

**THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AT THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE**

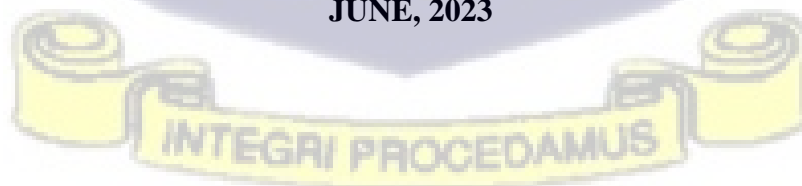
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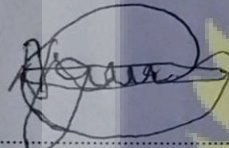
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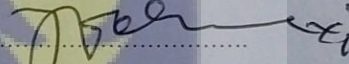
**DECLARATION**

I, Edward Scott Agyemang, do hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation is a result of my own work and findings. All sources used have been duly acknowledged. This work was under the supervision of Fr. Dominic Maximilian Ofori, PhD.



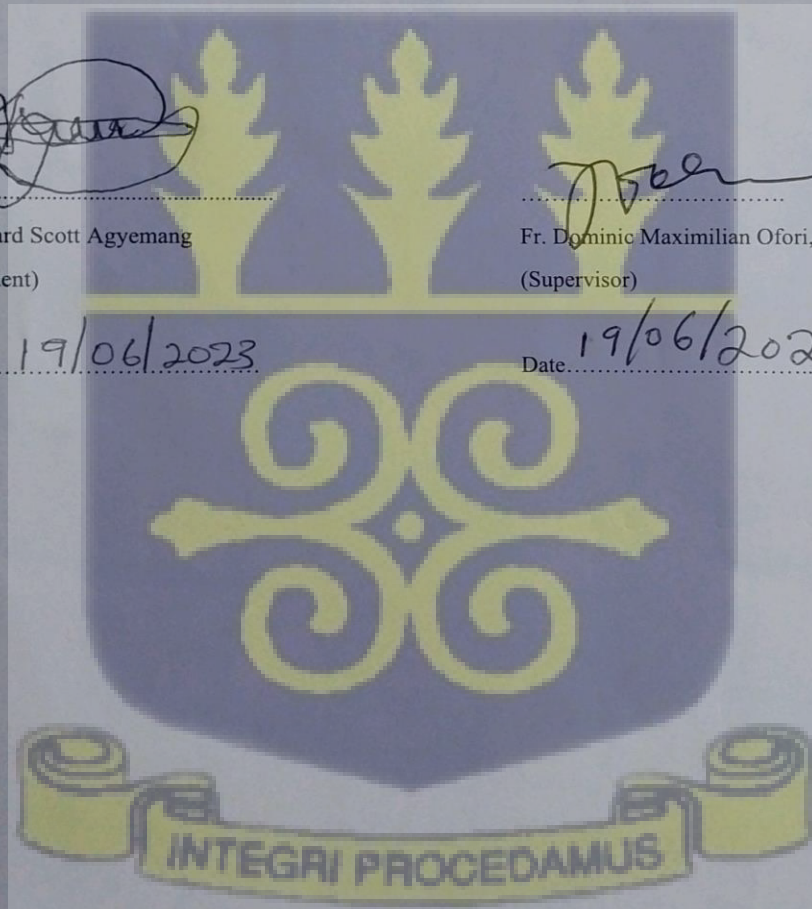
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## DEDICATION

I firstly dedicate this work to the almighty God who has been my shield throughout my life and then to my mother who has been praying for me always.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My profound gratitude goes to my supervisor, Fr. Dominic Maximilian Ofori, PhD, for his guidance and counsel throughout this journey, then to all my research participants especially Madam Cassandra Twum Ampofo, head of public relations unit of the Ghana Education Service. I really appreciate the commitment level of all my research participants.



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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of public relations at the Ghana Education Service (GES). It focused on the activities of public relations, looked at how public relations can help to accomplish the mission and vision of GES and also examined factors which hinder the practice of public relations at the GES. Moreover, the study examined the views of stakeholder publics on the practice of public relations at the GES and how the GES factors the views of these stakeholder publics into its mission and vision. The study delved into what can be done in order to improve the practice of public relations at the GES. Excellence theory was the only theory that underpinned the study. The study adopted the qualitative research methodology and gathered data via in-depth interview with public relations practitioners at the GES and focus group discussions with stakeholder publics of GES. The study revealed that the common public relations activity at the GES is writing because all practitioners indicated they perform writing activities. Other activities undertaken by practitioners in GES were media engagement and crisis communication. The study found that at the GES not all public relations practitioners were regarded as management members. This situation hinders the public relations practice because some practitioners are not able to make their opinions known to management of the GES especially at the district level. Furthermore, practitioners at the GES are faced with the challenge of financial constraints and misinterpretation on the concept of public relations. This impedes the work of practitioners. The study was limited to the Greater Accra region; only public schools in the Greater Accra region were used so it recommended that future studies could look the other political administrative regions of the country. Future studies could also obtain responses from teachers and parents of private schools to help broaden the role that public relations plays at the GES.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

The role played by public relations in managing communication between organizations and their strategic publics cannot be overemphasized. Organizations that put much premium on public relations tend to establish better relationships with their publics than organizations that belittle public relations (Anas & Batool, 2016). According to Kirat (2015), public relations offers organizations the opportunity to assess the attitudes of their publics, better understand those publics and further establish and maintain mutual relations with them. For Dozier and Broom (2006), public relations helps organizations to manage not only their external relations but also their internal relations. According to Khodarahmi (2009), public relations helps organizations to effectively keep their publics informed on vital issues and persuade them when and where necessary. To Gilaninia et al. (2013), public relations helps to build effective media relations to reduce the negative publicity that the media sometimes give to some organizations. In the words of Akuku (2012, p. 2), “whether an organization is perceived as rigid or flexible, strong or weak, open or closed may be dependent on its public relations unit.” To Siano et al. (2017), public relations provide organizations with the framework for determining how strong, how weak or how powerful they are and this helps to interact with the publics better.

On the whole, the role of public relations contributes to organizational goals. The Ghana Education Service (GES) is among key organizations in Ghana that uses public relations to build and maintain relationships with publics. The management of the GES believes that the ability to build and maintain relationships with stakeholder publics would create a conducive

environment for not only the GES but also stakeholder publics. Moreover, the GES believes that adopting public relations would help to achieve its set mission and vision.

In view of the above, this study sought to examine the role of public relations at the Ghana Education Service (GES). The study investigated the main functions and roles of public relations practitioners that contribute to achieving the mission and vision of the GES, determined the factors that hinder the practice of public relations and examined the views of stakeholder publics on the practice of public relations at the GES. The remaining sections in this chapter addressed the background to the study, the problem statement, the research objectives and the research questions. Significance of study as well as the operational definition of terms climax the chapter.

## **1.1 Background to the Study**

The background to this study sets the foundation by providing a discussion on public relations in the educational sector, the profile of the Ghana Education Service and public relations practice in the Ghana Education Service.

### **1.1.1 Public Relations in the Educational Sector**

The practice of public relations has become predominant among many organizations. One of the sectors where public relations has been considered effective is the educational sector (Agyapong et al., 2011). Scholars such as Newson and Carrel (2001) considered public relations practice as an art and science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organization leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which serve the interest of both organizations and their publics. Description of public relations by Newson and Carrel (2001) is evident in the practice of public relations in the education sector.

Educational public relations is associated with the practice of public relations in education-oriented institutions such as schools, colleges, universities and other agencies that support education. The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA, 2012), notes that educational public relations functions in decision making, management of schools, building and maintaining relationships with students and other stakeholders that contribute to the improvement of programmes and services of educational organizations. This view by NSPRA (2012) indicates that activities of educational public relations are a two-way affair involving communication between institutions and their stakeholder publics. According to Agyapong et al. (2013), officers of educational public relations in building and maintaining relationships assist students, work with parents and other interest groups. The responsibilities of educational public relations officers include the distribution of newsletters that contain information about events of educational institutions, addressing the concerns of students, parents, teachers, staff and stakeholders of the organization which all help to establish good relations between schools and all interest groups. For Lan (2009), educational public relations officers serve as information stations by providing information to students, employees, and the general public through mass media publications, leaflets and brochures on programmes of educational institutions.

To throw more light on the practice of public relations in educational institutions, Odongo (2009) added that educational public relations forms part of the management and structural function that empowers educational institutions such as colleges and universities to establish and maintain effective communication among both internal and external publics. Effective communication through public relations enhances visibility and creates a good impression to the publics of the institutions. Another important feature of public relations in an educational institution is that it plays the role of controlling the activities of institutions and provides

management counselling meant to inform decisions based on the perceptions of publics. According to Jackson and Center (2002), in controlling activities and providing counselling, educational public relations practitioners see to it that institutions' internal and external conflicts are resolved, employees' welfare is promoted, and employee-employer and institution-public relationships are maintained.

### **1.1.2 Profile of the Ghana Education Service**

The Ghana Education Service is a major government agency that was established to supervise and manage all pre-tertiary educational institutions in Ghana (Owusu-Asante, 2015). In Antwi's (1992) account of education, society and development in Ghana which has been acknowledged by the GES, he stated that the Ghana Education Service was established to be a major government agency under the Ministry of Education in 1974 via the National Redemption Council Decree (NRCD) 247. With time, the decree was amended through NRCD 252, 357 and the Supreme Military Council Decree (SMCD) 63. In the Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana, there have been amendments by acts of parliament, including the Education Act 506 (1994) and Education Act 778 (2008). The GES is governed by a fifteen-member council collectively referred to as the GES Council.

Presently, the GES is headed by a director general who has two deputies, one in charge of management service, and the other in charge of quality and access. There are sixteen regional education offices, and two hundred and sixty metropolitan/municipal/district offices that help the director general and his deputies in managing all pre-tertiary educational institutions in Ghana.

The vision of the Ghana Education Service as stated on its website is that it “seeks to create an enabling environment in all educational institutions and management positions that will

facilitate effective teaching and learning and efficiency in the management for the attainment of the goals of the Service” (Ghana Education Service, 2022). Again, from its website, the mission of the GES is to “ensure that all Ghanaian children of school-going age are provided with inclusive and equitable quality formal education and training through effective and efficient management of resources to make education delivery relevant to the manpower needs of the nation” (Ghana Education Service, 2022). The main functions of the GES include the provision of basic and secondary education, registration, supervision and inspection of private pre-tertiary educational institutions as well as the submission of recommendations to the Ministry of Education for educational policies, programmes and reforms in Ghana.

### **1.1.3 Public Relations at the Ghana Education Service**

Although public relations is important for organizations, it was not part of the management structure of the GES when it was established in 1974. The management of the GES at that time made little or no effort to ensure effective community engagement and effective relationship-building measures between the GES and stakeholders (Owusu-Asante, 2015). This exclusion of public relations from the management structure of the GES adversely affected the running of schools. Community members who were offended by the actions of some schools begrudged such schools and in some instances, schools had to be closed down (Owusu-Asante, 2015). The poor relationship between schools and communities confirms the assertion by Sarkhedi (2016) that managing schools without public relations leads to disjointed relationships between schools and communities. Fari (2016) also believed that when public relations is neglected in school management, the relationships between schools and their communities deteriorate.

In 1992, the management of the GES realized there was the need to ensure a healthy relationship with not only its internal publics but also with external publics such as the

communities in which schools were located. Public relations was therefore introduced into the GES in 1992. The introduction of public relations into the GES led to the establishment of public relations unit at the headquarters, and hence, was only visible at the national level (Owusu-Asante, 2015). Kugblenu (2021) found that to make it more visible and active, from the early 2000s to date, regional and district public relations officers have been appointed to undertake various public relations' activities at the regional and district levels. The main task of public relations at the GES has been to manage all communications between the GES and its stakeholders, reduce negative publicity, disseminate adequate information to stakeholders on all educational policies and reforms, and help improve the organizational image of the GES. While practitioners at the national headquarters supervise and coordinate all regional public relations practitioners in the country, regional public relations officers oversee all district public relations officers in the regions (Owusu-Asante, 2015).

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Current public relations scholarship has pointed to diverse ways in which public relations can be beneficial by helping organizations to manage and sustain relationships with their stakeholder publics. The roles played by public relations in organizations have been established by scholars such as Broom (1984) who proposed the four roles of public relations (that is, the expert prescriber, the communication facilitator, problem-solving process facilitator and communication technician roles) that have formed the basis of many studies into the role of public relations in many organizations. Researchers such as Dozier and Broom (1995) categorized these four roles into two which were communication managers and communication technicians. The basis for the two-way classification by these researchers was that public relations practitioners were found to perform either a managerial role or a technician role. The

two-way classification of the role of public relations was used by Ani et al. (2017) in determining the role of public relations in organizational structure and the impacts of roles and functions for educational, health and hospitality organizations. They found that practitioners indeed perform either a managerial role or a technician role. Since the late 1980s till present times, studies that have investigated the role that public relations plays in organizations have been using either the four-role, the two-role classification or both as a basis (Schwarzkopf, 2019).

