daily duties. The scholar argues further that Public Relations practitioners must be able to communicate well and effectively and therefore should be well equipped in skills of communication in journalism, advertising and Public Relations as well as the ability to write good and clear English with persuasive skills.

The study found that all these duties were performed by the police Public Relations officers in all the various Public Relations units. The data also revealed that apart from the core duties of the public relations practitioners as enumerated by many scholars above, the practitioners were sometimes used for general police duties such as arrests, prosecutorial duties and engaging in other operational duties in the police service as and when the need arose. Respondent 6WR explains:

I am a police officer, so apart from my core mandate of Public Relations duties, I sometimes perform other general duties. The Public Relations Unit collaborates with all Units in the service, so whenever the need arose, I participate in general operational duties as well. For instance, whenever we have operational duties, I join my colleagues for arrest of suspects etc. I need to be on the ground to see things for myself and report well. The fact that I am a PRO does not mean I should sit in the office all the time.

4.2.2 The Need for Research

Newsom, Turk, and Kruckerg (1996) argue that research is a very important component of Public Relations practice. The scholars believe that systematic research helps organisations in many ways such as: Identification of publics, media and trend analysis, issues monitoring and provision of essential data for policy directions of organisations. Latimore et al(2009) also point out that management always demand hard facts, not intuition or guess work so Public Relations officers must be able to demonstrate convincingly their ability to add value in producing a product or service.(Latimore et al.2009). Respondent 1PAD intimated.

Over here in my office, there is nothing like I think this or that. We don't do guess work. Anytime we have to make a proposal to management we have to back it with some empirical evidence. For instance, when we sent a proposal sometime ago for management to consider setting up social media and media monitoring unit, we conducted some research. You can't just get up one day and say we want to do this or that. Everything must be based on evidence.

The study discovered that although research was seen as a very important component of Public Relations duties, very little research was conducted by the practitioners in the Ghana Police Service. The basic research works identified in the study were mainly on monitoring the media via radio, television, and online. This was more vibrant at the headquarters in Accra but very little was done at the regional levels. Some of the practitioners therefore had to rely heavily on friends from media houses to feed them with information about the police service which were in the public space. One of the Respondents R3TR remarks as follows.

I don't even have enough personnel at my unit to help me conduct research. Sometimes, I just monitor the media if I have time to see what is happening about my organisation. To be frank conducting research here is problematic because I don't have the logistics and personnel to help me do so. So once in a while, I will do small research in my own way.

It was obvious from the study that most of the practitioners did not really have laid down plans or programmes for research work as part of their duties. They will only conduct research whenever they are compelled to do so, especially during crisis periods. Again, research became important when there was the need to find out the cause of a particular crisis so as to advise management on it. Secondly, the study found that the management of the police organisation was reluctant in approving funds to the unit to conduct research. This goes to confirm the views of Seitel (2007) that although research is a very important role of Public Relations practitioners, most organisations do not always attach importance to such programmes. Another Respondent 2AR had this to say.

These days most people prefer to go to the media houses to report their cases instead of the police station. So what we do is, we establish cordial relations with the media so they always give us early warning signs whenever danger is coming. However, we don't have all the media houses on our side so sometimes such journalist do anti-policing stories about us which are very negative. So I try to monitor the media for feedback and react whenever the need arises.

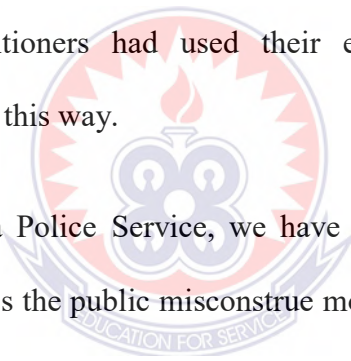
These assertions, such as the above, are in line with the coorientation theory which postulates that organisations must ensure harmony and peaceful coexistence with their constituents. Again, organisations must identify areas of conflicts with their publics and find solutions to them. They can do this by adopting effective two-way communication which generates feedback .The study discovered some contradictions between the respondents as far as the issue of research is concerned. While some said research programmes were always in place and were regularly conducting research, others were of view that research was merely cosmetic because no importance was attached to it by management.

4.2.3 Issues and Crisis Management

Cutlip et al (2009) believe that issues management is an integral part of Public Relations,so public Relations practitioners must have the expertise to deal with such issues before they degenerate into crisis. The scholars maintain that two points capture the essence of issues management. These are, early identification of issues with potential impact on the organisation and a strategic response designed to mitigate their consequences.

With regards to crisis management, Coombs (2007) explains that it is a critical organisational function because if crises are not well managed, they can result into serious harm to stakeholders, losses for an organisation, or end its very existence. So public relations practitioners are supposed to be an integral part of crisis management teams.

The study discovered that the Ghana Police Service has been hit several times with issues that have resulted into crisis (during the period under study). It was confirmed that issues and crisis management were integral part of the service's Public Relations practice. The respondents indicated that they had been proactive in avoiding crisis; so had thus averted serious crises on many occasions. In instances where the crisis had already occurred, practitioners had used their expertise to resolve the issue. Respondent 1PAD puts it this way.



As for the Ghana Police Service, we have been hit by crisis several times because sometimes the public misconstrue most of our activities as negative. I recall when we were hit by the recruitment scandal, many people said police was just for sale but that was not the case. We had to constitute a crisis team led by a commissioner of police and the team spoke with one voice. At the end of it all, we were able to inspire confidence in our publics again. So I can assure you that we deal with crises all the time whenever they occur.

This finding lends credence to what Coombs (2007) suggests as the best way to deal with the media during crisis. The scholar outlined four steps which he describes as crisis media training best practices. They are enumerated:

1. Avoid the phrase "No comment" because people will think the organisation is

guilty and trying to hide something.

