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**FACULTY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, MARKETING AND ADVERTISING**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PERCEIVED IMAGE OF THE CONTROLLER AND  
ACCOUNTANT-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT (CAGD)**

**SUBMITTED BY**

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**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF  
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AWARD OF A MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**SUPERVISOR: DR. RICHARD BOATENG**

**SEPTEMBER, 2020.**

**STUDENT’S DECLARATION**

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

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**SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

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

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....., **SEPTEMBER, 2020**

**DR. RICHARD BOATENG**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to the Almighty God for His direction and His help throughout my life in this Institution and also for inspiring confidence in me to go through with a positive zeal. I also dedicate this study to my family and many friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving children, Denzel and Dyliss Oponson for their support and patience during the long hours away from them to complete this program. Both of you have been my best cheerleaders. I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my mum, Mary Doe Sackey, my wonderful brothers, Jude and Ishmeal who have never left my side and are very special.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Organizations that are socially conscious tend to have the goodwill of the public as much as the corporate image is like a swinging pendulum. This paper aimed to shed light on the perceived image of the Controller and Accountant-General (CAGD). Review of literature on the perceived image showed that public perception was a significant factor in building the reputation of an organization. This study did not collect data as a result of minimizing contact due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study recommends that even though not mandatory, organizations should bear in mind that the perceived image their publics have about them is likely to affect their long term reputation.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CSO - Civil Society Organizations

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY

In the ever-increasing competitive conditions of modern society, enterprises no longer compete only within the dimensions of products, functions, specifications, and quality but also within the areas of corporate image, brand, and reputation. As we analyze the concept of the image, it is detected that a myriad of disciplines such as marketing, public relations, environment, and management are collectively intertwined as well (Finn, D. 1961: Bozkurt, 2018). This study will therefore attempt to assess the perceived image of the Controller and Accountant-General's Department (CAGD).

Adeniji, Osibanjo, Abiodun, and Oni-Ojo (2015) posit the view that organisations are understandably concerned with managing their Corporate Image. This shows that there is a strong positive correlation between how people perceive an organization and pro-corporate supportive behavior. Çetin and Tekiner (2015) argue that Corporate image is the picture emerging in the mind of the target mass that any given enterprise aims to reach. In a different saying; a corporate image is the accumulation of all judgments that exist in the minds of target mass as regards the adjectives associated with a given enterprise. In addition, it refers to a compilation of all analyses related to the way enterprises are recognized and perceived by the audience. All these analyses make-up of the entire corporate image (Çetin and Tekiner, 2015).

The corporate image relates not only to beliefs, thoughts, and impressions regarding the enterprise but also related to the name of an organization, impressions on its architectural structure, product, and services, traditions, ideology, and quality aside from the communication that each employee establishes with their corporate customers. It consists of two components as functional and emotional (Fombrun, Gardberg and Sever, 2000: Bozkurt,

2018). Functional component integrates physical qualities and can be measured easily whereas emotional component is related with psychological dimensions surfacing with emotions and attitudes and such emotions derive by processing personal experiences in tandem with knowledge. Thus, corporate image can be defined as the outcome emerging once customers make a comparison on various qualities of enterprises (Ateş, 2016).

Corporate image answers the question of; *what do people think of the company?* (Dowling, 2004; Bozkurt, 2018). It is viable that an image may occur as an effect of conscious efforts of an enterprise or unconsciously as a result of certain behaviors adopted by the company (Whetten and Mackey, 2002; Bozkurt, 2018). Image is the derivation of the word 'icon' that means the mental recreation of visualized face of any given entity. Akdu (2017) is of the view that it refers to impressions on a person, enterprise, product or situation created in one's mind to help the person remember and recognize the entity. Image has the character of guiding purchase behaviors of individuals and on a broader scale, it can be defined by employing adjectives such as positive, negative and average. In everyday life image refers to positive or negative perceptions created consciously or unconsciously about people, enterprises, cities or countries (Akdu, 2017).

Image according to Küçüksüleymanoğlu (2015) is recognized as perceptions of stakeholders based on the short-term impressions on an enterprise whereas corporate image refers to the specifications of manufactured products or services. It entails achievements and impacts that a company has attained since its establishment, behaviors in the relationships between employers and workers, a sense of responsibility toward the environment, personal experiences with the enterprise, informing people in line with their comprehension levels about the enterprise, in-company communication, and the impact created on the target mass by the company (Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2015).