Studies that have been done with respect to the intersection between public relations and education in other jurisdictions have mainly focused on other aspects of public relations other than the relationship between public relations and the views of the stakeholder publics of educational organizations. Scholars such as Comcowich (2020) in his study on the intersection between public relations and education focused on how to use two-way communication in school management and found that the two-way communication strategy was the most appropriate in establishing relationships with stakeholders of schools. A study by Roosevelt (2015) focused on the planning of communication relationships between public schools and their stakeholder publics to improve the perception of public education system. Another study by Amon (2018) which was similar to that of Roosevelt (2015) also delved into the planning of communication relationships between educational establishments and stakeholders but did not ascertain the views of stakeholders on public relations practice in educational institutions. This study found that public relations officers make use of one-on-one communication strategies to reshape the image of public schools.

Just like other jurisdictions, studies on the intersection between public relations and education in Ghana have also not delved deeper into the views of stakeholder publics on public

relations practice in educational institutions. In a study to determine public relations practices of private universities in Ghana, Agyapong (2011) put emphasis on the challenges facing public relations practice in private universities. A study by Adu-Oppong (2015) that researched into public relations and education focused on public relations as a management tool in tertiary educational institutions. Another study by Kyere-Duah (2021) examined public relations strategies and plans of technical universities and found that technical universities make use of radio programmes, social media and community relations in establishing relations with stakeholders. Anani-Bossmann (2022) also studied the nature of public relations management in Ghanaian educational institutions especially private and public tertiary institutions. This work found that public relations practice in educational institutions in Ghana focuses on technician role with little emphasis on managerial role.

Despite the many studies on the intersection between public relations and educational institutions, issues surrounding the views of stakeholder publics on public relations practice of educational institutions have not been clearly established by scholarship. Furthermore, how public relations helps educational institutions to achieve their set missions and visions are hard to come by in literature. Yet, as Grunig (2001, p. 5) has put it, “organizations become effective when they choose and achieve goals that are important to their self-interest as well as to the interests of strategic publics in the environment.” In furtherance of his postulation, Grunig (2001) stated the mission and the vision of organizations should be inclusive of the desires of strategic publics and public relations should help organizations to achieve such missions and visions. The strategic publics of organizations have their wishes and goals which must be respected by organizations because failure to adhere to such goals and wishes may spell the doom of organizations. Although Grunig (2001) established the need to use public relations to

achieve the missions and the visions of organizations, his work did not clearly establish how to achieve the missions and the visions with public relations.

From the foregoing arguments, it is realized that public relations scholars have not given much attention to how stakeholders view educational institutions and how public relations help educational institutions to achieve their missions and visions, thereby creating gaps in the literature. Knowing the views of stakeholders on public relations practice and how public relations help educational institutions to achieve missions and visions would not only help to bridge the gaps in the literature but would also help to improve upon the public relations practices of educational institutions. In this regard, this study focused on closing these gaps in the literature by determining the views of stakeholder publics on public relations at the GES and how public relations help the GES to achieve its set mission and vision.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The general aim of the study is to examine the role of public relations at the GES, a major government agency under the Ministry of Education. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To ascertain the functions and roles of public relations at the Ghana Education Service and how these functions and roles contribute to the attainment of mission and vision of the Ghana Education Service.
2. To ascertain the views of stakeholder publics on the practice of public relations in the Ghana Education Service.
3. To determine how public relations can be strengthened in the Ghana Education Service.

These objectives will help to have a holistic view of the role of public relations at the GES and will further help to make appropriate recommendations to help improve public relations practice at the GES.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study sought to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What public relations roles and functions do practitioners engage in to help the Ghana Education Service achieve its mission and vision?
2. What factors hinder the practice of public relations at the Ghana Education Service?
3. How do stakeholder publics view the practice of public relations at the Ghana Education Service?
4. In what ways can public relations practice be improved at the Ghana Education Service?

By obtaining adequate responses to these research questions the overarching aim of the study which is to determine the role of public relations at the GES would be achieved.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study will augment the knowledge in public relations scholarship. Firstly, with regard to research, the study shows that the education sector with its multiple stakeholder publics provides a rich source of information. Researchers can gain a lot of insight by engaging management and publics in terms of how public relations can function effectively in society. For scholars, this study will broaden their knowledge as they seek to review literature pertaining to the relationship between public relations and education. With respect to practitioners, the study will guide them in coming up with strategies to interact with both internal and external stakeholder publics. Finally,

the study will be significant to educational institutions as it will guide them in formulating appropriate policies to strengthen their public relations units. The formulation of better policies on how to use public relations in education will eventually help in establishing better relationships between management and educational institutions/schools.

## 1.6 Operational Definition of Terms

**Educational Establishments or Educational Institutions:** These are physical institutions that are usually called schools or colleges that engage in teaching and learning activities. They offer education-related services or instructional-related services to people who are referred to as learners/pupils/students.

**Managers of Schools:** These are the people who supervise, monitor, plan, organize, control and coordinate teaching and learning in schools.

**Public Relations Practitioners/Public Relations Officers:** These are individuals with the requisite knowledge in public relations who are employed by organizations to help manage communication and also build and maintain positive relationships between organizations and their stakeholder publics.

**Stakeholder Publics:** These are groups of people that have indirect or direct relations with an organization or an institution. Examples in this study are parents, teachers, traditional authorities, religious organizations and the general public.

**Stakeholders:** These are parties that have an interest in an organization and are affected either positively or negatively by the happenings in the organization. Examples in this study are the government, teachers, parents, traditional authorities, religious organizations and the general public.

## 1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter One covers areas such as introduction to the study, background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions and significance of the study and operational definition of terms. Chapter Two addresses a review of related literature and theoretical framework. Chapter Three discusses methodology. Methodological concerns here include research design, research population, sampling and sample size. Other vital issues include research methods, research instruments, data analysis and ethical concerns in the study. Chapter four will be used for the presentation of findings and discussions of the data collected whereas Chapter Five will address summaries, limitations, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## 1.8 Chapter Summary

The chapter set the foundation by introducing the study, discussed the background to the study with emphasis on public relations in the educational sector, the profile of the Ghana Education Service and public relations of the Ghana Education Service. The problem statement was presented. The objectives were outlined based on the research questions that were developed. The significance of the study, organization of study and definition of key terms were all captured in this chapter.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.0 Introduction

Effective public relations helps educational managers to better manage communication with their stakeholder publics (Rowe, 2012). In the reports of Callahan (2012) as well as Gilaninia (2013), public relations plays an integral role in resolving the crisis in school management, helps educational institutions to effectively engage the media which leads to the establishment of better relations between schools and managers of schools. For Carlsmith and Railsback (2001), employing public relations in the management of educational establishments tends to strategically manage dicey situations which emanate between schools, parents and the larger community. To Lee (2010), to prevent communication challenges and problems in the public sector, government institutions and agencies need to employ the services of public relations practitioners. From the literature themes that emerged were the role of public relations in organizations, the relationship between public relations and education, public relations in the public sector. Other themes were challenges in public relations as well as public relations and organizational image.

Although many public relations theories exist, the ones which have been employed in studies relating to the intersection between public relations and education are the systems theory and the excellence theory. Researching how public relations practitioners assisted schools to integrate both internal and external stakeholders into one unit, Roosevelt (2015) made use of systems theory and emphasized the need for all individual stakeholders to come together to help improve relationship building in school management. Another scholar, Comcowich (2020), also used excellence theory in his study that sought to determine the role of two-way communication

in school management and concluded that to establish better relationships between managers of schools and stakeholders, the two-way communication must be employed by public relations practitioners in education. The study adopted excellence theory to determine the role of public relations in education because its aim was similar to that of Comcowich (2020). The researcher also believed that the excellence theory would be the most appropriate theory considering the nature of the GES

This chapter is organized into two main sections, which are a literature review and a theoretical framework. The review section delved into the key themes identified in reviewing existing literature that are related to this study. The framework section emphasized the excellence theory which was the main theory that underpinned the study.

## **2.1 Literature Review**

This section of the chapter discusses literature that relates to the study. The works of scholars are presented under various themes.

### **2.1.1 The Role of Public Relations**

The first theme that emerged was the role of public relations in organizations. Public relations plays an integral role in developing, establishing and maintaining relationships with all stakeholder publics. The literature identified four roles that public relations plays in organizations. These four roles are the expert prescriber role, communication facilitator role, problem-solving (problem-solving process facilitator) and communication technician role.

The expert prescriber is someone with a deep and broad understanding of public relations or someone who has adequate knowledge and competence in public relations. Expert prescribers possess problem-solving skills and can work on their own. According to Ani et al. (2017, p. 31), the expert prescriber “has the ability to define problems, construct plans, make programmes and be responsible for the planned programmes.” For Anyijuka (2016, p. 18), “the expert prescriber role is where the practitioner has the responsibility to describe and solve problems of public relations independently.” Expert prescribers are seen as people who have in-depth knowledge of public relations and build effective relationships between organizations and their stakeholder publics.

In their research that sought to determine the roles of public relations practitioners and the consequences of those roles for organizations, Hogg and Doolan (1999) opined that the expert prescriber conducts research, tries to define problems, develops programmes and plays the leading role in the implementation of those programmes. Their research made use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods as they conducted both interviews and focus group discussions with public relations practitioners and also administered questionnaires to all local authorities in Scotland. They found that although the expert prescriber role is important in public relations, only 6% of practitioners in local Scottish local authorities play the expert prescriber role. To this end, they concluded that many public relations practitioners do not undertake the role of the expert prescriber.

The second role is *the communication facilitator role*. The communication facilitator role is where practitioners act as liaison officers between organizations and their stakeholder publics. Practitioners act as mediators and settle issues between organizations and both internal and external stakeholders. According to Ani (2017, p. 31), the communication facilitator “has the

responsibility to maintain two-way communication quality and quantity between an organization and its public. This kind of public relations plays as interpreter and mediator which have to erase communication boundaries.”–Communication facilitators also work with the assumption that a two-way communication network enhances the quality of decisions which are made by organizations and their publics. Such decisions may be on actions of mutual trust, procedures and most importantly policies (Anyijuka, 2016).

The research by Ani et al. (2017) sought to analyze the position of public relations in organizational structure and the impacts of roles and functions for organizations. The authors made use of a qualitative methodology and conducted interviews with eight public relations officers of hospitals, schools and hotels. They found that practitioners in the role of communication facilitation impact hospitals, schools and hotels by offering both management and publics the needed information for making informed decisions which may lead to mutual trust.

The third role is *the problem-solving process facilitator role*. The problem-solving process facilitator role is a situation where practitioners devise appropriate means to solve communication and relationship-building problems between organizations and their stakeholder publics. According to Ani et al. (2017), practitioners in the role of problem-solving process facilitator work in collaboration with other managers in defining and solving communication problems to establish better relations with all stakeholders.

In a study by Hogg and Doolan (1999) that employed the mixed methods approach to determine the roles of public relations practitioners and the consequences of those roles for organizations, they found that practitioners who are not part of top management hardly play the role of problem-solving process facilitator as such roles are usually left in the hands of top

managers. They concluded that few public relations practitioners are in the role of problem-solving process facilitator.

The last and final role is of public relations identified in the literature was *the communication technician role*. The communication technician role is the basic role among all the roles of public relations and it is a common for all beginning practitioners. A typical example is report writing. According to Grunig et al. (2002), the communication technician role is where the practitioner works as a technical service provider and generates the needed materials for implementing a communication or public relations programme. For Dida et al. (2017), any public relations practitioner who takes orders from superiors to write reports and articles, edit press statements, issue annual reports, design speeches and launches official websites is referred to as a communication technician.

To establish the main role of communication technicians in maintaining the image of schools, Zu and Purwanti (2021) conducted interviews with three public relations officers of schools, analyzed digital and printed documents and also observed ten public relations officers. They found that aside from writing reports, press releases and speeches, communication technicians in the education sector have the added responsibility of managing the social media channels of schools. Their research revealed that at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, public relations practitioners in the role of communication technicians became social media managers. To this end, they communicated with the stakeholders of schools via various social media channels as the owners/managers of schools authorized them to do so. Furthermore, the qualitative research by Ani et al. (2017) that determined the position of public relations in hospitals, education and hotel organizations revealed that communication technicians have skills in journalism as such practitioners can write and edit news articles.

Further research on the four roles showed that the first three are similar in the sense that the expert prescriber is more likely to perform the roles of communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator. Researchers such as Dozier and Broom (1995) categorized the roles of public relations into two which are communication managers and communication technicians. The two-way classification of the role of public relations was used by Ani et al. (2017) in determining the role of public relations in organizational structure and the impacts of roles and functions for organizations which included educational institutions as part of its sample.

### **2.1.2 The Relationship between Public Relations and Education**

Another theme that emerged from the literature is that of the relationship between public relations and education. Education touches the lives of almost every individual and this explains why all over the world, it is extensively perceived as an important building block in the human and economic development and a vital tool for reducing poverty (Carlsmith & Railsback, 2001). Similarly, Quaye (2021, p. 1) noted that “the importance of education can never be overemphasized as it touches the lives of not only humans but also their communities.” These views give the indication that a nation that prioritizes its educational system tend to develop more than a nation that belittles education. Despite the immeasurable importance of education in the community, the goals of education in a particular community may not be accomplished if stringent measures are not taken to handle issues which arise between educational establishments and their strategic publics. This depicts that the services of public relations practitioners will form integral part in advancing educational agenda of communities and school managers must endeavour to seek the services of public relation practitioners.