2. Present information clearly by avoiding jargons or technical terms.
3. Appear pleasant on camera by avoiding nervous habits that people may interpret as deception.
4. Brief all potential spokespersons on the latest crisis information and the key message the organisation wants to convey to its publics. It was confirmed from the study that the practitioners applied most of the techniques outlined above by Coombs (2007) to deal with crisis and they spoke with one voice as they dealt with media enquiries.

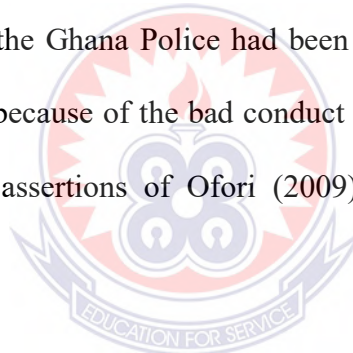
4.2.4 Managing Organisational Reputation and Image

Amoakohene (2002) paints a gloomy picture of the image of the Ghana Police Service and argues that the image of the service had been created largely through public perception rather than through a conscious effort by the service to build an image for itself. Tench and Yeomans (2006) also maintain that the word image means reflection, so it is a reflection of an organisation in the eyes and minds of its publics that constitute an image. The scholars argue further that overtime, an individual might accumulate a number of different images of the same organisation due to several factors. The scholars, Tench and Yeomans (2006), see reputation of organisations as pictures that are taken about an organisations over a period of time and crystallised into an opinion about the organisation. Respondent 1 PAD remarks below on the image and reputation of the Ghana Police Service:

As for our image, I can tell you that it is a difficult one, because if today we have a good image and just one police officer misconduct his or herself, the whole service is affected. I can say for sure that our image is not that good but

my outfit has been working tirelessly at that. We do a lot of education internally and we also try to inspire public confidence. Am sure with time we can have a better image than we presently have. Once we have a good image, our reputation too will be excellent.

This remark to some extent adds some level of credence to what Amoakohene (2002) said, that the image of the police service is created largely by public perception rather than a conscious effort by the service to build an image for its self. It was discovered from the study that the image of the police service had been dented for a very long time and several interventions had been put in place by successive administrations to improve on it but that had been an uphill task. Ofori (2009) for instance posits that, one of the reasons why the Ghana Police had been struggling to maintain a positive image and reputation is because of the bad conduct of some of its personnel. In what appears to support the assertions of Ofori (2009), Respondent 4 ER remarks as follows.



Recently, the Police Administration decided to constitute a panel to interview some Motor Traffic and Transport Directorate (MTTD) personnel all over the country. We heard from sources that one of the personnel told the panel that the responsibility of MTTD personnel is taking of money. So you see if you have personnel in the service with that mentality, what kind of image do you expect to have? Secondly, because we are operating under a democratic regime, we have to respect the rights of the citizenry but sometimes our personnel don't do so and that is why people always speak badly about the Ghana Police Service. We are working at it all the time because we communicate on behalf of the organisation so it is our duty.

This remark is also in tandem with the coorientation theory which postulates that organisations must use two-way communication to ensure peace and harmony with their publics. The theory also assumes that perception plays an important role in sustaining relationships between an organisation and its publics especially if the publics perceive the organisations in a positive light. Also, the theory has some grounding in psychology and emphasises on attitudinal change and the need for mutual adjustment between an organisation and its publics to ensure consensus building.

4.2.5 Public Relations and the Role of the Police Public Relations Practitioner

Motschall and Cao (2002) observe that for nearly four decades, police agencies of all sizes worldwide have established public information officer functions to communicate with a variety of audiences, particularly the media. The scholars argue that although many people describe the roles of the police public information officers as media - oriented and reactive, some of the practitioners are seen using management-oriented and proactive techniques that are consistent with established public relations roles. The work of the security apparatus is to ensure the general security and safety of all persons and their properties. It is therefore important that the public relations officers of the police service provide surveillance information on how to avoid the activities of criminals (Donkor 2010). Donkor (2010) observes further that over the years, the public relations officers of the Ghana Police Service have been proactive in their communication roles since they have always been at the forefront of engaging in communicating on issues that bother on security in the country. It must be noted that public relations activities in most organisations are viewed today as an integral part of

the organisations; and this includes the Ghana Police Service. Respondent 3 TR said this:

In the Ghana Police Service where I practice as a Public Relations officer, we see ourselves as being the link between the police service and its numerous publics. We act as spokespersons and information managers of the service and we must be seen as a “glue” that hold the organisation and its publics together. We have to ensure the flow of information both within and outside the service. Let me hasten to add that depending on the situation that the police organisation finds itself, my role as PRO can always vary. Sometimes my bosses may regard me as an expert in the field but other times too, I am not seen as an expert so it varies.

The finding is consistent with the roles theory by Cutlip et al (2009). The scholars point out that the roles of the public relations officers may always change from time to time in the organisation although a practitioner can be seen performing a dominant role. Again, practitioners may be seen playing all the four traditional roles outlined by scholars, namely; Expert Prescriber, Communication Technician, Problem-Solving Facilitator or Communication Facilitator Role.

4.3 Analysis and Discussions on the Types of Communication Strategies used by the Public Relations Department of the Ghana Police Service.

R.Q.3 What are the communication strategies used by the public relations departments of the Ghana Police Service?

Scholars such as Cutlip et al (2009), Kitchen (2006) and Amoakohene (2002) note that most public relations units have been given different names and titles. Some of

the names or designations are as follows; Public Relations, Public Affairs Departments, Corporate Communication, Community Relations, Investor Relations, Media Relations among others. Others are clearly given by various organisations depending on the nature and size of it. Cutlip et al (2009) argues that public relations manager performs managerial as well as operative functions. Basic functions of management such as planning, organising or directing to manage his or her department are key. The Public Relations officer also performs the operative functions such as press conferences, media strategy, advertising, press releases, and media relations and so on which top management may entrust to him.