Corporate image is the internal picture reflected on those outside the sphere of enterprise in question. A positive corporate image would forge sense of trust thereby ensuring satisfaction and loyalty. On the other hand, a negative corporate image would lower potential customer portfolio and reliability of the firm. All in all a positive image is vitally crucial for corporations. From that perspective, enterprises having a corporate image, via fueling positive customer perceptions, can achieve and sustain their corporate reputation after long-lasting efforts spanning over a considerably-long-time interval (Kahveci, 2015; Bozkurt, 2018).

Corporate images are perceived as the mental pictures of an organization. It is the sum total of these perceived characteristics of the corporation that we refer to as the corporate image. Every organisation has its image whether the organization does anything about it or not. Corporate image is formed based on the stakeholders' perceptions of specific company actions as well as associated industry and nation issues. An organisation's image to a large extent influences stakeholders' reactions to specific corporate actions and products (Adeniji, Osibanjo, Abiodun and Oni-Ojo, 2015).

### **1.1.1 Profile of the Controller and Accountant General Department**

The Controller and Accountant-General's Department (CAGD), was established in 1885, during the pre-independence era of the Gold Coast. The Department was originally referred to as the 'Treasury' upon its establishment until 1937 when it was rechristened Accountant-General's Department. This name was maintained until 1967 when it obtained its current name, the 'Controller and Accountant-General's Department,' clearly defining its roles to include the responsibility of exercising efficient and effective financial controls in the budget execution process (Controller and Accountant-General's Department (CAGD) Company Profile, 2020).

Established under the Civil Service Act 1960 (CA.5), the CAGD represents the Accounting Class of the Civil Service. It is, therefore, a Civil Service Department under the Ministry of Finance. The 1992 Constitution and the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921), provide the legal framework that governs the operations of the CAGD. As the Chief Accounting Officer of Government and Advisor to the Minister and Government in matters relating to accounting, the Controller and Accountant-General (CAG) is responsible to the Minister for the custody, safety and integrity of public funds (CAGD Company Profile, 2020).

The Controller and Accountant General is, therefore, enjoined by law to; compile and manage the accounts prepared in relation to the Consolidated Fund and other Funds; issue general instructions to a Principal Spending Officer in accordance with the Act and the Regulations and to keep, render and publish statements on public accounts under the Act (CAGD Company Profile, 2020).

Again, the Department is mandated to develop efficient accounting systems for a covered entity and approve accounting instructions for a covered entity and receive, disburse and provide secure custody for public funds. Also, on the instructions of the Minister, open an account with the Bank of Ghana and its agents for the deposit of public funds subject to compliance with the Treasury Single Account system and authorise the opening of an account for a covered entity (CAGD Company Profile, 2020).

In consultation with the Auditor- General, the Department is to specify for a covered entity the accounting standards, policies and the classification system to be applied in public accounting to ensure that a proper system of accounting operates; provide accounting officers to covered entities and be responsible for the classification and management of value books (CAGD Company Profile, 2020).

The functions of the CAGD according to the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921) to; receive all Public and Trust monies payable into the Consolidated Fund (done through its staff stationed in all government departments including the revenue collecting ones); provide secure custody of Public and Trust monies with the support of the Ministry of Finance and Bank of Ghana and to make disbursements on behalf of the Government. This includes the payment of monthly salaries to government employees in active service; pension gratuity and monthly pension payment to those on retirement; and releases of funds to prosecute government projects and development throughout the country (CAGD Company Profile, 2020).

Further, the Department is to establish, on behalf of the government, such accounts with the Bank of Ghana and its agents for the deposit of Public and Trust monies; be solely responsible for the opening of bank accounts for any government department; keep, prepare, render and publish Financial Statements on the Consolidated Fund of Ghana both monthly and annually, not later than three months after the end of the financial year. The Auditor-General is furnished with the necessary financial statements for his scrutiny and onward transmission to parliament and eventual gazetting and approve accounting instructions for Government Departments and to promote the development of efficient accounting systems in all Government Departments (CAGD Company Profile, 2020).

The mission of the Department is to provide Public Financial Management Services to the Government and the general public through efficient, skilled, well-motivated and dedicated staff, using the most appropriate technology. While it's vision is that of the public service with positive culture, client-focused and result oriented, constantly seeking ways to improve the delivery of Financial Management Services to the Government and the general public (CAGD Company Profile, 2020).