The intersection between public relations and education refers to the adoption of public relations in managing educational institutions to help improve and build better relations between

managers of schools and all their stakeholder publics. When organizations adopt public relations, there will be an effective relationship between schools as well as all internal and external stakeholders. According to Sarkhedi (2016), adopting public relations in education means using public relations to strengthen communication between schools, parents and the general public. For Callahan (2012), public relations helps in tackling natural disasters and unpredictable occurrences which affect school management. According to Fari (2016), public relations helps to ensure effective engagement with the community and community engagement leads to the acceptance of education-related programmes by members of the community; there is community cooperation in matters relating to educational reforms.

In a study that had the main objective of determining the opinions of principals of schools on public relations practice, Coruk (2018) adopted a qualitative research methodology and purposively sampled 13 principals of primary, middle and high schools. The overarching theme that emerged from the interviews with these principals was expert communication. Out of the 13 principals, 12 viewed public relations practitioners in schools as expert communication officers. To these 12 principals, in terms of school management, the services of public relations practitioners help to adequately communicate with all stakeholders of schools. The responses from the 13 respondents indicated that public relations officers are able to better handle media relations and better manage websites of schools.

Furthermore, in a study to ascertain the planning of communication relationships between public schools and their stakeholder publics to improve the perception of public education, Amon (2018) used case study research and sampled 29 participants from four schools in Oklahoma, United States. The study found that public relations officers make use of one-on-one communication strategies to uplift or reshape the image of public schools. The study further found

that “it is important for schools to engage in accurate, timely, and consistent communication with their stakeholders to create a mutual trust between the school and the stakeholders (Amon, 2018, p. 117).”

### **2.1.3 Public Relations in the Public Sector**

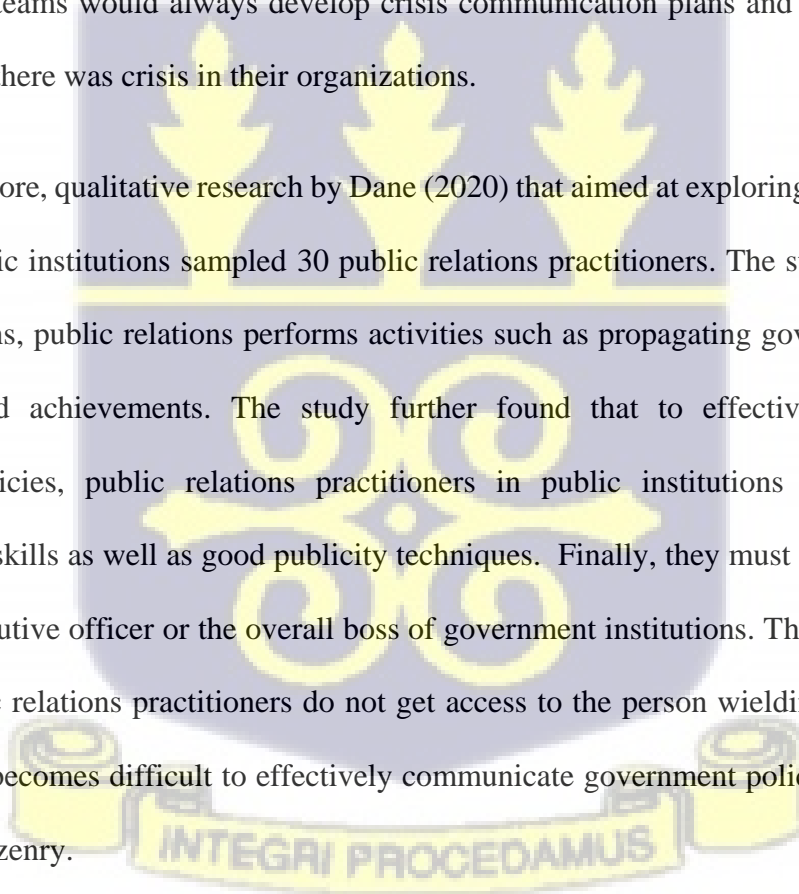
The third theme that emerged from the literature was public relations in the public sector. Practicing public relations in the public sector means engaging the services of public relations practitioners in government agencies and institutions to help manage communication and eventually build and maintain relationships with all stakeholders of government institutions. By engaging the services of public relations practitioners in the public sector, government agencies can devise appropriate communication strategies to communicate government policies to all stakeholder publics. For Marion (2018, p. 38), using “public relations at the public sector means using public relations to project the image of public institutions and establishing communication links with various publics.” According to Harris and Fleisher (2016), the communication of public policies must not be in the hands of politicians alone but those of well-trained public relations practitioners. They continued that allowing only politicians to communicate government policies would not allow the citizens or the general public to appreciate such policies due to the political biases on the part of politicians.

In a quantitative study that was aimed at establishing the relevance of public relations in public institutions, Marion (2018) sampled 100 stakeholder publics of public institutions with public relations practitioners and 100 stakeholder publics of public institutions without public relations practitioners. The findings showed that public institutions without public relations practitioners were more likely to suffer from negative publicity which leads to a negative public image than public institutions with public relations practitioners. 77% of respondents of public

institutions without public relations practitioners answered that their public institutions suffered from negative publicity as opposed to 39% of public institutions with public relations practitioners.

In another study that sought to determine the role of public relations in the public sector, Lopez (2019) used a qualitative methodology and interviewed 40 public relations practitioners in public institutions. Findings from the study showed that public relations practitioners in the public sector were mandated to reduce negative publicity of their institutions. In the quest of public relations practitioners to reduce negative publicity, the study found that there were crisis communication teams in many public institutions that had public relations units. These crisis communication teams would always develop crisis communication plans and make use of such plans whenever there was crisis in their organizations.

Furthermore, qualitative research by Dane (2020) that aimed at exploring the role of public relations in public institutions sampled 30 public relations practitioners. The study found that in public institutions, public relations performs activities such as propagating government policies, programmes and achievements. The study further found that to effectively communicate government policies, public relations practitioners in public institutions must have good communication skills as well as good publicity techniques. Finally, they must have direct access to the chief executive officer or the overall boss of government institutions. The study concluded that when public relations practitioners do not get access to the person wielding authority in an organization, it becomes difficult to effectively communicate government policies to the general public or the citizenry.



#### 2.1.4 Public Relations and Organizational Image

The fourth theme that came up from the literature was public relations and organizational image because literature revealed that public relations would not be relevant in its quest to establish and maintain relationships with strategic publics if it failed to raise the image of organizations. Raising the image of organizations means devising means or strategies to create positive perceptions or impressions in the minds of stakeholder publics about organizations. According to Frandsen (2017), organizational image is how both internal and external stakeholder publics perceive organizations. For Oparaugo (2021, p. 26), “public relations is a veritable tool of corporate image building and sustenance because it helps in shaping the way publics of an organization see or perceive the organization.” For Grunig (2001), practitioners of public relations can help create positive images and perceptions of their organizations when they deem it vital to give good counsel to organizations to conduct themselves in ways that the public desire. In the quest of organizations to build or raise the image of an organization, Celebi (2021) explained that public relations practitioners use press releases and press conferences to interact with publics. These scholarly works depict that indeed public relations has the potential to raise the image of organizations and in this regard, organizations need to prioritize public relations.

In a quantitative study that sought to determine the role of public relations in building a sustainable organizational image, Owizy (2019) surveyed 100 public relations officers from different organizations. From the findings, 94% of the total sample answered that public relations was important for creating organizational image. The study tested the hypothesis "There is a significant relationship between public relations and corporate image" via Chi-square test of association. The responses from the public relations officers gave a significant value of 0.038 (3.8%). The research hypothesis was therefore accepted because a significant value of 0.038 is less

than 5% meaning there is a relationship between public relations and organizational image. The study recommended that organizations must make adequate efforts to make their public relations departments vibrant to enhance a good organizational image.

To establish how public relations can be used to enhance the corporate image of organizations, Sharma et al. (2013) conducted secondary research and reviewed 35 articles on public relations and corporate image. This secondary research showed that to use public relations to enhance an organizational image, public relations practitioners establish and broaden their network with publics through proper information dissemination. A major recommendation in this study was that public relations practitioners should adopt more two-way communication strategies in their interactions with stakeholder publics.

### **2.1.5 Challenges of Public Relations Practice in the Educational Sector**

The final theme that emerged in the literature was the challenges of public relations practice in the educational sector. Challenges are associated with the core function of public relations which is to build and maintain relationships between organizations and their stakeholder publics (Odongo, 2009). The challenges are peculiar to each organization and sector where public relations is practiced. Several studies have indicated diverse challenges of public relations practices that exist in the educational sector. The challenges cut across educational institutions such as universities, colleges, secondary schools and other education-oriented organizations. Writing on the challenges and problems facing the practice of public relations, Fari (2016), opined that public relations as a discipline is largely misunderstood and intentionally misinterpreted to suit pejorative purposes and to associate it with propaganda. Teresa (2017), stated that many organizations do not regard public relations as a vital management function which can vehemently build relations with strategic publics. To Stroh (2007), several

organizations only recognize the paramount importance of public relations when they are hit by a crisis. These issue becomes a great challenge to the discipline and practice of public relations and prevents public relations practitioners from accomplishing their responsibilities creditably.

In 2018, Gezihagne assessed the practices and challenges of public relations in 13 government universities in Ethiopia. The study adopted mixed methods approach where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed. Interview guides and questionnaires were employed as data collection instruments to gather data from public relations officers from the selected universities. After the analysis of collected data, it was revealed that professional public relations practices were in a difficult condition because public relations offices were not professionally and structurally organized. Most of the officers did not understand the concept of public relations as a management function that creates a mutual understanding between internal and external publics. Other challenges that were uncovered in the study were lack of professional skilled human power, minimal attitudes, lack of empowerment, absence of adequate capacity-building training, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate assistance from the concerned leaders. To overcome these challenges, Gezihagne (2018) found that universities should appropriately empower public relations and also make the needed efforts to provide the requisite logistics and infrastructure or resources for public relations practitioners.

Furthermore, Singh (2019) studied the issues that engulfed public relations practice by focusing on the Education Ministry of India. The researcher gathered and analyzed secondary data on the state of public relations. Data analysis revealed that low application of technology in the practice, lack of better strategies, daily social and political issues, lack of proper organization of public relations structure in terms of practitioners' responsibilities and cooperation among

practitioners, low motivation, and poor gathering of information were the major issues associated with the practice of public relations in the educational sector.

Moreover, a study by Nurhanifah (2018) found that in public relations, practitioners encounter a lot of challenges. Nurhanifah (2018) examined the challenges of effective public relations by using the State Islamic University of North Sumatera in Indonesia as a case study. After the analysis of data that were collected through interviews, it was revealed that lack of funds, qualified personnel and inadequate facilities were the key challenges faced by practitioners in the practice of public relations in the university.

In another study on the practices of public relations in private universities in Ghana, Agyapong (2011) discovered that inadequate resources such as financial support, lack of qualified personnel, absence of recognition (little or no appreciation of the work of practitioners), lack of logistics and resources were the major challenges of some of the private universities. The study was qualitative in nature and employed in-depth interviews with the help of interview guides to collect data from public relations practitioners of private universities. This study recommended that in order to improve public relations practice in educational institutions especially at universities, efforts must be made to provide the needed resources for practitioners and organizations should endeavour to appreciate the work public relations practitioners.

#### **2.1.6 Gap in the Literature**

This review of related literature delved into five main themes or key ideas which were the role of public relations in organizations, the relationship between public relations and education, public relations in public institutions, the intersection between public relations and organizational image and lastly, challenges of public relations practice in the educational sector. The body of

literature reviewed in this study extensively established that public relations plays an imperative role in organizations. However, how stakeholder publics view the practice of public relations in organizations was not clearly established especially in the defined geographical location of the research. Additionally, how public relations helps organizations to achieve their missions and visions was not established. Scholars such as Grunig (2001) stated that organizations need to factor the missions and visions of stakeholder publics into their decisions. Nevertheless, the literature reviewed did not clearly establish how organizations could include the views of stakeholder publics into their missions and visions. To this end, this study intended to fill the gaps of how stakeholder publics view the practice of public relations in organizations and how public relations help organizations to achieve their missions and visions.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This section of the chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study. The section gives an account of the excellence theory, its relevance and how it was used in the study.

### **2.2.1 The Excellence Theory**

Based on the gap in the literature and the nature of the problem at hand, the study employed the excellence theory of public relations. The excellence theory refers to “a general theory of public relations that resulted from a 15-year study of best practices in communication management funded by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation” (Grunig, 2002, p. 8). The theory states that the worth of public relations is dependent upon the relations between organizations and their publics. The use of "excellence" in the excellence theory means a contribution to organizational effectiveness. Organizational effectiveness occurs when an organization attains goals that are important not only for the

organization but also for all strategic constituencies; that is, goals that serve the interests of both the organization and all strategic publics. Excellent public relations is the one that builds quality and long-term relationships with all strategic publics or constituencies (Grunig et al, 1992).

The excellence theory was propounded by six researchers who were leading researchers at the IABC research foundation. These researchers were J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Dozier, Ehling, White and Repper. The development of the excellence theory started in 1984 and lasted for fifteen years (Grunig, 2008). The researchers sought to answer “how, why, and to what extent communication affects the achievement of organizational objectives” (Grunig et al., 2002, p. 10). The theory was developed through survey research with chief executive officers, heads of public relations units and employees in three hundred and twenty-seven organizations (non-profit organizations, government agencies, corporations and associations). The survey research was followed by interviews with heads of public relations units, other public relations practitioners and chief executive officers in twenty-five organizations in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom (Grunig, 2002).