4.3.1 Public Relations Departments and the Ghana Police Service

Given that the main focus of this study was on the Public Relations unit of the Ghana Police Service, Lock and seele (2016) in their study on Public Relations Departments in relation to corporate social responsibility (CSR) outlined three types of departments - the single-headed type, two-headed type and the infused type .They also identified the reporting relationships in the various types .With regard to the single-headed type, the scholars argue that the head of Public Relations reports directly to management without having to pass through another officer. However, in the case of the Two-headed department, the head of Public Relations does not report directly to top management because there is a dedicated body in place where the head of public relation reports to, which is known as the supervisory board for onward reporting to top management. In the case of the infused type of department, there is a dedicated body (operational & governance) reporting to the top management but with clear division of labour between the two sub-bodies. The Governance body is responsible for strategic formulation while the operational body sees to implementation of

policies. While this is the case, the Ghana police service operates with the single-headed type. According to the study, the Director of Public affairs of the Ghana Police Service reports directly to the top management. Also the head of Public Affairs reports directly to any other command or department within the Ghana Police Service. As established earlier, the head of Public Affairs sits in all meetings by the top management board which is known as Police management Board (POMAB). This board, according to the study, is the highest decision making body of the police service. The head of Public Relations Participates in all meetings and acts as the master of ceremony (MC) for the meetings. However, the study revealed that, Public Relations' voice is always muted when decision regarding the service are taken which include the Public Affairs directorate. In some cases, the head of Public Relations is given the opportunity to suggest but not to instruct. The study further discovered that because the Police Service is a regimental institution, ranks play a vital role, so Police Officers with lower ranks have virtually nothing to say when critical decisions about the service are being taken.

This finding contradicts the assertions and arguments by scholars such as Grunig (1992) Heath and Coombs (2006) and Kitchen (2006) that public relations must be part of every policy formulation in organisations; and must also see to the implementation of such policies. The scholars argue that organisations that ignore this important rule, risk creating crises for themselves and when such incidents occur, Public Relations is tasked to turn things around.

This remark from Respondent 6 WR captures it all.

At the Regional level here, I have the privilege of sitting in all meetings and

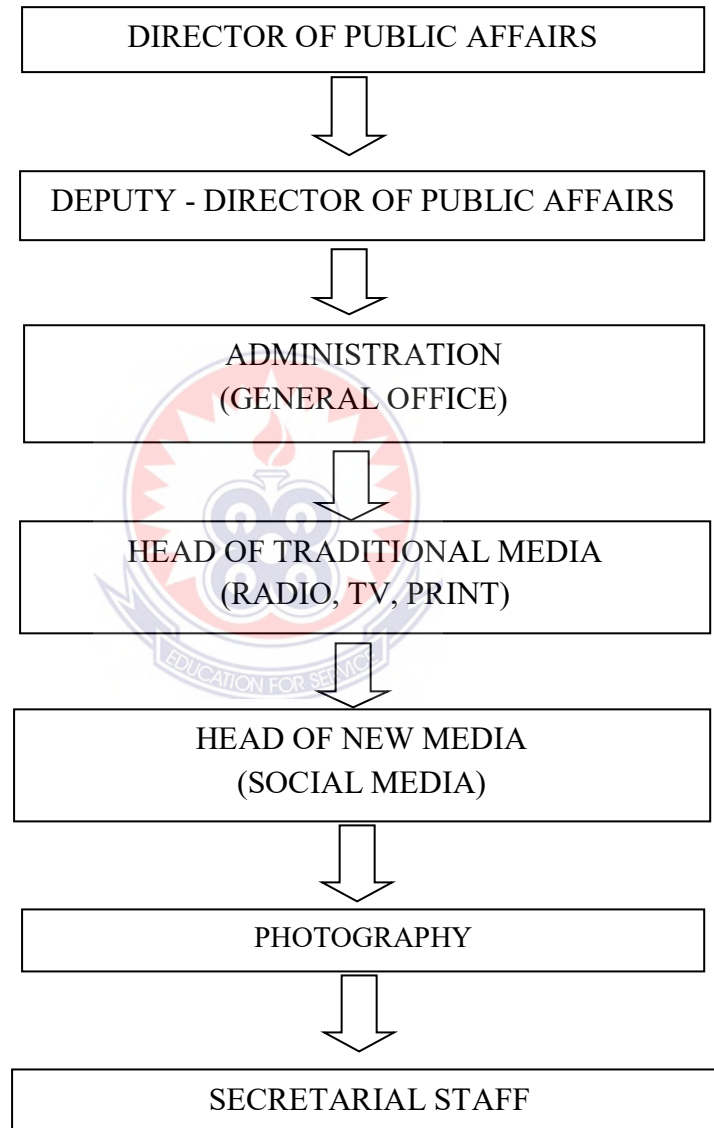
we do so twice in a week that is Mondays and Thursdays. All important decisions are taken at these meetings but unfortunately, I do not take part in decisions. When the commissioners are talking, who am I to speak? Meanwhile, anytime there is a problem in the region, they put a lot of pressure on my office to ensure that the public is duly informed. Practicing Public Relation is very difficult but what can we do? I just hope that one day I will also rise to that level so that my input can be felt. Recently, a Police Constable shot and killed somebody in the Region and I was so hot because pressure was mounting from every quarters including Accra and you know our media today. It was not easy for me but we managed the situation very well.

This finding confirms the argument of Ofori (2009) that practicing Public Relations in the security agencies especially the Police is always difficult. The situation becomes even more worrying because most of the activities of the Ghana Police are always misconstrued as negative which makes the profession very difficult to manage. Again, the finding lends credence to Donkor (2010) on her assertions that Public Relations officers are not regarded as experts in the Ghana Police Service until crisis occurs. This, the scholar thinks it is because of the “master-servant” relationship that exist between top management and their subordinate officers in the Police Service which obviously has a ripple effect on Police-Public Relationships.