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Adeniji et al (2015) in investigating the impact of corporate image on customer loyalty and profitability within the Nigerian service industry (banking) found out that parameters like physical environment, service offering, and customer loyalty had a significant impact on the level of profitability. Thus, concluding that the level of satisfaction among customers tends to affect the service offerings and customer loyalty which has a direct link with corporate profitability. Organizations are nowadays concerned with managing their corporate image. There is a strong positive correlation between people's perceptions of a company and pro-corporate supportive behaviour (Adeniji et al, 2015).

Veen and Song (2014) in a study is to empirically assess the mediating effects of the impact of the perceived image of celebrity endorsers on tourists' intentions to visit, using celebrity-endorsed print advertisements for travel destinations found out that celebrity endorsers had a significant impact on people's attitudes and visit intentions, thus verifying the mediating effects of this variable.

With these arguments in mind, this study seeks to assess the perceived image of the CAGD. This is necessary because among the literature reviewed, the discussion of image is mainly associated with private organizations. Taking into consideration the level of importance the CAGD to the public sector of Ghana, the researcher thus seeks to assess the perceived image of the CAGD in order to fill that research gap identified.

## **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of the study will be to assess the perceived image of the CAGD. Notwithstanding, these specific objectives will be looked at. The objectives will be:

1. To determine the perceived image of the CAGD

2. To ascertain the relevance of a good corporate image
3. To explore ways CAGD can protect its corporate image

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In line with the objectives set for the study, the researcher will attempt to answer the following research questions.

1. What is the perceived image of the CAGD?
2. What is the relevance of a good corporate image?
3. What ways can CAGD protect its corporate image?

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

With the study's aim of assessing the perceived image of the CAGD, this study will help understand this phenomenon and how it plays out in the Ghanaian setting especially. Also, the study will serve as a reference material for scholarly discourse on image of key public agencies in the sub-region and Africa as a whole.

#### **1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

This study was organized into four (4) parts namely Chapters One, Two, Three, Four and Five. Chapter One was the introductory part. It focused on the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions and the significance of the study. In the second part, Chapter Two, the theoretical grounding of the study was given. This comprised of a discussion of theories and an empirical review. Chapter three discusses your proposed methodology as well as an analysis of methodologies used by previous related

studies. Chapter four discusses proposed findings you would have put together as a researcher or analyse findings from other researchers. Chapter five discusses the summary, recommendations, conclusion and limitations.

## **1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter gave a general overview of the phenomenon this study attempts to explore. This was done by giving a background and context of the study where the problem the study sought to tackle was stated. The research objectives and research questions were stated together with the significance of the study. The next chapter gives the study theoretical grounding by discussing theories and related empirical studies that are relevant to this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reviews literature related to this study. With the aim of the study to assess the perceived image of an organization, this was done with the expectation that relevant information would be obtained to help shape and enrich the study. Knowledge of what had been done on this topic was important in helping to clarify issues. This chapter is organised under discussion of theories, concepts and related empirical studies.

#### **2.1 DISCUSSION OF THEORIES**

This section discusses theories that underpin the study. For this study, the two (2) are discussed, the Stakeholder Theory and the Excellence Theory.

##### **2.1.1 Stakeholder Theory**

Mitroff (1983) first suggested the idea of the Stakeholder Theory in his book Stakeholders of the Organizational. Shortly thereafter, Freeman (1983) also released an article about Stakeholder Theory. Freeman rather attributed the Stakeholder Theory to discussions at the Stanford Research Institute. Freeman went on to publish his own book, Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach. However, there are many books and articles on the subject and most cite Edward Freeman as father of the theory (Blackburn, 2019).

The Stakeholder Theory is a theory of organizational management and business ethics that accounts for multiple constituencies impacted by business entities like employees, suppliers, local communities, creditors, and others (Lin, 2018). It addresses morals and values in

managing an organization, such as those related to corporate social responsibility, market economy, and social contract theory.

The Stakeholder Theory succeeds in becoming famous not only in the business ethics fields. It is used as one of the frameworks in corporate social responsibility methods. For example, ISO 26000 and Global Reporting Initiative involve stakeholder analysis (Ann, 2010). The stakeholder view of strategy according to Philips (2003) integrates a resource-based view and a market-based view, and adds a socio-political level. One common version of stakeholder theory seeks to define the specific stakeholders of a company (the normative theory of stakeholder identification) and then examine the conditions under which managers treat these parties as stakeholders.