The theory argues that for an organization to be effective “it must behave in ways that solve the problems and satisfy the goals of stakeholders as well as of management” (Grunig, 1992, p. 5). The theory explains that failure on the part of organizations to meet the goals of stakeholders will allow stakeholders to oppose organizations in ways which will bring about risks and costs to organizational decisions and policies. To behave in socially acceptable ways, "organizations must scan their environment to identify publics who are affected by potential organizational decisions or who want organizations to make decisions to solve problems that are important to them" (Grunig, 2008, p. 8). Good relationships between organizations and their strategic publics help to develop and accomplish the goals of organizations and their publics,

reduce harmful publicity and raise profits by providing goods and services that are needed by stakeholders (Grunig et al. 2002). According to Grunig (2002), the theory identifies features of effective public relations in four main areas, namely, empowerment of public relations functions, communicator roles, organization of the communication function and its relationship to other management functions. The last one is model of public relations.

Empowerment of public relations functions is the first feature of effective public relations. Empowering public relations means giving public relations practitioners high authority and power to carry out managerial roles in an organization. According to Grunig et al. (2002), empowerment of public relations functions means that for public relations to contribute to organizational effectiveness, it must be made a crucial management function. To this end, senior public relations executives must be involved in strategic communication programmes and strategic management of the organization. The senior public relations executive or the head of public relations unit should be “a member of the dominant coalition of the organization or has a direct reporting relationship to senior managers who are part of the dominant coalition” (Grunig, 2002, p. 335).

The second feature of effective public relations is the communicator role. The communicator role means that the head of public relations unit must be a manager and not a technician because communication managers possess some skills which communication technicians may not possess. According to Grunig et al., research in public relations has brought about two major roles that are played by communicators and these roles are the manager and technician roles. In an instance where the senior communicator is not a manager, public relations finds it difficult to function effectively. Therefore, to enhance effectiveness in an organization “the senior public relations executive or others in the public relations unit must have the knowledge needed for the manager” (Grunig et al., 2002, p. 336).

The third feature of effective public relations is the organization of the communication function and its relationship to other management functions. Organizing communication functions means integrating all communication activities in an organization into one. Public relations must be a function that is separate from other functions in an organization. According to Grunig et al., public relations must be an integrated communication function. They explained that integrated communication function means “an excellent public relations function integrates all public relations programmes into a single department or provides a mechanism for coordinating programmes managed by different departments” (p. 337). They continued that for public relations to be effective, it must not be put in a department whose basic obligation is any other function other than a communication function. Even though the public relations function is integrated into an excellent organization, the function should not be placed in another department whose primary responsibility is a management function other than communication. In the words of Grunig (2002, p. 337), when public relations is made a subsidiary function it becomes difficult to manage it strategically because it cannot move resources meant for communication from one public to another public.

The last feature of effective public relations is models of public relations. According to Grunig et al., research suggests that excellent public relations units base their communication programmes on a two-way communication model rather than on the press agency (emphasizing only favourable publicity), public information (disclosing accurate information but engaging in no research or other form of two-way communication), or two-way asymmetrical models (emphasizing only the interests of the organization and not the interests of publics. The two-way communication model helps to resolve conflicts. It also helps to build long term relations with

strategic publics. Therefore, “to be effective, excellent public relations needs to adopt a two-way communication model” (Grunig, et al., 2002, p. 339).

Aside from the four major areas, Grunig et al. (2008), said that further research also resulted in fourteen generic principles which were later reduced to ten. The ten generic principles were involvement of public relations in strategic management, empowerment of public relations in the dominant coalition or a direct reporting relationship to senior management, integrated public relations function, public relations as a management function separate from other functions. Other generic principles were public relations units should be headed by a manager and not a technician, two-way symmetrical model of public relations, a symmetrical system of internal communication. The last three were knowledge potential for a managerial role and symmetrical public relations, diversity embodied in all roles and lastly, organizational context for excellence.

Involvement of public relations in strategic management. Involving public relations in strategic management means that to ensure effectiveness, public relations practitioners should form an integral part of major decision-making in an organization. According to Grunig et al. (2002), involving public relations in strategic management ensures all-encompassing decision-making, and leads to the formulation of better organizational policies which is inclusive of the views of both internal and external stakeholders.

The second generic principle is empowerment of public relations in the dominant coalition or a direct reporting relationship to senior management. To ensure effectiveness, the senior public relations executive should either be part of the senior management team or should have access to all senior managers. According to Grunig et al., (2002), the head of the public relations unit in an organization should be empowered to give a direct report to the chief executive officer or anyone

occupying the topmost position in an organization in order to give good counsel on matters relating to stakeholder publics, ethical decision making and values.

Thirdly, integrated public relations function. Excellent public relations must integrate all public relations functions into one department because integrated systems make it possible for public relations to come up with communication programmes for the benefit of all stakeholders. According to Grunig et al., (2002), an integrated public relations function has access to all authorities in an organization and it is not put under any department which ensures autonomy and can formulate policies which are in the interest of all stakeholders.

The next generic principle is that public relations is a management function separate from other functions. Public relations should not be added to other functions such as marketing or human resource. Adding public relations to other functions makes it difficult in developing its policies to serve the interests of all stakeholders. According to Grunig et al., (2002), when public relations is sublimated or added to other functions it leads to encroachment and cannot function effectively as an integrated function.

The fifth generic principle is that public relations units are headed by a manager and not a technician. Technicians have skills in writing and other technical works but do not usually have management training so ensure a manager should be the head of a public relations unit. According to Grunig et al., (2002), communication technicians undertake the day-to-day activities in communication but may not be better managers so to have excellence in public relations, public relations departments should have a manager as the head.

The sixth generic principle is a two-way symmetrical model of public relations. It is significant for public relations to adopt a two-way symmetrical model because in most instances

dialogue is more effective in preventing problems, resolving conflicts and sustaining relationships with strategic publics. According to Grunig et al., (2002), research indicates that the two-way symmetrical model is more effective in resolving conflicts among all stakeholder publics than other models of public relations and should be used most often by excellent public relations departments.

The next one is a symmetrical system of internal communication. Any excellent public relations unit must have the requisite knowledge needed for managing public relations symmetrically. Excellent public relations should be able to research to understand the views of the publics. According to Grunig (2008, p. 37) “excellent public relations have symmetrical systems of internal communication with strategic publics that increases job satisfaction because the goals of publics are incorporated into the organizational mission.”

The eighth generic principle is knowledge potential for a managerial role and symmetrical public relations. Excellent public relations units must have people with deep knowledge of communication and public relations as staff. According to Grunig et al., (2002), to ensure effectiveness in an organization people who have received education in public relations or professionals in public relations who are active members of professional associations should work in public relations units.

The penultimate generic principle is diversity embodied in all roles. People from diverse backgrounds must work in excellent public relations units. According to Grunig (2008, p. 37), “excellent public relations includes both men and women in all roles, as well as practitioners of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.”

The last generic principle is organizational context for excellence. To be effective, participation should be seen in excellent public relations units. According to Grunig (2008, p. 38),

“excellent public relations departments are nourished by participative rather than authoritarian cultures, activist pressure from the environment, and organic rather than mechanical management structures.”

### **2.2.12 Relevance of the Excellence Theory to the Study**

The excellence theory has been used by several scholars to underpin studies on the practice of public relations by different organizations. To cite a few, scholars such as Van Heerden (2004) conducted a study to describe the practice of public relations in Africa. By employing the excellence theory as one of the theories that underpinned his study, it was found that the practice of public relations in Africa is strategic, and practitioners function at a very influential strategic level within organizations.

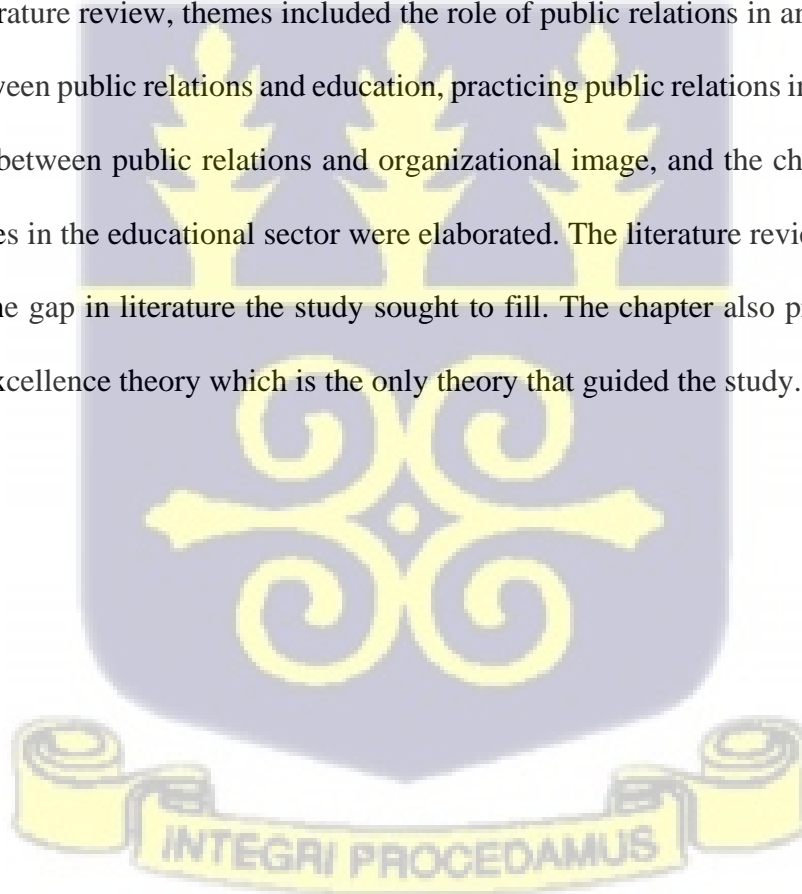
Moreover, Dornyo and Adiku (2015) employed the excellence theory as a reference point to assess the practice of public relations at Valley View University and Islamic University College in Ghana. The study revealed that public relations practitioners failed in the strategic management of communications in both institutions. The over-emphasis on media relations compelled public relations managers to adopt a one-way public information model in the process of communication. The adoption of the one-way model caused a hindrance to accept the two-way symmetrical model which is the ideal model for any communication process.

Lastly, the theory guided Adjei (2021) to assess the role of public relations as a strategic management function that contributed to the growth and success of RLG, a telecommunication organization. The study revealed that RLG’s public relations department played a strategic managerial role that impacted the overall strategy of the organization. The department, therefore, contributed to organizational excellence and effectiveness.

The aforementioned studies were guided by the excellence theory to reveal the practices of public relations in different organizations. Hence, this study also looked at the practice of public relations in the educational sector with a focus on the Ghana Education Service. The excellence theory guided this study through framing of questions in the interview and discussion guides; the researcher took into consideration the tenets of the theory in framing the questions in the interview and discussion guides whilst paying attention to the main aim of the study.

### **2.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented a discussion of the literature and the theory that underpinned this study. In the literature review, themes included the role of public relations in an organization, the relationship between public relations and education, practicing public relations in the public sector, the intersection between public relations and organizational image, and the challenges of public relations practices in the educational sector were elaborated. The literature review was concluded by identifying the gap in literature the study sought to fill. The chapter also provided a detailed account of the excellence theory which is the only theory that guided the study.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

Qualitative research approach was adopted in this study. The researcher deemed qualitative research approach appropriate because the study did not intend to generalize the research findings. The study intended to use the subjective views of research participants in determining the role of public relations at the GES. The selection of qualitative research was premised on a recommendation by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) that qualitative research is the most appropriate research in a study that intends to interpret the subjective opinions or views of research participants in explaining or describing a research problem or finding appropriate answers to research questions.

The chapter describes the research design which will talk about the research population, sampling technique as well as sample size, research methods and research instruments. The chapter will also talk about data analysis and ethical issues raised in the study.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The qualitative research design was used in the study and all methodological issues followed a qualitative approach. Data were collected using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The use of qualitative research design made it possible to collect rich and in-depth data in determining the role of public relations at the GES.

### 3.1.1 Population

The study consisted of three (3) target populations which were public relations officers at the GES, parents/guardians as well as teachers in public schools. The population was drawn from the Greater Accra Region because prior discussions between the researcher and the head of public relations unit at the GES in 2020 showed that it is the only region that has the highest number of public relations officers who are members of a professional body (Institute of Public Relations, Ghana). Furthermore, the head of public relations at the GES said Greater Accra is the only region that organizes regular meetings (every three months) on how to improve the practice of public relations at the GES. Public relations practitioners in the Greater Accra region formed the first target population. The second target population was parents/guardians and the third target population was teachers. Both the parents/guardians and teachers were all selected from the Greater Accra region.

In all, there are 29 metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officers in the Greater Accra region. Adding the regional public relations officer and the head of the public relations unit makes the population 31. The three schools used had a total teacher population of 56. Of this number, 15 were from Kokomlemle Two Basic School, 28 from Kotobabi Three Basic School and 13 from Alajo One Basic School. The learner/pupil population was 435, 819 and 439 for Kokomlemle Two, Kotobabi Three and Alajo One Basic Schools respectively, giving a total of 1,693. With respect to the actual population of parents/guardians, the researcher did not get a concrete figure but at least each learner/pupil has at least someone who attends PTA meetings on his or her behalf so it was assumed that the number of parents/guardians was around the number of pupils/learners.