According to respondent 1 PAD, although in most organisations, protocol units are always subordinated under public relations department, that was not the case in the police service. The protocol office is headed by a different officer who reports to a different commander rather than the head of Public Relations.

In order to understand Public Relations Departments within the context of the Ghana Police Service, the figure below (figure 3) illustrates the present structure of the public relations department of the Service.

Figure 3: The Current Structure of the Public Relations Unit of the Ghana Police Service (National Headquarters)



Source: Ghana Police Service (2017)

The figure above (figure 3) represents the current structure of the public relations directorate of the police service which is located at the National Police Headquarters,

Accra. This information was accessed through interviews conducted with respondents as well as documents gathered from the Public Relations Directorate of the Service. Although the study was conducted on the Ghana Police Service as an organisation, the main focus was on the public relations units of the service which encompasses the police headquarters and five Regional Police Command of the service namely Accra Region, Tema Region, Eastern Region, Ashanti Region and Finally Western Region which formed the scope of the study. Based on information gathered from R1PAD and figure 3, at the main headquarters, the head of Public Relations is designated as Director of Public Affairs (DOPA) with the rank of Superintendent of Police. He is assisted by a Deputy Director who also holds the rank of a Deputy Superintendent of Police. The respondent confirms that the Directorate also has a general office that deals with all administrative matters and correspondence from the department to other departments of the service which includes all public relations units at the regional levels. It was discovered from the study that a media monitoring center was established within the directorate. The main rationale was to enable the personnel monitor the traditional media - radio, TV and print to ascertain information about the police organisation as well as sister security agencies in order to improve its relations with the public and other security agencies in the country. Secondly, the unit also deals with complaints and grievances from members of the public about police personnel and refers such complaints to the appropriate quarters for redress. All these efforts are aimed at improving police-public relations. Respondent 1 PAD remarks:

Apart from improving police-public relations, our unit also deals with complaints and grievances from members of the public regarding police personnel and general security issues. In October, 2016, when the country was

due for the general elections, the police administration approved the establishment of a social media centre. This was mainly to track information from the public about our operations and in fact it helped us a lot. The public even gave us more information on election-related issues and we acted on them with dispatch. I can tell you that it was one of the reasons why we came out of the elections very successful.

This finding confirms the claims of Otu (2015) who argues that social media has become a global phenomenon and most organisations are using it to engage their numerous publics. It is therefore not a surprise that the study has confirmed that social media had been incorporated into the police public relations unit.

It was also confirmed from the interviews and documents analysed that the Public Relations unit also has a photography and secretarial sections. The photography section deals with all photographic assignment within the service that includes all the regional commands. These photographs when taken are used as exhibitions for special events which serves partly as institutional memory for the Ghana Police Service. Finally, the secretarial staffs deal with all secretarial duties such as typing and other clerical duties in the unit. The department currently has a staff roll of 30 personnel serving on the various sub units at the directorate. Respondent 1 PAD remarks again:

Currently, I have a total staff number of about 30 personnel at the unit. A few are on leave and some are on peace keeping mission outside Ghana. All these personnel work as a team for us to give of our best. We sometimes do internal reshuffling to enable everybody share their expertise so all hands are on deck. We are the managers of the communication wing of the Ghana Police Service

so our bosses expect nothing but the best from us. We are the liaison between the police organisation and the Ghanaian public so we have a lot to do in this unit.

This finding is in line with the communication facilitator role of the public relations roles theory which says that public relations officers should be seen playing the boundary-spanning role because they are the mediators and interpreters of all activities within the service and to their publics. Again, the finding is in line with the coorientation theory which postulates that the best way to ensure cordial relationship between an organisation and its publics is through two-way communication and consensus building.

4.3.2 Channels of Communication in the Public Relations Department

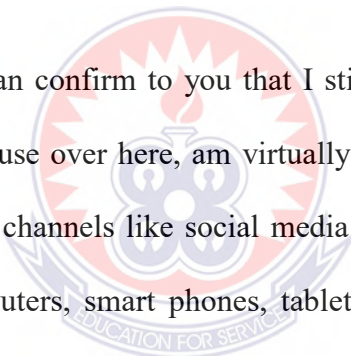
Generally, the study found that the public relations department uses persuasive communication to disseminate information to their publics.

Wilcox and Cameron (2009) indicate that the media are the conveyors of messages to the publics of various organisations so it is important to choose a channel that is appropriate in order to communicate your messages. The scholars categorise channels of communication as public and private. The public channels are those used by organisations to communicate to the external publics while the private channels are those used by organisations to communicate with the internal publics.

In general, the study found that the public relations department uses various channels to communicate with their publics. These channels were identified as traditional channels which include Radio, Television and print media. Other traditional channels were welfare meetings, Durbars, Community meetings, organisational newsletters,

documentaries and policy documents. It was discovered from the study that the department uses any of these channels depending on the problem at hand.

The new channels also include social media mainly facebook, whatsapp, instagram, website and sometimes twitter. A critical assessment of the new channels show that the public relations department uses social media to engage, inform and protect their various publics online, as well as combat online threats to Ghana's peace. So there was the need for the police to maintain a social media presence. The study found that although new media channels have been replicated in all the eleven regions of the police service, only the headquarters has been found to be more effective. Respondent 6 WR confirms the finding:



In my region, I can confirm to you that I still stick to the traditional way of doing things because over here, am virtually operating alone. And you know that with modern channels like social media etc, you need advanced gadgets like laptop, computers, smart phones, tablets etc to operate. You also need more personnel to help you do that which we don't have so we are still going the traditional way by using radio, television and sometimes, the print media for our press releases, press conference and other special events. What I can point to you as new is that we now go into the communities nearby to enlighten them on security matters so we call that community outreach programmes.