Argandoña (1998) is of the view that the Stakeholder Theory of the social responsibility of business is the more appealing of the two from an ethical point of view, at least if we understand ethics in a broad sense. And yet it lacks a solid philosophical, sociological and economic foundation that would be acceptable to a variety of schools of thought.

Stakeholder theory has seen growing uptake in higher education in the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Westerheijden, 2014). One influential definition defines a stakeholder in the context of higher education as anyone with a legitimate interest in education who thereby acquires a right to intervene (Björkquist, 2011). Studies of higher education first began to recognize students as stakeholders in 1975. External stakeholders may include employers. In Europe, the rise of stakeholder regimes has arisen from the shift of higher education from a government-run bureaucracy to modern system in which the government's role involves more monitoring than direct control (Mansell, 2013).

Blattberg (2004) has criticized Stakeholder Theory for assuming that the interests of the various stakeholders can be, at best, compromised or balanced against each other. He goes on to argue that this is a product of its emphasis on negotiation as the chief mode of dialogue for

dealing with conflicts between stakeholder interests. Blattberg (2004) recommends conversation instead and this leads him to defend what he calls a 'patriotic' conception of the corporation as an alternative to that associated with stakeholder theory. By applying the political concept of a 'social contract' to the corporation, stakeholder theory undermines the principles on which a market economy is based (Mansell (2013)).

This theory is of relevance to this theory because among other things, it posits that a company is only successful when it delivers value to its stakeholders, and those values can come in many forms beyond financial benefits. The theory also addresses business ethics, morals and values when managing stakeholders involved with a project or organization. It seeks to optimize relations with stakeholders, thereby improving efficiencies throughout the project or organization. There are ethical benefits of practicing it as well. The usage of the opinions and influence of stakeholders helps shape an organization and put it in a much better positioned for success. When an organization practices the Stakeholder Theory, it creates healthy competition among other companies, where all can thrive and help benefit their stakeholders. Also, this theory becomes relevant to this study because it is very much in line with the essence for giving back to the society which is the core of corporate social responsibility. In all these endeavors, it is evident that Community Relations thrives in the view of the Stakeholder Theory this is because at every point, stakeholders are interacted with.

### **2.1.2 Excellence Theory**

The Excellence Theory is a general theory of PR which resulted from a 15-year study of best practices in communication management funded by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation. Three books were published from the research (J. E. Grunig 1992; Dozier et al. 1995; L. A. Grunig et al. 2002). The theory was tested through survey research of heads of PR, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and employees in

327 organizations (corporations, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and associations) in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom (Survey; Interview). The survey research was followed by qualitative interviews with heads of PR, other PR practitioners and CEOs in 25 organizations with the highest and lowest scores on a scale of excellence produced by statistical analysis of the survey data.

The Excellence Theory first explained the value of PR to organizations and society based on the social responsibility of managerial decisions and the quality of relationships with stakeholder publics. To behave in socially acceptable ways, organizations must scan their environment to identify publics who are affected by potential organizational decisions or who want organizations to make decisions to solve problems that are important to them. Then, organizations must communicate symmetrically with publics (taking the interests of both the organization and publics into account) to cultivate high-quality, long-term relationships with them.

The interviews with CEOs and senior PR officers revealed that good relationships were of value to organizations because they reduced the costs of litigation, regulation, legislation, and negative publicity caused by poor relationships; reduced the risk of making decisions that affect different stakeholders; or increased revenue by providing products and services needed by stakeholders.

Based on this theoretical premise about the value of PR, the Excellence Theory derived principles of how the function should be organized to maximize this value. First, the research showed that involvement in strategic management was the critical characteristic of excellent PR. PR executives played a strategic managerial role as well as administrative manager role. PR also was empowered by having access to key organizational decision-makers in other words, the dominant coalition.

Second, the study showed that PR loses its unique role in strategic management if it is sublimated to marketing or other management functions. Sublimation to another function resulted in attention only to the stakeholder category of interest to that function, such as consumers for marketing. Sublimation to marketing also usually resulted in asymmetrical communication. An excellent PR function was integrated and programs for different stakeholders were gathered into a single department or coordinated through a senior vice president of corporate communication. An excellent PR function did work with other management functions to help them build relationships with relevant stakeholders.

Third, the Excellence study showed that a symmetrical system of internal communication increased employees' satisfaction with their jobs and with the organization. However, internal communication generally was not practiced unless organizations had a participative rather than authoritarian culture and a decentralized, less stratified (organic) structure rather than a centralized, stratified (mechanical) structure.