### 3.1.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study adopted a purposive sampling technique in selecting the schools and all research participants. The use of purposive sampling was based on the recommendation by Opoku Amankwa and Graham (2009) that in purposive sampling, participants are selected because they possess certain characteristics or qualities that meet the requirements of the study. The schools sampled were Kokomlemle Two Basic School, Kotobabi Three Basic School and Alajo One Basic School. The selection of these schools was premised on the fact that the researcher had easy access to them. These schools also had enough parents/guardians and teachers who were familiar with public relations practice. The sampled metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officers in the Greater Accra region, who are members of the institute of public relations (IPR), Ghana had also practiced for at least five years. The researcher was of the opinion that such practitioners had enough experience and knowledge to help determine the role of public relations at the GES. Parents/guardians who regularly attend PTA meetings and were familiar with how schools build relationships with parents/guardians were selected because they were the ones who could give appropriate responses to the stated research questions.

The sample size for the public relations practitioners was eight. This sample included the head of the public relations unit, the Greater Accra regional public relations officer and six district public relations officers. According to Dworkin (2012), a sample size ranging from six to 50 is enough for qualitative research; therefore, eight public relations officers were deemed enough for the study. The researcher reached saturation after interviewing the eight public relations officers so there was no need to conduct another interview. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), saturation in research is a point where no new information is acquired in a study, as

the researcher at this point gets no new information. Fusch and Ness (2015) further stated that saturation point determines a sample size for research because it indicates that adequate data which can help to achieve the stated objectives have been found. For the parents/guardians, seven were sampled from each of the three schools to participate in the focus group discussion. Three focus group discussions were therefore conducted in the study. According to Krueger (2017), seven to ten participants are enough for a focus group discussion. Similarly, seven teachers were selected from each school to participate in the focus group discussions. After conducting the three discussions for parents/guardians and the three for teachers, there was saturation and no new data were sought again.

### **3.2 Data Collection Methods**

The study used two main data methods which were in-depth interviews and focus group discussions in gathering data from the research participants. The in-depth interviews were conducted with the eight public relations officers who were sampled from the first target population. The focus group discussions were conducted with the sampled parents and teachers who formed the second and third targets respectively. The use of in-depth interviews was based on a proposition by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) that using an in-depth interview in qualitative research allows the researcher to ascertain into detail the views of research participants. The selection of in-depth interviews was also premised on a proposition by Wimmer and Dominick (2011) that in-depth makes it possible to probe into the opinions and experiences of research participants. The researcher intended to delve deeper into the views and experiences of public relations officers in finding answers to some of the research questions so it became important to use in-depth interview. Focus group discussion also became appropriate in soliciting the views of

stakeholder publics because data from focus group discussions are rich also contain many ideas or views of research participants. According to Krueger (2017), a major reason for using focus group discussion is that its data are rich and includes many views of participants.

The public relations officers were contacted prior to the interviews and the aim of the study was explained to them. Interviews were conducted on Zoom video conferencing due to COVID-19 restrictions and also the distance between the researcher and all participants. During the interview, there was no internet/network breakage as the researcher gave all participants money to purchase a high-speed internet bundle that was stable. All interviews were conducted in March 2022 and each interview lasted for approximately 35 minutes. Each interview was recorded using a Huawei Y9 smartphone with a high-quality sound recording system. The researcher took notes amidst each recording. The researcher then transcribed the data, coded them and also put them into themes before analysing them.

Focus group discussions were conducted with the parents and teachers. Three focus discussions were conducted with the parents and three were conducted with the teachers. There were seven participants in each of the focus groups. The researcher used to attend PTA meetings and was familiar with parents/guardians who were conversant with the relationship between schools and parents/guardians in each of the selected schools. It was therefore easy for him to identify such parents/guardians to participate in the study. Similarly, the researcher who used to organize programmes for all teachers in the selected schools knew of teachers who were conversant with the relationship building between the GES and its teachers. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the distance between the researcher and the participants, each of the six focus groups was done via Zoom video conferencing. During these online discussions, there was no

internet/network breakage as the researcher provided each participant with a high-speed internet bundle that is stable.

There were six sessions, one for each of the focus groups and each session lasted for about 90 minutes. The researcher moderated each session and two assistants helped in taking notes. There were audio recordings of the sessions using Huawei Y9 smartphone which were later transcribed. The discussions in each group were directed by the moderator, who allowed the discussions to flow in order not to include his influence on the outcome of the research. The discussions made room to gather views that were more concrete as each participant had time to express his or her opinion on the questions which were stated in the discussion guides. In some instances, follow-up questions were asked and participants reacted and that also aided the research. The recorded data from each of the sessions were transcribed, coded and themes were derived before analysing them.

### **3.2.1 Data Collection Instruments**

The study made use of two data collection tools or instruments. Precisely, interview guides and discussion guides were used in the in-depth interview and focus group discussions respectively. The interview guides were used during the interview with the participants from the first target population whereas the discussion guides were used in the discussions with participants from the second and third target populations.

#### **3.2.1.1 Interview Guide**

Three semi-structured interview guides were designed and used in eliciting data in this study. One was for the head of public relations unit at the headquarters of GES, one for the regional public relations officer of the Greater Accra region and the last one was for the

metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officers who were sampled in the study. The use of semi-structured interview guides helped the researcher to ask follow-up questions that were in line with the aim of the study; flexibility was enhanced and that is in tandem with an assertion by Mason (2002), that the defining characteristic of a semi-structured interview is that it has a flexible and fluid structure that allows researchers to ask follow up questions. The public relations officers were asked questions that would help to determine the role of public relations at the GES. Precisely, questions on the main responsibilities of public relations officers, factors hindering their work and whether or not public relations officers at the GES are part of management or not were asked. Other questions were on how public relations helps the GES to accomplish its mission and vision. All questions were informed by relevant literature and the theoretical framework.

### **3.2.1.2 Discussion Guide**

Two discussion guides were designed and were used in eliciting answers from teachers and parents on their views on the role of public relations in the Ghana Education Service. Follow-up questions were also asked in instances where an answer from one respondent necessitated a follow-up question. All seven participants gave their responses to a question before the next question was asked. Open and free discussions among participants culminated in the generation of novel ideas which were extremely useful in ascertaining the views of both the teachers and the parents. All questions in the discussions aimed at ascertaining how the GES factors the views of stakeholder publics into its mission, vision and its decisions. All questions were informed by literature and the theoretical framework. All participants in each of the six focus groups were contacted prior to the discussions.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The researcher transcribed the collected data that were gathered using the interview and the discussion guides. The transcribed data were organized and coded according to themes which were in line with the research questions of the study. Analyses were carried out thematically to meet the objectives and also to find answers to the stated research questions. Some themes that emerged were activities of public relations the GES, factors hindering the work of public relations practitioners and ways of improving public relations at the GES. Other themes were the views of stakeholder publics on the practice of public relations at the GES.

### 3.4 Ethical Concerns

The researcher obtained permission from the School of Graduate Studies through the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana before collecting data. Permission was also obtained from the sampled schools, public relations officers, teachers and parents before the interviews/discussions were conducted. In the course of the interviews/discussions, permission was obtained before recordings were taken. Information given by research participants was kept confidential and the names of all participants were not mentioned in the study. Furthermore, all outside sources used were duly acknowledged.

### 3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the methodological approach adopted for the present study. Conducted in the Greater Accra Region of the country, the study sought the views of educational public relations officers, teachers and parents, through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. To ensure ethical compliance, the researcher first obtained permission from the

University, then sought permission from prospective participants before engaging them and committed to keeping participants' views confidential. Finally, the chapter explained how the data gathered were analysed.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

The present qualitative study sought to investigate role of public relations at the Ghana Education Service. It sought the views of participants on the functions and roles of public relations in contribution to the achievement of the mission and the vision of the GES, challenges of public relations practices at the GES, the relationship that exists between the GES and stakeholder publics and the ways of strengthening public relations at the GES.

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were employed as data collection methods to gather data from the study's participants. With the help of interview guides, in-depth interviews were conducted for the head of public relations unit at the GES Headquarters, Regional Public Relations Officer at the Greater Accra Regional Office of the GES, and six public relations officers at the municipal offices of the GES. The focus group discussions with the employment of discussion guides were organized for seven teachers and seven parents that were selected from the three basic schools. The data gathered were coded and analyzed thematically to address the research questions that were raised in the study. Overall, four themes emerged, namely, public relations activities at the GES, hindrances of public relations practice at the GES, the views of stakeholder publics on public relations practice of the GES and ways of improving the practice of public relations at the GES.

This chapter is made up of two main sections: findings and discussions. In the findings section, four main findings are presented. Then in the discussion section, the main findings of the

study are discussed in relation to the findings of previous studies and the theory that underpinned the study.

#### **4.1 Presentation of Findings**

This section provides information regarding the demographics of the research participants and the four themes that were generated from the collected data.

##### **4.1.1 Demographical Information of Research Participants**

The study focused on gathering data from three groups of participants. The first group was that of public relations practitioners from the Ghana Education Service (GES). Among the eight practitioners who were interviewed, two were males, whilst six were females. The age range of the practitioners was between 34 to 43 years. The highest qualification of the practitioners was a master's degree whilst the lowest qualification is a bachelor's degree. For a working experience as public relations practitioners, participants had been working between five and 11 years.

The second group of the study's participants were teachers. Within this group, there were three categories of teachers. The first category consisted of seven teachers from Kotobabi Three Basic School. Among the teachers, three were males whilst four were females. The oldest teacher was 56 years old whilst the youngest was 31 years old. The highest qualification was a master's degree whilst the lowest was a bachelor's degree. Participants here had been working between three and eleven years. The second category of teachers was from the Kokomlemle Two Basic School. The oldest teacher was 55 years old whilst the youngest was 29 years old. The highest qualification was a master's degree whilst the lowest was a bachelor's degree. Participants here had been working between three and twelve years. The third category of teachers was from Alajo One Basic School. The oldest teacher was 47 years old, whilst the youngest was 29 years old. The

highest qualification was a master's degree whilst the lowest was a bachelor's degree. Participants here had been working between three and fourteen years.

Moreover, the third group of the study's participants were parents or guardians who had their wards in either Kotobabi Three, Kokomlemle Two or Alajo One Basic Schools. The age range of the parents/guardians was between 38 to 64. The highest educational qualification of parents/guardians who participated in the study were A Level, Diploma and High National Diploma. Others had bachelor's and master's degrees as their highest educational qualification. The professions of the parents/guardians included teaching, entrepreneurship, banking and trading.

#### **4.1.2 The Contributions of Public Relations to the Realization of the Mission and the Vision of the GES**

The first major theme that emerged from the participants' views was that of the contribution of public relations to the realization of the mission and the vision of the GES. Before expressing their views on how public relations helps the GES to achieve its set mission and vision, participants mentioned the responsibilities they perform at the GES. Practitioners indicated that they write reports (monthly, quarterly, and annually), organize various stakeholder engagement programmes and engage the media on education-related issues in Ghana. The sampled public relations officers indicated that they participate in management meetings and give counsel to the management on issues that are related to stakeholder engagements. The head of public relations unit at the headquarters of the GES explained her responsibilities this way:

Generally, I handle the corporate affairs of the Ghana Education Service. As part of my responsibilities, I ensure that there is a positive relationship between GES and its stakeholders. We monitor media coverage of teacher issues in the country and media

engagement is one of the key responsibilities I handle and that is why before this interview I had a journalist from TV3 in my office. As part of my responsibilities, I use a crisis communication team to tackle every crisis that comes to our attention and I make sure that the crisis communication team helps to prevent the crisis. I develop PR campaigns and media relations strategies. On a daily basis my team and I monitor media discussions to uncover what they discuss with respect to the Ghana Education Service.

These words from the head of public relations unit at the headquarters of the GES give the indication that the GES uses public relations to engage the media, develop public relations campaigns and develop crisis communication strategies to address crisis which befall the GES. Furthermore, it is seen that the head of public relations unit performs multiple responsibilities.

To bring more specifics to her responsibilities and activities as the head of public relations unit of the GES, she explained that on a daily basis, she monitors both the traditional and social media and then give report of the monitoring to other management members of the GES. Moreover, she explained that whereas some media discussions were favourable, others were not. Accordingly, the GES took steps to address the ones which were not favourable. A typical way of tackling unfavourable ones was to come out with press releases on some issues. She gave an example of a press release that came from her outfit on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2021. This press release responded to media reportage on how school authorities of Wesley Girls' High School in the Central Region prevented Muslim students from fasting during Ramadan. She made it clear that the media reportage was not accurate and needed to be corrected. She also clarified that before issuing a release, she usually consults her crisis communication team and some members of the GES.

Besides, the public relations officer at the Greater Accra regional office of the GES gave some of his responsibilities as a practitioner. The following were his submission:

As a regional PRO, I coordinate all public relations officers in the region and as part of that, I ensure they send me their monthly, quarterly and annual reports on time. We have a report writing template which is used by all the 29 municipal or district PROs in the region and I ensure they follow the template strictly. After receiving the reports, I review them and write a regional report which is sent to the headquarters every month, every quarter and every year. Media relations and stakeholder engagement at the regional level fall under my jurisdiction and because of that the media usually come to my office for interviews. I coordinate meetings for all the 29 PROs who are under me.

These submissions give the indication that, in the dispensation of his responsibilities, the Greater Accra regional public relations officer coordinates all the activities of the metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officers, and also receives reports from all public relations officers in the region.

Describing his responsibilities further, the regional public relations officer said during every Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and every West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), he visits the various metropolitan/municipal/districts together with the regional director and some regional education officers to assess the examination situations.