With regard to the channels of communication, Grunig and Hunt (1984) developed four models of public relations that organisations use to communicate with their publics. These are the Press Agency model, Public Information model, Two-Way

Asymmetric model and Two-Way Symmetric model. The study found that the main traditional channels-television, radio and print fall within the first three of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) model. With regards to the Press Agency model, the study found that the public relations department has been using this model for a very long time to communicate messages to their publics which is mostly one-way. They normally do so on a float with brass band music and share brochures and paraphernalia about the police organisation. They use some principal streets in the cities to drum home their message by sharing out these information to draw the attention of their publics to a particular information they want to pass on. Grunig and Hunt (1984) point out that this type of model is used by public relations practitioners in government and its agencies as well as non-profit organisations. Those who practice public relations under this model do very little research about their publics beyond just publicity and promotion of their messages. This remark by Respondent 1 PAD sums it up.

We have been using this strategy for a very long time now. Anytime we want to communicate some information to our publics, we use this method too, especially if it is a new idea. We wear our customised T shirts coupled with good music from our police brass band and we walk through the principal streets of the city and share out our information. For example, when the administration decided to launch our public confidence affirmation programme, we used the police band and went on a float through the town and within a few minutes the information was all over the place. I think it's very effective sometimes especially if it is an emergency.

The above finding is at variance with the tenets of the coorientation theory which postulates that organisations must adopt two-way communication to engage their publics in order to build and maintain relationships. In this case, information is only disseminated without any regard to research or feedback to know if the information is received by the publics and with what effect?

With regard to the public information model, it was confirmed from the study that the public relations department uses that one too even though it has been found to be one-way. Grunig and Hunt (1984) point out that practitioners who use this type of model do very little or no research about their publics except testing the clarity of their messages. The department uses this model to communicate to their publics through press releases, press conferences and also special events with wider media coverage.

The two-way asymmetric model is described as scientific persuasion by Grunig and Hunt (1984). The practitioners under this model use surveys, interviews and group discussions to measure public relationship. Feedback is considered but the organisation is always interested in having its publics adjusted to it rather than the reverse. The study discovered that the public relations department uses this model to communicate both internally and externally.

The two-way symmetrical model is described as the ideal for public relations practice by Grunig and Hunt (1984) because it insist on consensus building and two-way communication. There is always a mutual understanding between the organisation and its publics. With regard to the two-way symmetrical model, the study found that the public relations department uses it as well. Respondents 3 TR had this to say:

You and I know that for organisations to grow and achieve results, you need

the support of your publics whether internal or external. I can tell you that we use this approach all the time. In fact the organisation has taken a first step in always hearing from our publics and taking decisions based on the feedback. For the past decade or so, we have been doing our outreach programmes with some units like the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), the Community Police Unit [CPU], the MTTD unit among others to educate the public on our operations. We also listen to their concerns and together we help ourselves. In fact the community watch committee concept is working very well for us and we are making a lot of progress in policing.

This finding is in tandem with the coorientation theory which postulates that consensus building is the best way organisations can nurture relationships. Also the theory asserts that based on the perception that an organisation has about its publics, they (organisation and publics) are able to adjust with each other to understand themselves to ensure peace and harmony. So for an organisation like the Ghana Police Service, it is a good step that it uses this model to reach out to its publics. The study confirmed that the use of the outreach programmes enables personnel from the public relations department to have face-to-face communication with their publics to address their concerns. The organisation is able to change the otherwise negative perception that the public has about it. This lends credence to Ofori's (2009) assertion that the activities of the Ghana Police are always being misconstrued as negative. Through these frequent interactions, the department has been able to build bridges with their external publics. The views of Ofori (2009) are also supported by Amoakohene (2002) who argues that the police are always viewed with suspicion and mistrust which leads to strain police-civilian relationships.

4.3.3 Public Relations and Technology

Cutlip et al (2009) maintain that the internet represents an important component of the communication revolution because nearly all new media are internet based. The scholars stress that public relations practitioners must recognise the fact that technology has changed how public relations is now being practiced and that many practitioners are scrambling to adjust to the new era. The public relations practitioner must acknowledge that new technology today means that anyone with a camera or Smartphone can “report” the news about the organisation they represent and describes such people as “citizen journalists” (Cutlip et al, 2009).

It came to light that the public relations department of the police service had embraced technology because it is now the order of the day. But the question then was, what contribution could the new communication technologies make in public relations practice in the Police Service today? The study discovered that modern gadgets such as laptop computers, projectors, smartphones, smart television screens, tablets, pen drives among others were available at some of the Departments especially the Police Headquarters. It was further observed that the Public Affairs Directorate had full internet connectivity which was being used by personnel to monitor social media and other channels. Respondent 1 PAD states as follows.

Almost every organisation today is taking advantage of technology because it helps us do our work faster and better. Am saying so because technology has simplified information handling because it is much easier, faster and readily available to our publics. We used to make photocopies of our speeches to journalist whenever we call them for press conferences but today, we just take their emails and ‘shoot’ the information to them. We sometimes even send our

press releases through whatsapp to some of our friend-journalists to broadcast for us. I must say that technology has now become a vehicle for improving public relations practice and its efficiency.

This finding reinforces the assertion by Cutlip et al (2009) that technology has changed the face of public relations practice worldwide and therefore public relations practitioners must adjust to the new era and improve on their profession. However, the study discovered that most of the regions where these public relations officers were located lacked technology and access to the internet. The words of R2AR is captured below:

We don't have all the facilities as compared to our counterparts in Accra so we here are seriously challenged as far as internet facilities are concerned. Most of the time we resort to the old way of doing things. In fact, if I had all the gadgets to operate, it would have been much easier for me. This computer you see here was donated to my office by a friend, I don't have easy access to the internet, no fax, no projector etc. This smart television for instance was purchased by me so when am going, I will take it away. So, as for here, we don't talk about technology. We are yet to get there one day with hard prayers.