Fourth, the Excellence study examined the effect of the growing number of women in PR and evidence that women had difficulty entering managerial roles. The research showed that organizations with excellent PR valued women as much as men for the strategic role and developed programs to empower women throughout the organization. The emphasis on gender also led to inclusion of diversity of race and ethnicity as a fifth part of the Excellence Theory. This focus, along with the international nature of the project, expanded the theory to make it appropriate for use outside the United States – in diverse cultural, political, and economic contexts. Replication of the study in Slovenia (L. A. Grunig et al. 1998) showed that the Excellence Theory is generic to many contexts, as long as the theory is applied differently when contextual variables are different. The research in Slovenia also resulted in the addition of ethics to the Excellence Theory – a sixth component (PR Ethics). Since the completion of the excellence study, scholars in this research tradition have continued to

improve and enlarge the theory by conducting research to help PR professionals participate in strategic decision processes. This research has been on environmental scanning and publics, scenario building, empowerment of PR, ethics, relationships, the return-on-investment of PR, evaluation, relationship cultivation strategies, conflict resolution, complexity theory, specialized areas of PR, and global strategy (Grunig, 2006: Toth, 2007: Boamah, Kpodo, Hughes, Addo and Nagai, 2019).

This theory is relevant to this theory because it touches on the very important tenets that make up the basis on organizational success. Even though the theory is purely from the PR outlook, it extends to other disciplines such as Human Resource, Marketing and Quality Control.

Looking at the twelve (12) characteristics of excellent organizations as suggested by the excellence study, the first six look at human resources, organic structure, intrapreneurship, symmetrical communication system, leadership and culture are all related to one another, with symmetrical communication being integral factor for attaining organizational excellence.

The last six characteristics or attributes-strategic planning, social responsibility, acceptance of women and minorities in organizations emphasis on quality and effective operating systems all suggest attributes of excellence for organizations.

From the communication point of view, this theory underpins this study because it proposes certain criterion which organizations who want to be excellent should strive to achieve. In line with this study's aim, it will help to get a broader picture of the essence of Community Relations to an organization. As Grunig (2002) posits excellent PR is the glue that holds excellent organizations together.

## **2.2 DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTS**

### **2.2.1 Public Relations**

Public Relations (PR) is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics', Institute of Public Relations (2004). Harlow (1976: 36) observes that:

Public Relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organisation and its publics. It involves the management of problems or issues and help management to keep informed on, and be responsive to public opinions.

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006: 5) observe that PR is a management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics on whom its success or failure depends. Grunig and Hunt (1984: 42) describe publics as the stakeholders who face a problem or have an issue with an organization. Kim and Cha (2013) admit that PR is an effective strategy to acquire higher corporate reputation that would ultimately contribute to the organizations' Return on Investment (ROI).

According to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA, 1982), cited in Bowen (2010:

11) the functions of PR are as follows:

To help our complex, pluralistic society to reach decisions and function more effectively by contributing to mutual understanding among groups and institutions. It serves to bring private and public policies into harmony.

PR serves a wide variety of institutions in society such as businesses, trade unions, government agencies, voluntary associations, foundations, hospitals, schools, colleges, and religious institutions. To achieve their goals, these institutions must develop effective relationships with many different audiences or publics such as employees, members, customers, local communities, shareholders, and other institutions, and with society at large.

The management of institutions need to understand the attitudes and values of their publics in order to achieve institutional goals. The goals themselves are shaped by the external environment. The public relations practitioner acts as a counsellor to

management and as a mediator, helping to translate private aims into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action.

In Ghana, the PR profession can trace its historical roots to the Colonial Era as the practice is believed to have been introduced by the British colonial administration (Boamah et al, 2019). Consequently, the kind of PR which was practiced during the colonial era was basically focused on public information; a practice where the colonial administration used one-way communication as a vehicle to disseminate information to the public and to garner support for their various policies and initiatives. The post-independence stage, saw Dr. Kwame Nkrumah establish the Ghana Institute of Journalism in 1959, to train public professionals to replace the colonial practitioners. In 1972, the Public Relations Association of Ghana (PRAG) was formed by Hermann Alah with a small group of practicing journalists as PR officers. Until then, some PR professionals in Ghana were members of foreign PR associations. (Atawura, 2010) On December 6th 1991, PRAG was re-organized and a new Constitution, Code of Ethics, Code of Professional Standards and Bye-Laws were adopted which transformed it into the Institute of Public Relations (IPR), Ghana. Now, having made the progression from one-way communication models in pursuit of a more balanced two-way communication, the practice of PR relies heavily on new media and digital technologies.