Still on the activities of public relations at the GES, the metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officers added that they often write speeches for their directors and also accompany these directors to educational programmes. Aside from their normal duties, the practitioners

sometimes help other staff members to execute tasks that require more hands. The public relations officer at the Accra Metropolitan Education Office added that “aside from my normal duties of writing reports, I write speeches for my director to deliver at functions. I also write minutes in meetings, queries and confidential letters.” One municipal public relations practitioner added that her director made her a secretary to the municipal disciplinary committee and now she coordinates all the activities of the committee.

Some of the practitioners reacted that their views are sometimes included in management decisions as they form an integral part of management in their offices. Others, however, indicated that they were not part of management and it is hard for their views to be included in management decisions. Only two of the public relations officers interviewed indicated that they were not part of management. In relation to public relations as part of management, the head of public relations unit stated that:

I am an important member of management and sometimes management considers my decisions on matters relating to communication and public relations. Not all management members appreciate the value of PR and communication, but the director general being a communication expert appreciates my work and so my counsel is mostly taken. Mostly at management meetings, the communication and media effects of our decisions, when and how to disseminate information to the media, to our schools and our staff are what other management members seek my counsel and I advise them accordingly.

The responses from the head of public relations unit at the GES show that at the headquarters, public relations is part of management functions and decisions taken by management at headquarters are inclusive of the head of public relations unit.

On his part, the regional public relations practitioner added that on few occasions, he is invited to management meetings and at those meetings, he is allowed to voice opinions and make recommendations on issues of the GES.

In connection with the responsibilities of the public relations practitioners that contribute to the achievement of missions and visions of the GES, the practitioners indicated that they actively engage their stakeholder publics on vital issues to ascertain their worries and other matters which might be detrimental to the success of their work. The practitioners believed that the effective engagement with the stakeholder publics strongly helps the GES to achieve its vision of creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning and its mission of ensuring that Ghanaian children of school-going age get access to quality education. According to the head of public relations unit at the GES;

Importantly, GES is to provide quality education to the Ghanaian child and the provision of quality education must be done in a conducive environment. We have our students, teachers and other staff. As public relations practitioners, we engage them, get to understand their concerns and inform management. This motivates teachers to help deliver quality education which is our mission. All the activities we do help us to create enabling environment for effective teaching and learning which our vision is and to help the Ghanaian child get quality education which is our mission. For example, regarding the recent issue on laptops for teachers, public relations practitioners advised management to let the teachers who were aggrieved know that the government was paying 70% to help them acquire laptops so the teachers will pay 30% and these laptops are for the teachers themselves and not for their schools. This yielded results.

These words from the head of public relations unit indicated that the GES provides quality education to students in a conducive learning environment. She further explained that in achieving the mission and vision, the GES through public relations engage stakeholders including chiefs, religious leaders and assemblymen to discuss the issues of absenteeism of students in communities.

The views of the head of public relations unit at the GES were re-echoed by the regional and the metropolitan/municipal/district public relations practitioners. These junior practitioners all said that through constant engagement with stakeholders, they help the GES to accomplish its set mission and vision. They all cited the 2021 stakeholder engagement in their metropolitans/municipals/districts as the occasion that was used to unravel absenteeism of school children when schools reopened after they were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of a comparative analysis during stakeholder engagement indicated a sharp difference between the number of school children who were absenting themselves from school before and after the closure. The public relations officers realized that through their reports, directors of education had to address the issue of absenteeism in schools. Some of the public relations officers mentioned that through the 2021 stakeholder engagement public relations helped in getting children back to school and which is in line with the mission of the GES.

#### **4.1.3 Hindrances to Public Relations Practice at the Ghana Education Service**

In spite of its major contributions to the realization of the mission and vision of the GES, public relations as practiced at the GES faces a number of challenges. According to participants, the main challenges they face in their line of duty are lack of financial resources and equipment and support from some management and staff members of the GES. Some practitioners have to

personally finance public relations activities. Consequently, practitioners are not able to carry out important public relations activities for the GES. Moreover, it was found that stakeholders do not appreciate the importance of public relations in an organizational setting; accordingly, these stakeholders usually make the work of practitioners very difficult. The head of public relations unit at the GES explained her challenges this way:

For challenges or hindrances, the main one I face is inadequate resources. There is no budgetary allocation for public relations and communication activities here at the headquarters, but we manage. There is no impress to buy credit or data and I mostly use my data. Recently, we streamed live on the issue of one teacher one laptop, using our phones and data because we cannot say because there are no resources we will not work on. When it comes to understanding PR, it is a major challenge. Most officers do not appreciate the impact of communication and public relations and they sometimes ignore PR because they think GES is not in competition with anybody, unlike the private sector where if you do not do good communication for your brand your business will collapse.

These words of the head of public relations unit indicate that at the GES public relations is faced with many challenges. These challenges hinder the work of practitioners. The views of the head of public relations unit on the challenges of public relations practices were re-echoed by other officers.

Another challenge which was peculiar to the headquarters of the GES was that of political infiltration. The head of public relations unit explained that as the service is headed by a political figure, definitely political infiltrations are bound to happen and she encounters a lot of politics in the discharge of her responsibilities.

#### **4.1.4 The Views of Stakeholder Publics on Public Relations Practices of the Ghana Education Service**

Moreover, the theme of views of stakeholder publics on public relations practices and the GES emerged as a finding of this study. After the focus group discussions with teachers and parents/guardians, different views were revealed concerning the practices of public relations.

##### **The Views of Teachers on the GES and Public Relations**

For the views of the teachers, discussions were centred on disregard for teachers, faster but contradicting information, poor treatment by the GES and its public relations practitioners, and inactive and invisible practitioners. The teachers revealed that the GES does not seem to have respect for teachers. The GES works in its own interest and does not respect the interest of teachers. The teachers are not engaged properly by the GES concerning impending activities. This situation has resulted in most teachers questioning the relevance of public relations at the GES. A female teacher at Kotobabi Three Basic School expressed her views this way:

Well, I do not see the relevance of public relations at the GES. PROs only try to please the directors of education and not the teachers who teach in the schools. These PROs will always defend everyone except teachers. They have absolute disregard for us. They must be up and doing. I view PR as irrelevant at the GES.

The response from this teacher paints the picture that public relations officers at the GES try to please the employer and not teachers. Therefore, public relations practitioners do not build any effective relationship with teachers. This response also give the indication that although public relations practitioners at the GES believe that they engage stakeholders adequately in order to help

the GES achieve its set mission and vision, teachers who are part of internal stakeholders do not agree with practitioners.

Teachers of Kokomlemle Two Basic School added that the GES only uses public relations for media engagement to paint a good picture for the employer (government) to know the effectiveness of public relations at the GES. The teachers who were conversant with public relations practice felt that although the role of public relations in building and maintaining a good relationship between teachers and the GES was a good one, the approach used by public relations practitioners was appalling because practitioners do not adequately channel the grievances of teachers to the appropriate quarters (GES offices).

Teachers of Alajo One Basic School expressed the view that both the public relations practitioners and the GES do not serve the interest of teachers but rather the government. Many of them said the GES does not take into account the concerns of teachers. However, one teacher had a dissenting view. She noted that she watched the head of public relations unit at the GES on television trying to explain issues concerning teachers' welfare. To that end, she argued that such an effort by the GES public relations officer signified the organisation's respect for teachers. Her last response on this issue was that her colleagues should not expect 100% satisfaction from the GES and its public relations outfit because teachers cannot also give 100% output.

On the issue of faster but contradicting information, the teachers considered the public relations officers as carriers of fast information. To them, the advent of digitalization has contributed to faster dissemination of information. Nevertheless, some teachers were of the view that although information dissemination was quick, most of the press releases by the GES carry contradictory information. A female teacher at Kotobabi Three Basic School asserted that a lot of

contradictory messages were disseminated when the GES decided to change the term-system to a semester-system at the basic school level. She expressed her views this way:

Well, I believe with Whatsapp, Facebook and other social media channels, dissemination of information to me as a teacher is very rapid but I receive much different information on the same issue and mostly I am confused. When I ask the head of my school and other teachers, they too will say they do not know the correct one. Recently, this term and semester issue, different messages were on our WhatsApp platforms and even my headmistress was confused. Our PROs and their directors do not give us clarity on time. It takes time before we get the true information. Sometimes we receive many press releases from the PR unit and they appear contradictory.

These views from the teacher give the indication that although with the advent of social media and technology, information dissemination to teachers has become faster, teachers receive a lot of messages and they struggle to determine the correct or genuine information. Furthermore, teachers are sometimes confused on the kind of messages they receive. The result of this confusion is that the GES is not able to use public relations to build any meaningful relations with its teachers.

Other teachers expressed the same views that quick information dissemination has brought many contradictions making it difficult for them (teachers) to determine accurate information. A female teacher at Kokomlemle Two Basic School cited an example to buttress her point. She said that she came across different WhatsApp messages concerning reopening dates in January 2022. She continued that these different reopening dates confused many teachers because they did not know the accurate date of reopening of schools. Another female teacher in the same school expressed similar views this way:

In this modern era, information dissemination has been made easier and quicker for public relations officers. They just have to sign something, send it to headteachers and all of us will receive it. Because of that, many people fake messages and put the electronic signature of the head of PR unit and spread it. Some of them we know are fake because of the many grammatical errors but some of them are not easy to know if they are genuine or fake and I think these PR people should be up and doing to control fake news. That will help us to know the authenticity of the numerous messages we receive that our headteachers are not even aware of.

These words indicate that there is fake news and teachers are not able to verify the authenticity of messages they receive from public relations officers at the GES. The inability to verify messages hinders effective relationship building between teachers and the GES.

Expressing concerns about how school authorities and the GES treat them, the teachers mentioned that the treatment given to them by the GES and all educational authorities does not help them as teachers. They mentioned that public relations officers and the GES as a whole do not connect well with schools. Some of them said although they channel their concerns to their headteachers for these headteachers to inform the school improvement support officer and the public relations officers for actions to be taken by the officers, usually nothing happens to their concerns.

Still on the views of teachers regarding public relations and the GES, another female teacher at Kokomlemle Two Basic School reduced the work of public relations at the GES to media relations because public relations practitioners and the GES are only active in responding to issues on radio and TV. She further added that she saw her municipal public relations officer only once and that was during the 2020 Independence Day Celebration when the practitioner introduced

himself as the public relations officer in their municipality. Other teachers explained that it is only during the BECE, the WASSCE and the CSSPS periods that they hear of practitioners in the media. However, at Alajo One Basic School, a male teacher expressed his views that all formal reports and most official communication at the GES are handled by public relations practitioners. He concluded that the work of the practitioners and the GES is good because he was satisfied with releases by the GES. He urged his colleagues to lower their expectations regarding the work of practitioners and the GES because even teachers are also not living up to expectations.

### **The Views of Parents/Guardians on the GES and Public Relations**

The views of parents/guardians, external stakeholder publics were also used in the study to determine the role that public relations plays at the GES. The study sought to find out how the various schools treated parents and their wards as a way of understanding how public relations helps build mutually beneficial relationships between the GES and its stakeholder publics. The parents/guardians asserted that they have cordial relations with schools and the GES. They explained that they are engaged through PTA and other important meetings and the GES includes their views in their reports. In terms of cordial relations, all the parents reacted that the relationship between them and the schools is healthy. Some of the parents stated that their relations with the school are friendly. Sometimes the headmasters and mistresses go to the extent of calling them on phone to explain peculiar issues on how to improve the academic performance of their children. The heads also visit their homes to discuss the academic issues of their children. They explained that they could approach some teachers and other school authorities on peculiar issues that pertain to their children in the school. One parent who has his child at Kotobabi Three Basic School expressed his views this way:

I do not have any problem with this school. I like the character of the headmistress and how she relates to me. As a PTA chairman of this school, I have been coming to the school regularly and I see how the headmistress and her teachers react toward me. Recently, she called me to discuss how we parents can write to the GES authorities in this municipal to start extra classes again after it was cancelled by the GES. She did not tell the children to inform their parents of extra classes but discussed with me first so I think she is one of the best that we have.

This view expressed by this PTA chairman meant that he likes the character of the headmistress because she takes steps to discuss issues with him before actions are taken which is a good step in relationship building. The implication for public relations here is that the GES is able to build good relationships with parents/guardians through headteachers.

Another parent, having a child in Kotobabi Three Basic School, reacted that a week before the focus group discussion, she sought permission from the headmistress about her child being late for school due to an errand the child had to run. The headmistress kind-heartedly granted the permission.

Moreover, the parents/guardians appreciated that the schools build relationships with them through PTA and other important meetings. They explained that PTA meetings offered them the opportunity to voice their concerns to school authorities and also to get to know happenings in the school. One female parent whose child is at Kotobabi Three Basic School expressed her views this way:

In my view, the main way of interacting with this school is through PTA meetings. As a PTA chairman, I sometimes come to the school, but to parents who are not chairmen, the

avenue for them to interact with the school is through PTA meetings. At the last PTA meeting, we discussed the performance of the school in the 2020 BECE and how we can improve academic performance in this school. The organization of extra classes which we talked about earlier is something that as parents we want GES to reconsider the decision to cancel it and we are engaging the director of education about it.