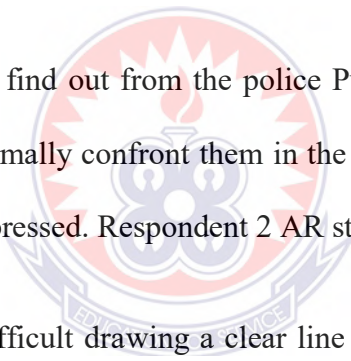
This finding is in line with Gyan's (1991) argument that only a few public relations practitioners have access to technology and that most of them are still practicing without the benefit of modern equipment or access to the internet. Gyan (1991) argues further that as a result of challenges in accessing modern gadgets, most Public Relations practitioners are still engaging in the traditional way of practice which does not promote contemporary Public Relations practice.

4.3.4 Ethics and Public Relations Practice in the Ghana Police Service

According to Newsom, Turk and Kruckberg (1996), the field of ethics which is also known as moral philosophy is about issues regarding right and wrong behaviour. The scholars argue that ethical issues that need attention in public relations practice are, honesty, openness, loyalty, fairness, truth, integrity and forthright communication.

Seitel (2007) is of the view that ethics are values that guide a person, organisation or society. These are concepts of right and wrong, fairness and unfairness, honesty and dishonesty. The scholar argues that an individual's conduct is measured not only against his or her conscience but also against some norms of acceptability that society or an organisation has determined (Seitel 2007).

The researcher sought to find out from the police Public Relations Officers some of the ethical issues that normally confront them in the course of practice. Different and similar opinions were expressed. Respondent 2 AR states the following:

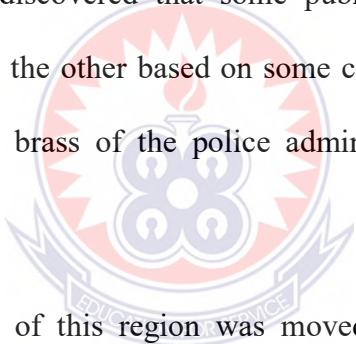


Sometimes it's difficult drawing a clear line between what is expected of the police and the actions of the police itself. We all know that the police is now operating under a democratic era so we always have to respect the right of the citizens but sometimes our men go out of their way to do things that are not good and you are compelled to defend it. One problem is that the PRO is not always in the know when these things happen. I rely on what the men tell me or pick the information from the station diary but it is the public who witnessed the incident who can be the best judges but I cannot condemn my own people. Sometimes you defend certain issues against your own conscience but it is a job you have to do. Sometimes, your own personal and

professional values are undermined for the sake of the service and if you don't do it like that, you will have problems internally especially with your bosses.

The study found that one area that remains a threat to professional practice of public relations in the Ghana Police Service is ethics. The above findings go to support the views of most public relations scholars on ethics in public relations which discusses the issues of right and wrong in Public Relations practice. The study also found that because the Ghana Police Service is a security agency, most of the information is classified so the public relations officers are always in a dilemma as to what information to release. This situation affects their professional values in practice.

Furthermore, the study discovered that some public relations officers have been victimised in one way or the other based on some comments they have made which turned to annoy the top brass of the police administration. Respondent 5 Ash R remarks:



The former PRO of this region was moved to another region because he granted a media interview and the administration was not happy about it. Sometimes, you are torn between the truth or lies because you see the thing to be “Black” but the administration wants you to say its “White”. That is the kind of PR we practice here. It is not easy at all. I always feel guilty when I have to lie to defend or cover the police personnel. You can see the police is wrong but you can't come out to say it. They will turn against you in the end so, “when you go to Rome you do what they do.”

This finding is consistent with most of the views expressed by Donkor (2010) and Ofori (2009) on public relations practices in the police service. The scholars had earlier argued that public relations practice in most security agencies is difficult. Donkor (2010) attributes this to the regimental nature and the incipient “master-servant relationship” that exists between senior officers and their subordinates in the Service.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The study set out generally to examine how Public Relations has been practiced in the Ghana Police Service. The study established that Public Relations is key to the Ghana Police Service because most of its activities are often misconstrued by the public to be negative. This chapter therefore summarises the findings, conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study. It further makes suggestions for future studies.

5.1 Summary of Findings

A number of key findings came up strongly as far as public relations practices in the Ghana Police Service is concerned. The study set out generally to examine how public relations is being practiced in the Ghana Police Service. The research focused on the Public Affairs Directorate at the Police Headquarters and five other Regions which are represented by police public relations officers. To achieve the aims of the research, the study focused on three objectives;

1. To investigate the position of Public Relations in the Ghana Police Service.
2. To assess the roles played by the Police Public Relations Officers.
3. To investigate and describe the communication strategies employed by the Public Relations Department of the Ghana Police Service.

As stated earlier, the study discovered that Public Relations is key to the Ghana Police Service because most of its activities had often been misconstrued by the general

public as negative, so there was the need to maintain a vibrant Public Relations Unit at all time to explain the actions of the police to their publics.

Secondly, the Public Relations Unit was key because it is supposed to maintain a positive image and reputation for the Ghana Police Service.

Generally, the study found that there was no significant difference in public relations practices at the directorate of public relations in Accra from that of the Regional ones. All Public Relations officers in the regions participated in management meetings just like what pertains in Accra, the national headquarters.

The results from the study also revealed that there is an attitude of what could be described as a love-hate relationship between the police and the general public. Sometimes, the police is loved by its publics when there is a general feeling that they (the police) is performing at expectation and in other instances, are hated by its publics when there is a feeling of performance below expectation.

The study discovered that although public relations was visibly located at top-management on the organogram of the police service, it was merely cosmetic because the management function role of the public relations practitioner was relegated to the background of policing activities.

A critical assessment of the roles played by the police public relations officers revealed that they (police) play an all-encompassing role as expert prescribers, communication –facilitators, communication technicians and problem solving facilitators.

The study also found that police public relations officers play these roles depending on the situation that the organisation finds itself in and also based on instructions from their bosses.