Implicitly, PTA chairmen get the opportunity to interact with schools to discuss pertinent issues but parents who are not PTA chairmen only use PTA meetings for discussions. Furthermore, it shows that during PTA meetings, issues that are discussed centre around the performance of school children in the BECE and how to improve academic performance among students. The implication for public relations here is that through PTA meetings and other meetings that involve schools and parents, the GES is able to build good relationships with parents.

Furthermore, stakeholder engagement which is also a form of a meeting gives parents the avenue to make their sentiments known to school authorities, GES staff and other stakeholders in the municipality. One parent with a child at Kokomlemle Two Basic School expressed his views this way:

The school builds relationship with me through PTA meetings. PTA allows parents to participate in matters that can develop the school. Some parents are invited to stakeholder engagements every year and that in my view is a nice way of building relations between the school and everyone. When my firstborn was writing the BECE in this school, they invited us to educate us on computer placement in the senior high schools and that helped me a lot. My daughter got Accra Girls and I am really happy.

The view by this parent adds to the fact that a PTA meeting is a major avenue that schools use to interact with parents and take actions to resolve issues affecting parents which helps to establish and maintain relationships with parents.

Additionally, it was also found that the schools together with the GES have girl-child coordinators that seek to address the concerns of parents and the academic performance of female students. The parents also explained that their views as parents are factored into the report of the headmistress to the office of the director of education for the municipality. According to the parents, reporting to the director of education on the views of parents is a formal way in which they could get the GES to respond to their views. Some of the parents indicated that the school improvement supporting officer and some officers from the education office monitor their PTA meetings and as such important issues and decisions are communicated to the education office.

The parents sentimentally shared that the only view that has been ignored by the GES is the reinstatement of the extra classes that were organized by the schools. One parent with a child at Kotobabi Three Basic School expressed his views this way:

I am a PTA chairman and together with other PTA chairmen in the municipality, we wrote a formal letter/proposal to the municipal director of education to allow schools to do extra classes but the director of education has not yet agreed to our proposal. The director explained to us that he received a directive from headquarters not to allow extra classes since some schools use it as an opportunity to dupe school children and by extension some parents.

These words by the parent indicate that the issue of reintroducing extra class has become a worry for most parents but going forward, they hope to resolve the issue with the GES. The implication

for public relations here is that when parents have issues with some decisions taken by the GES, they find a way to come to a resolution with the GES which is a right step in relationship building, the focus of public relations.

#### **4.1.5 Improving the Practice of Public Relations at the Ghana Education Service**

The last theme that emerged as a finding was how to improve the practice of public relations at the GES. To improve the practice, the practitioners suggested that management and other staff members needed to be educated on the value of public relations. The management of the GES at headquarters needs to clearly define what practitioners are to do. Other responses were that GES needs to provide funds for practitioners. The head of public relations unit at the headquarters of the GES expressed her views this way:

I think we need to make sure that only qualified people with communication or public relations backgrounds are allowed to take up PR responsibilities. In Accra, we have some district PROs who are members of IPR and that is a plus but that is not the case in other regions. Also, we need to educate management and other educationists on the value of PR in organizations. Most importantly, PR and communication must be included in budgetary allocations. I will also say that at the various offices of the GES in Ghana, directors of education should add public relations practitioners to the district education management teams so that the voice of practitioners will be heard at district education meetings. That is practitioners must be empowered at all levels in the GES.

These words mean that the GES should engage the services of qualified people to take up public relations roles. Moreover, the GES needs to provide education on public relations to its members

and lastly include public relations in all budgetary allocations and add district public relations practitioners to district education management teams.

Furthermore, the regional public relations practitioner also said providing enough funds to support the activities of public relations at the GES is crucial. All metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officers also said funds must be made available to them. These metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officers agreed with the head of public relations unit at the GES that other staff members of the GES need to be educated on the value or the importance of public relations. The last point expressed by all the metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officers was that the GES needs to come clear on what practitioners are to do to ensure uniformity of roles across the various districts.

## **4.2 Discussion of Findings**

The second section of this chapter discusses the findings of the study. The findings are discussed in relation to the reviewed literature and the theory that underpinned this current study.

### **4.2.1 The Contributions of Public Relations to the Realization of the Mission and the Vision of the GES**

The present study first sought to find out what public relations activities are employed by practitioners to help the GES achieve its mission and vision. The findings helped to answer this question because they revealed that when practitioners undertake various activities such as community engagements (stakeholder engagements), they are able to ascertain the desires of all stakeholders. Practitioners further inform the management of the GES about the views of stakeholders. The management of the GES then takes actions to address the desires of stakeholders

which usually deal with getting children to school and providing quality education. In this regard, the GES fulfils its set mission and vision which have to do with getting providing education for all Ghanaian children who have reached school going age. This finding can be understood on the aspect of the excellent theory which talks about the mission and the vision of organizations. According to the theory, organizations must include the desires of stakeholder publics into organizational decisions. Including the desires of stakeholders in organizational decisions will prevent stakeholders from resisting such decisions and will also help organizations to achieve their set missions and visions because the desires of stakeholders will be factored into the mission and the vision of organizations. This point is borne out by this study as it found that the GES public relations officers help the GES as an organization to effectively engage its stakeholders. The responses from practitioners that through stakeholder engagements in the various municipalities, the GES is able to ascertain the concerns and worries of all stakeholders and by addressing these concerns and worries, the mission of providing quality education and the vision of creating enabling environment to ensure effective teaching and learning is accomplished all underscore the critical role of public relations at the GES. According to practitioners at the GES, stakeholder engagements help the GES to identify school dropouts. Subsequently, the GES takes actions to get these dropouts back to school. This institutional response helps to achieve its mission of ensuring that all Ghanaian children of school-going age are provided with education. In short, this study shows that to achieve the mission and the vision of organizations, efforts must be made to constantly engage stakeholder publics.

Moreover, the study revealed that writing reports (monthly, quarterly, and annually), writing speeches for directors, organizing various stakeholder engagement programmes and engaging the media on education-related issues are the activities of public relations in the Ghana Education

Service (GES). Again, the writing finding of practitioners is consistent with the findings of Zu and Purwanti (2021) whose study examined the role of public relations officers of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that practitioners write reports, press releases, speeches, and also added the responsibility of managing the social media channels of the schools. Similarly, this present study found that public relations officers of the GES especially those at the district level write speeches, press releases and reports which makes them more of communication technicians than communication managers.

Furthermore, it was found that the head of public relations unit at the headquarters of the GES is part of the management of the GES and she participates in management meetings. At the headquarters, the head of public relations unit gives counsel to management on issues that are related to stakeholder engagements. This finding may be understood on the basis of the principles of excellence theory which are empowerment of public relations functions, communicator roles and involvement of public relations in strategic management. According to the theory, empowerment of public relations functions means that for public relations to contribute to organizational effectiveness, it must be made a crucial management function. To this end, senior public relations executives must be involved in strategic communication programmes and strategic management of organizations. The communicator role describes the situation of making the head of public relations unit a manager and not a technician because communication managers possess some skills which communication technicians may not possess (Grunig et al., 2002). The involvement of public relations in strategic management means that public relations needs to be part of strategic management. In this regard, public relations practitioners need to take part in decision-making in organizations (Grunig et al., 2002). Therefore, by allowing the head of public relations unit to be part of its management team, the GES is empowering public relations at its

headquarters. The voice of the head of public relations unit at the table of decision making, therefore carries weight. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that, at the GES, empowerment of public relations practitioners is not possible at all offices or levels. At the regional and many district offices, practitioners are not empowered. This non-empowerment at the regional and district offices may prevent practitioners from contributing effectively to the overall success of the GES.

#### **4.2.2 Hindrances to Public Relations Practice at the Ghana Education Service**

The present study also sought to find out about the hindrances to public relations at the GES. The study answered this question by revealing that at the regional and at many districts of the GES, practitioners were not part of management teams. To this end, practitioners find it difficult to give counsel on public relations to district education management teams. Again, the empowerment feature or principle of the excellence theory can be used to interpret this finding. To the excellence theory, including practitioners in management teams empowers them to give counsel to management. The exclusion of practitioners from district education management teams prevent them from giving communication and public relations counsel to management which in the long run hinders practitioners from contributing effectively to the success of the GES. Therefore, at many districts of the GES, public relations practice is not excellent despite the fact that practitioners said they help the GES to achieve its set mission and vision.

Other findings on the challenges of public relations practice at the GES revealed in the study were lack of logistics/equipment, lack of support from management and staff, limited financial resources to embark on public relations activities and little or no appreciation of the work of practitioners. Another interesting finding in relation to the challenges was political infiltration because the head of public relations unit at the GES mentioned that indeed her work is sometimes hindered by politics but she did not cite instances to buttress her point. These finding on the

challenges or hindrances of the present study agrees with the earlier works by Nurhanifah (2018) and Agyapong (2011). Nurhanifah (2018) investigated the challenges of effective public relations practice at the State Islamic University of North Sumatera in Indonesia. It was brought to light that lack of funds and inadequate resources were key challenges faced by the public relations department. Agyapong (2011) also investigated public relations practices in private universities in Ghana and found that inadequate financial resources, low practitioner appreciation, and lack of logistics were some of the major challenges facing public relations in private universities. Similarly, the present study found that challenges facing public relations at the GES are inadequate or lack of financial resources and equipment and lack of appreciation from management and staff of the. These challenges hinder the work of practitioners as they try to help the GES achieve its set mission and vision. The negative image created in the minds of teachers about public relations practice at the GES may be attributed to the challenges facing practitioners at the district level. When practitioners are not equipped financially or they are not given the needed logistics to undertake their responsibilities, they may not be able to work well to improve public relations practice at the GES. Consequently, some stakeholders such as teachers will not view public relations practice as relevant at the GES.

#### **4.2.3 The Views of Stakeholder Publics on the Practice of Public Relations at the GES**

Thirdly, the study sought to ascertain the views of stakeholder publics on the practice of public relations at the GES. Here, participants' responses varied, depending on their relationship with the GES. The first group of stakeholders who were teachers shared the view that both the practitioners and the GES have low regard for teachers, provide faster but contradictory information and build relationships in ineffective ways. A majority of teachers felt that

practitioners are inactive and invisible when it comes to executing public relations functions. The second group of stakeholder publics who were parents and guardians, on the other hand, said that they had cordial relations with the schools and the GES and that they are engaged through PTA and other important meetings. Parents or guardians are key stakeholders of the GES because they have their children in schools and they are affected either directly or indirectly by the activities of the GES. Anything that happens in schools or at the GES will have an effect on parents/guardians and therefore, they form an integral part of the external stakeholders of the GES. This finding on the views of stakeholders can again be understood on the tenets of the excellence theory. The excellence theory explains that organizational effectiveness occurs when an organization pursues goals that are important not only for the organization itself but also for all strategic constituencies; that is, goals that serve the interests of both the organization and all strategic publics. Excellent public relations is the one that builds quality and long-term relationships with all strategic publics or constituencies (Grunig et al, 1992). Based on the responses, it is realized that the GES does not serve the interest of teachers (internal stakeholders) because teachers have negative image or perception about the practice of public relations at the GES. The desires of teachers are not considered by the GES. In this regard, public relations cannot be said to be excellent at the GES. However, the views of parents/guardians on the practice of public relations at the GES was positive. To the parents/guardians, their desires are considered by the GES. On this premise, the GES can be said to be practicing organizational effectiveness which is what the excellence theory proposes. The implication here is that the GES respects the desires of its external stakeholders (parents/guardians) more than the desires of its internal stakeholders (teachers).

#### 4.2.4 Improving the Practice of Public Relations at the GES

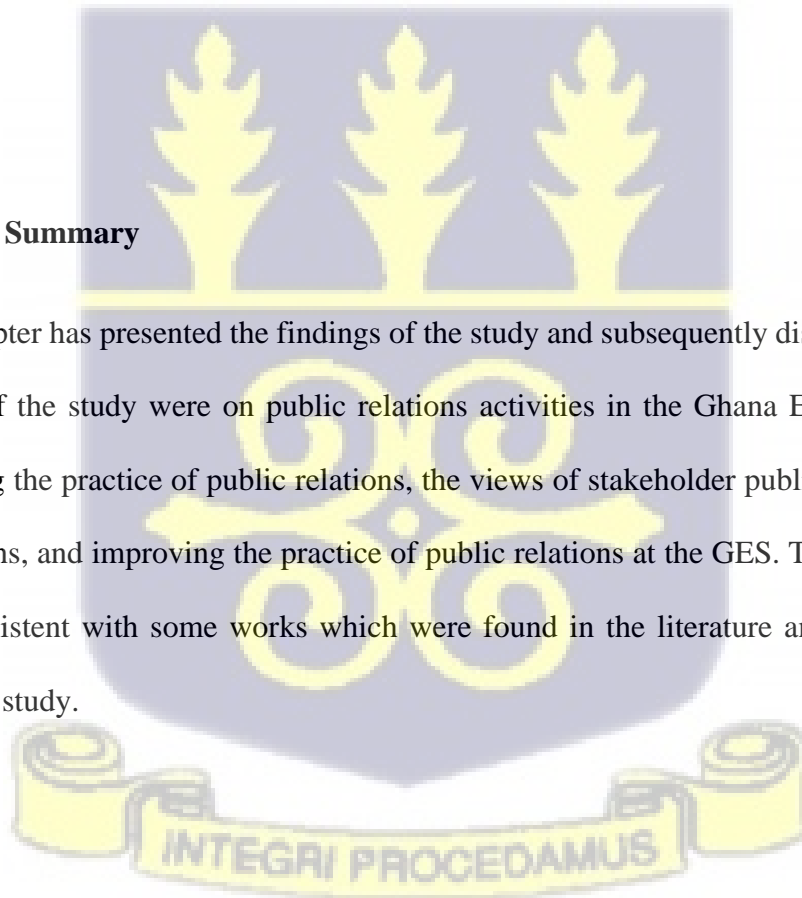
Finally, the study sought to find out ways of improving public relations practice at the GES. To improve their practice, practitioners stated that at every level of the GES, public relations must be empowered, that is all practitioners must be included in management teams so that they would be able to provide admonishment on communication and public relations to the GES at all levels and not only at the headquarters. Once again, the empowerment feature of the excellence theory can be used to understand this finding. The theory suggests that to make public relations more effective and excellent, practitioners must be part of management teams so that they would be able to advice management on the impact of public relations on all management decisions. At present, not all practitioners at the GES are part of management teams. Therefore, not all practitioners are able to advice management of the GES about public relations and communication effects of management decisions. Consequently, the GES cannot be excellent at all levels although practitioners stated they use stakeholder engagements to help the GES achieve its set mission and vision.

Furthermore, practitioners stated that to improve public relations practice at the GES, funds must be available for them to execute public relations programmes. This finding agrees with a recommendation by Gezihagne (2018) and Agyapong (2011). After investigating the challenges of public relations facing educational institutions, both works recommended that educational institutions must always make the needed resources or logistics available to public relations practitioners. Refusal to adequately provide the requisite resources for practitioners prevent them from being effective. At present, practitioners at the GES are faced with inadequate resources making them ineffective. Consequently, they struggle to help the GES achieve its set mission and vision.

Moreover, practitioners stated that the GES needs to properly ensure uniformity of responsibilities and properly organize public relations practice. Besides, the GES needs to encourage educational officers to appreciate the work of practitioners. These findings are in agreement with the work of Singh (2019) who found that in order to improve public relations practice in educational organizations, there should be proper organization of the main responsibilities that are performed by practitioners and the work of practitioners must be appreciated to serve as a source of motivation for practitioners. Although there are similarities among the work of practitioners at the GES, there are some responsibilities which are performed at some districts but cannot be found in other districts making the work of practitioners ununiformed.

### 4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the study and subsequently discussed them. The main findings of the study were on public relations activities in the Ghana Education Service, factors hindering the practice of public relations, the views of stakeholder publics on the practice of public relations, and improving the practice of public relations at the GES. The findings of the study were consistent with some works which were found in the literature and the theory that underpinned the study.



## CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.0 Introduction

This study examined the main activities of public relations practitioners that contribute to the achievement of the mission and vision of the Ghana Education Service, ascertained the challenges of practitioners in practising public relations, examined the views of stakeholder publics on the practice of public relations at the GES and also looked at how public relations could be strengthened at the GES. Because the study was qualitative, data were gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions from public relations practitioners, parents/guardians and teachers respectively. Data were analyzed thematically and presented based on the research questions that the study sought to answer.

This next section of the chapter summarizes the key findings of the study. Subsequently, implications are drawn from the findings. Then, the chapter points out limitations of the study and makes appropriate recommendations.

### 5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The first key finding of the study was that the functions of the public relations unit of the GES include speechwriting, organization of stakeholder programmes, media relations, and serving as the conscience of the management of the organization. In other words, the head of public relations unit at the GES was a member of the dominant coalition. However, at the regional level and in many districts, practitioners functioned more as communication technicians.

Secondly, the study found that lack of financial resources and equipment, limited funding, low appreciation and political infiltration were the major challenges of practitioners at the GES. These challenges hinder public relations practice and do not allow practitioners to give out their best of output.

Thirdly, the study found contradictory views of stakeholders regarding the GES. That is, the views of teachers as stakeholder publics on the activities of practitioners and the GES were disregarded for teachers, provision of faster but contradictory information and building of relationships in ineffective ways. However, the views of parent/guardians were existence of cordial relations with schools and the GES, engagement through PTA and other important meetings, and the inclusion of parents/guardians' view in the reports of the GES.

Lastly, the study found that to improve public relations practice at the GES, the GES could provide adequate financial resources and equipment to all public relations practitioners. Lastly, the GES could consider providing education on public relations to other education officers for them to appreciate the value and importance of public relations at the GES.

## **5.2 Conclusions/Implications**

The above findings have implications for public relations as a practice and discipline. In the first place, the public relations practitioners at the GES are treated as communication technicians with the exception of the head of public relations who works at the headquarters of the GES. Aside from the head of public relations unit at the headquarters, other practitioners at

the GES do not play a major role in the decision-making of the GES. Therefore, they do not function to make the GES an excellent organization per the views of Grunig and Hunt (1985).

Secondly, all practitioners face challenges in the execution of their functions in the Ghana Education Service. The lack of adequate logistics and financial support for the GES public relations hinders its ability to conduct much needed research that will help the organization know what issues and areas to pay attention to. The various challenges revealed in the study prove that the practice of public relations in the Ghana Education Service has been partially neglected because challenges exist among all practitioners and have continued for a longer time without any attempt to resolve them. As long as these challenges remain, it is hard to see the GES as an excellent organisation. Moreover, the persistent of these challenges can ultimately affect the achievement of its mission and vision.

Thirdly, the findings gathered from the two groups of stakeholder publics indicate that the teachers are not satisfied with the relationship that exist between them and the GES. However, the parent/guardian stakeholders are satisfied with the relationship and consider the relationship to be cordial. The point here, as indicated above, is contradiction in terms of how key stakeholders perceive the GES. The contradiction in terms of stakeholder perception of the GES also has implications for the GES as an organisation. The fact that teachers have a poor view of the organisation may lead to low morale, which can affect their performance. Besides, excellent prospective teachers may be dissuaded from joining the service. Such a situation will undoubtedly hamper the GES from realizing its mission of providing quality and equitable education to Ghanaian children of school-going age and its vision of creating an enabling environment in all pre tertiary educational institutions that will facilitate effective teaching and learning.

Lastly, from the study, it is implied that the GES has not done enough to improve its public relations practice. Presently, there is no uniformity of responsibilities for practitioners because the responsibilities being performed by one practitioner in a particular district differ from the responsibilities being performed by a practitioner in a different district. Moreover, not all practitioners are part of management teams in their offices. The exclusion of practitioners from management teams prevent them from giving public relations and communication counsel to management which does not augur well for the GES. Therefore, to improve public relations practice, the GES needs to ensure uniformity of responsibilities for all practitioners and make sure that all practitioners become part of management members in the various offices of the GES.

### **5.3 Limitations**

This study was limited to the Greater Accra Region. The practice of public relations at the GES in other regions was not included in the study. To this end, the views of practitioners in the Greater Accra region which have been used in this study do not represent a collective or a general view of the over 260 public relations practitioners at the GES in the whole country.

The choice of the qualitative method was also another limitation. First, views were subjective. Second, the sample size was small. Therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalized.

Finally, only public schools were looked at. Private pre-tertiary schools were not included in the study. The choice of the group of schools was also a limitation. The views of teachers and parents of private schools could perhaps change the findings of the study because private schools

are not directly managed by the GES. It would be interesting to know the views of teachers and parents of children in schools not directly run by the GES.

#### 5.4 Recommendations

On the basis of the above limitations, it is firstly recommended that future studies on public relations at the GES focus on other political administrative regions in the country. Soliciting the views of public relations officers in the remaining 15 regions in the country would help the GES and its stakeholders to have a holistic and a broader view of the role of public relations at the GES.

Moreover, a mixed methods approach could be employed to expand the scope of the study. The quantitative part of this mixed methods study would help in seeking the responses of a larger sample which would be more appropriate in generalizing the findings of the role of public relations at the GES or the.

Furthermore, it is recommended that, in the quest of future scholars and researchers to delve into the role that public relations plays at the GES, the views of teachers of private pre-tertiary schools be sought. Future studies could also seek the views of parents who have their children in pre-tertiary private schools. The combination of the views of stakeholder publics of both private and public schools would give a deeper and a broader perspective on the role that public relations plays at the GES.

Lastly, the GES could make adequate efforts to include all district public relations practitioners in district education management teams so that these practitioners can give communication and public relations counsel to the GES at the lower/district level. Sequel to this, the GES could also include public relations activities in its yearly budget so all public relations

activities at the GES would be financed or resourced adequately. The GES could also streamline all public relations functions or activities so that uniformity of functions can be ensured at all levels. Public relations activities or functions being performed in one district will be the same as the activities or functions being performed in another district. The non-uniformity of public relations activities especially at the various districts does not augur well for the country's largest government agency.



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**APPENDIX A****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HEAD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS UNIT AT THE GES**

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
2020/2021 ACADEMIC YEAR**

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The general aim of the study is to determine the role of public relations at the Ghana Education Service. This interview is solely for academic purposes and all ethics will be observed as such. There are no right or wrong answers so feel free to give your candid and forthright views.

Age:.....

Number of years as a practitioner in the GES:.....

1. What responsibilities do you perform as the head of public relations unit of GES? Describe these activities.
2. How do these responsibilities help GES to serve all stakeholders?
3. How do these responsibilities connect with the mission and vision of GES?
4. How does GES factor the views of all stakeholders into its activities or its educational policies?
5. In what ways do public relations help GES to accomplish the set mission and vision?
6. In what ways are your views as the head of public relations factored into management decisions?
7. What challenges do you face in the dispensation of your responsibilities as the head of public relations in GES?
8. How do you manage or cope with these challenges? How can these challenges be addressed?
9. What do you think can be done to improve the practice of public relations in GES?
10. Who are those responsible for implementing these measures which can help to improve the practice of public relations in GES?

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

**APPENDIX B****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE GREATER ACCRA REGIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER**

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
2020/2021 ACADEMIC YEAR**

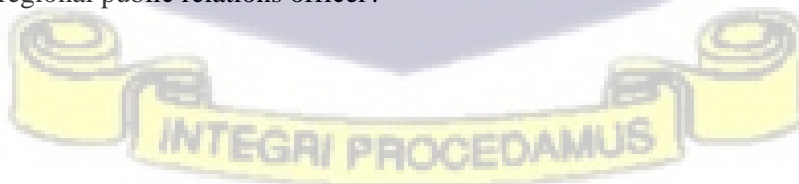
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The general aim of the study is to determine the role of public relations in the Ghana Education Service. This interview is solely for academic purposes and all ethics will be observed as such. There are no right or wrong answers so feel free to give your candid and forthright views.

Age:.....

Number of years as a practitioner in the GES:.....

1. What responsibilities do you perform as a regional public relations officer? Describe every activity that you do in the GES.
2. How do these responsibilities help you to serve the interests of all stakeholders in the region?
3. In what ways do your work connect with the mission and vision of GES?
4. How does your work help to achieve the mission and vision of GES?
5. Are your views as a regional public relations officer taken into consideration by the management of the regional education directorate? In what ways? Please explain.
6. Which challenges impede your work as a regional public relations officer?
7. How do you tackle these challenges?
8. What do you think can be done to improve your work as a regional public relations officer?
9. Which people do you think can help in the implementation of these suggestions to improve your work as a regional public relations officer?



**APPENDIX C****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR METROPOLITAN/MUNICIPAL/DISTRICT PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICERS**

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
2020/2021 ACADEMIC YEAR**

The general aim of the study is to determine the role of public relations in the Ghana Education Service. This interview is solely for academic purposes and all ethics will be observed as such. There are no right or wrong answers so feel free to give your candid and forthright views. Thank you.

Age:.....

Number of years as a practitioner in the GES:.....

1. What responsibilities do you perform as a metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officer? Describe every activity that you do in GES.
2. How do these responsibilities help you to serve the interests of all stakeholders in the region?
3. How do you factor the views of your stakeholders into your work?
4. In what ways do your work connect with the mission and vision of GES?
5. How does your work help to achieve the mission and vision of GES?
6. Are your views as a metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officer taken into consideration by the management of the metropolitan/municipal/district education directorate? In what ways? Please explain.
7. Which challenges impede your work as a metropolitan/municipal/district public relations officer?
8. How do you tackle these challenges?
9. What do you think can be done to improve your work as a regional public relations officer?
10. Which people do you think can help in the implementation of these suggestions to improve your work as a regional public relations officer?

**APPENDIX D****DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
2020/2021 ACADEMIC YEAR**

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The general aim of the study is to determine the role of public relations at the Ghana Education Service. This discussion is solely for academic purposes and all ethics will be observed as such. There are no right or wrong answers so feel free to give your candid and forthright views. Thank you

1. How do you see the relationship between you as a teacher and the GES
2. How do you see the relationship between public relations officers in the GES and you as a teachers?
3. In what ways do the GES build relationship with you?
4. In what ways do public relations officers in the GES build relationship with you?
5. In what ways do the practice of public relations at the GES affect your work as a teacher?
6. How are your sentiments and views taken into account by GES?
7. How do you see the releases that emanate from the public relations unit of the headquarters of GES that concern teachers? Releases on promotion, transfer/resposting, recruitment etc.



## APPENDIX E

### DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES 2020/2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

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#### DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

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1. How do you see the relationship between parents and the Ghana Education Service?
2. How does the school build relationship with you as a parent?
3. In what ways are you affected by happenings in this school as a parent?
4. How does the school connect with you on issues pertaining to the computerized school selection and placement system (CSSPS) of your children?
5. How are your views taken into consideration when you go for PTA meetings?