With regards to communication strategies employed by the Public Relations Department, the study found that both dialogic and monologic strategies were used to communicate with their publics. The channels of communication were proved to be effective. The channels were categorised as traditional channels which included Radio, Television and Print Media. Other traditional channels were welfare meetings, durbars, organisational newsletters, circulars within the service, documentaries and policy documents. The new channels were identified as social media, mainly facebook, whatsapp, instagram, website and sometimes twitter. It was further noted that the department employed any of these channels depending on the problem at hand.

Again, the study discovered a new technique of information gathering and dissemination being employed by almost all the public relations officers in the service. This new technique dubbed “Community outreach programme” was a new strategy that had been introduced by the public relations unit to engage their publics through face-to-face interactions. By this new method, the public relations officers collaborate with other units in the police service to go to communities to engage the community members through face-to-face interactions and educate them on security and crime issues. Through the constant interactions, the community members are also given the opportunity to air their views so that together, they (police and publics) are able to find solutions to such concerns. Notable among these units were the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) and Motor Traffic and Transport

Department (MTTD). The study considers this new move by the Police Public Relations officers to be consistent with the coorientation theory which advocates that organisations ought to be in constant interaction with their constituents and build consensus which can go a long way to facilitate peace and harmony.

It is important to note that, although public relations had been recognised as a key unit in the Ghana Police Service, management did not seem to attach any importance to its very existence.

This was in spite of the fact that the police administration had found it necessary to establish public relations offices throughout its eleven (11) administrative regions.

The study further discovered that even though the police public relations practitioners possessed minimum qualifications of first degree or higher, the police administration did not seem to place emphasis on the academic qualifications but rather the rank that one held in the service. This unfortunate development obviously does not promote effective public relations practice in the service. The present situation with regard to public relations practice is found to be consistent with most of the views public relations scholars hold that most organisations do not attach much importance to public relations units even though they find the need to establish them (Grunig, 1992; Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2009; Gyan, 1991). The findings also connect well with most of the tenets espoused in the Public Relations roles theory which postulates, among others, that Public Relations practitioners may play a varying degree of roles although a dominant role may emerge.

However, all the challenges enumerated in the summary of findings notwithstanding, the study found that police public relations officers were always at the forefront

working to maintain a positive image for the Ghana Police Service. The practitioners constantly communicated the actions of the police to their publics which went a long way to build public confidence and some level of trust in the Police. The practitioners worked to ensure that no myth was built around police operations.

5.2 Conclusions

A number of conclusions have been established based on the overall objectives of the study. The study concludes that in the opinion of the participants, the Ghana Police Service is a very important state organisation because it has a core mandate of ensuring law and order as well as general peaceful atmosphere in the country. The participants were unanimous in their opinion that public relations practice had received very little recognition and credibility in the Ghana Police Service. Managing the image of the Service continues to be a huge challenge for the public relations department because very little importance is attached to public relations practice in the service. This does not give the public relations practitioners the necessary boost to enable them excel in their field.

Public Relations was however found to be an integral part of the police organisation considering the fact that the administration found it necessary to establish Public Relations units in all the eleven (11) administrative regions. The administration appears to acknowledge the fact that the Public Relations Department must always be at the forefront in communicating the actions of the police to the general public.

Furthermore, the study concludes that public relations is not recognised as a management function in the Ghana Police Service. The Public Relations practitioners are only given the opportunity to sit in management meetings as “observers”; they do

not the take part in policy formulation. The study also concludes that the Public Relations Department uses two-way communication to engage their publics more often than the one-way communication. The practitioners are gradually gravitating towards two-way engagement with their publics rather than the usual one-way communication strategy. The community outreach programmes adopted by most of the practitioners appears to bring policing to the door-step of the citizenry so it has gone a long way to improve the police-public relationship. This new approach is in tandem with the coorientation theory which advocates for constant interaction between organisations and their constituents. This approach helps organisations to ensure peaceful co-existence between themselves and their constituents. The coorientation theory also postulates that constant interactions helps organisations to identify potential areas of conflicts and quickly find solutions to them.

Finally, the study concludes that the Public Relations officers mainly play the role of technicians rather than experts. However, in a few instances, practitioners were somewhat given the opportunity to act as experts especially during crises periods. It is only in such situations that public relations practitioners were recognised as experts in the field of communication. It is therefore difficult to find a one-fit –all description of public relations practice in the Ghana Police Service.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

While conducting this study, the main hurdle was getting access to all the Police Public Relations practitioners. It was apparent that getting a police officer to interview was not an easy task. There were several disappointments in pre-arranged schedules for the interviews. This situation unduly increased the data collection period and thus affected the general timetable of the study. Secondly, some of the interviewees

declined to be recorded, so in accordance with the ethics of research, one could not push for recording but had to manually script the interview while at the same time probing further with follow up questions. However, this situation did not affect the quality of the data since rich data was gathered through the interviews.

Also, because the Ghana Police Service is a security agency, most of its activities are shrouded with secrecy so information is always classified and therefore it is possible that some of the participant might not have divulged all the necessary information that the researcher was trying to find from them. In other words, they might have revealed some vital information but retained some. It was realised at most of the interview stages that some participants were hesitant releasing some vital information demanded by the researcher.

A further possible limitation was the inability of the police public relations practitioners to provide the researcher with all internal vital documents such as memoranda, speeches, circulars, press releases, policy documents, organisational newsletters among others. However, the researcher managed to collect a good number of such documents for perusal which enriched the study.

Finally, the researcher could not cover all the entire eleven (11) administrative regions of the Ghana Police Service because some of the practitioners were not ready to accept the request to be interviewed and some regional public relations officers too were on official engagements outside the country during the study period while other regions had no Public Relations officers representing them at all.

5.4 Recommendations

In the light of the summary of findings and conclusions drawn, the following two (2) main headings are made:

- (a) Recommendations for management of the police administration
- (b) Recommendations for all Public Relations practitioners within the Ghana Police Service

5.5 Recommendations for Management of Police Administration

The study established that although Public Relations is visibly seen to be located at management on the organisational chart of the Police Service, the management function of the Public Relations practitioner had been marginalised. It is therefore recommended that in line with the tenets of the Public Relations profession, the police administration should take steps to elevate the director of Public Affairs at the Police Headquarters to a higher rank that gives him/her the needed confidence to fit well into management. This will help such a person better counsel the head of the service in all matters relating to the organisation as well as the image of the police service. He or she will thus qualify to attend management meetings and contribute to policy formulation and decision making processes of the service.

The study showed that management was very reluctant to committing resources to equip the public relations unit. This has resulted into several challenges that confront the unit and does not promote the smooth running of the Public Relation units. Evidence drawn from the study shows that basic logistic such as office computers, chairs, and even personnel for manning the various public relations units were virtually absent. The present situation where all the 11 administrative regions had only one man public relations unit or department calls for an urgent need for the

police administration to take the necessary steps to recruit qualified personnel with communication background to fill in all the vacant positions in the public relations units. At least two people should represent each region so that in the absence of one person, the other can hold the fort. Again, the administration should attach more importance to the public relations unit by committing more resources to equip the units in their budgetary allocations.

The study also found that there was a general despondency among the public relations practitioners due to poor working conditions. It is therefore recommended that the police administration should recognise the public relations units as special units within the service and commit extra resources in the form of duty allowance to boost the morale of such personnel to give of their best in public relations practice.

Again, opportunities should be given to all the practitioners to upgrade themselves in reputable institutions of learning or attend seminars, conferences, and workshops in order to constantly update their knowledge to improve on their professional capacities.

Finally, technology should be given a major boost in the Public Relations practice of the Ghana Police service. There is the need for the service to ensure that all public relations offices are technologically equipped with modern gadgets to enable practitioners be on top of issues regarding information communication technology (ICT).

5.6 Recommendation for all Public Relations Practitioners

Public relations is a profession with a specialised function. It requires all practitioners to exhibit high professional standards in the course of practice. Findings revealed that most of the practitioners were using both two-way and one-way channels of communication. However, it was discovered that emphasis was greatly laid on two-way communication which reinforces the understanding of modern public relations practice. However, it is recommended that the various practitioners should work towards further developing and strengthening information at all their communications outlets to make information flow faster and better.

Practitioners should be able to personally design and open effective channels of communication with their numerous publics, especially by liaising with various media organisations to feed the public with the appropriate information at the right time. In order to boost two-way communication, more educational campaigns about crime detection, prevention and reporting should be intensified. Practitioners should develop more community-based outreach programmes that have the capacity to foster cordial relationships between members of the public and those of the police service. Programmes such as open days in the service, sports, musical concerts, clean-up campaigns, entertainment activities, and formation of watch committees that can bring the police more closer to their communities can go a long way to improve police-civilian relationships. The study also found that Public relations research was being poorly done by practitioners. It is therefore recommended that practitioners must make effort to learn more on the rudiments of research and must regularly conduct research before and after rolling out any public relations programmes or campaigns.

The study discovered that managing the image and reputation of the Ghana Police Service by the Public Relations unit had been an uphill task. It is therefore strongly recommended that in order to bring the public relations unit of the Ghana Police Service at par with modern public relations practice, it is important that all constraints facing the public relations units are tackled with the urgency they deserve to enable the public relations practitioners perform their responsibilities smoothly.

5.7 Suggestions for Future Studies

This study basically focused on public relations practices in the Ghana Police Service with specific reference to the directorate at the Police Headquarters and some regions in the country. It will therefore be expedient if future researchers can explore deep into public relations practice in the Ghana Police Service focusing mainly on only the regional levels so that the issues at the regions can be discussed in a broader perspective. The study also recommends that future studies should focus more on how the police in Ghana can maintain a lasting positive image because the study found that several efforts made by the public relations units to maintain a positive image over the years have yielded no positive results.

Finally, the media has reported and continue to report negatively on most police activities in the print as well as electronic media. Even though this study has briefly discussed some of the causes, it is highly suggested that future studies should focus on some of these negative reportage of the media on the Ghana Police Service over a defined period and unearth the root cause (s) and how to maintain a police-media relationship that is friendly and positive.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC: PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES IN THE GHANA POLICE SERVICE.

This study is an academic enterprise that seeks to explore Public Relations practices in the Ghana Police Service. I should be very grateful if you could help me conduct the interview to obtain information for the study. I assure you of my utmost confidentiality because the data to be collected is solely for academic purposes.

1. What is your understanding of Public Relations practice in the Ghana Police Service?
2. Do you consider Public Relations to be at top management position or not?
3. What is the position of Public Relations on the organogram of the Police Service? What is the reporting relationship at the PR department to other top management department?
4. What are the roles that you play as a police Public Relations officer?
5. a) What communication strategies do you use to communicate with your publics?
b) What communication channels are available at your department that you use to communicate with your publics and how effective are these channels?
6. Has the police service ever been hit by a crisis? How do you manage such crisis when they occur within your organisation?
7. Does your work (as PR officer) require any form of research?
8. How does your outfit (PR department) manage the image and reputation of the Ghana Police Service?

9. How has technology changed the face of Public Relations in the Ghana Police Service?
10. How does your outfit effectively leverage on social media to engage your publics?
11. How does Public Relations contribute to the organizational successes of the Ghana Police Service?
12. How can Public Relations practice be improved in the Ghana Police Service?
13. What are some of the challenges you encounter in your department as a Police Public Relations practitioner?
14. As the Ghana Police Service is growing, what do you think is the future of Public Relations in the Service?
15. What ethical issues normally confront you in your practice as a Public Relations officer for the Ghana Police Service?
16. What significant events have occurred within the PR department over the years that you may want to highlight on?
17. What is your present rank in the Ghana Police Service?

THANK YOU