### **2.2.2 Corporate Image**

Virvilaite and Daubaraitė (2011) are of the view that when constituting corporate image, the most important goal is to form positive attitude towards the organization among present and potential consumers. Corporate image is comprised of creating a positive corporate personality, marketing communications and channels as well as constant feedback from the target audience.

### ***2.2.2.1 Essence of Corporate Image to an Organization***

Lizarraga (2010) state that positive corporate image provides organization with individual features that lead to brand recognition, improve consumer and employee loyalty as well as corporate reputation Worcester (2009) notes that corporate image consists of product image, brand image and brand consumer image. Yeo and Youssef (2010) as cited in Virvilaite and Daubaraite (2011) state that corporate image is a source of competitive advantage: due to the fact that corporate image can only be formed over a long time, it becomes difficult to imitate. Besides corporate image creates consumer trust and deters competitors from entering the market.

## **2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

This section reviews works relevant to this study. These works were selected as a result of proximity to Ghana. The review will comprise of Pihlstedt's (2012) work on *Reputation management study of leading Finnish companies* as well as that of Ocran, Abudey, Ndom, Laarimong and Arhin, (2018) on *The role of Public Relations and image building in public institutions*.

In Pihlstedt's (2012) study, the researcher studied how companies could acquire good reputation looking at leading Finnish Companies. The theories studied according to the researcher suggested that good reputation was something that could be reached only by working hard and long, but at the same time reputation could be destroyed in a matter of minutes. The study also asserted that reputation was a multi-dimensional phenomenon, which meant that in order to reach and maintain a good reputation all these dimensions must be accounted for. Culture, no matter if it concerns corporate or national culture, was a matter that was often not considered when it came to reputation, but the fact that culture affects all

business operations everywhere, reputation as well, should certainly not be underestimated (Pihlstedt, 2012).

The basic point to be made according to Pihlstedt (2012) was that corporate reputation should not be underestimated and that it should be considered in company's strategy and in all operations, inside the company as well as outside. The study again suggested that it was important for companies to know exactly who their customers were and what they most value in the company, in order to choose the correct tools to manage their reputation because it takes time and resources but eventually the benefits that follow are undeniable.

It is interesting to note that the research respondents as well as the theories which underpinned the study were inclined towards the notion that brutally competitive markets reputation could provide a company a real edge, and if managed correctly over the years the good reputation may ensure continuous economic success now and in the future (Pihlstedt, 2012).

Ocran et al. (2018) also conducted a study which focused on the role of PR in building the reputation of public institutions by using the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) as a case study. The scope of the study was between 2015 and 2016 and employed the mixed research method approach. The study employed interviews and questionnaires as the research instruments. The sample of the study was selected customers of the bank as well as employees of the bank.

From the study, it was found that the reputation of an organization could be affected if PR activities were not properly executed by the said organization. Therefore, it was concluded that for an organization to build a good image, it must have a strategic PR plan which will ultimately influence the success of the organization. The study recommended the education

of customers of ADB on PR activities and functions to project the image of ADB as a viable financial institution in the country (Ocran et al, 2018).

## **2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter reviewed literature related to this study. The aim of the study is to assess the perceived image of an organization. This was done with the expectation that relevant information would be obtained to help shape and enrich the study. Knowledge of what had been done on this topic was important in helping to clarify issues. This chapter was organised under discussion of theories and related studies. The next chapter discusses the research methodology this study adopted.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the research methodology this paper adopted. This will include discussing the various research designs which will then narrow in on the approach this study adopted.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Kothari (2008) is of the opinion that research design is a way to systematically solve the research issue. This covers the different steps taken in the analysis of the problem. In line with this, Creswell (2011) suggests that three (3) methods of analysis exist, namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodology approaches. An overview of how the study is performed is presented by the research design; an overview of the methods used and the procedures followed, as well as reasons or justifications for the use of such methods and or procedures.

##### **3.1.1 Quantitative Research Design**

This research will employ the quantitative approach which Creswell (2011) notes that quantitative research is the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and writing the results of a study. Matthews and Ross (2010) also back this argument by suggesting that quantitative research methods are basically applied to the collection of data that is structured and which could be represented numerically. Generally, quantitative data is collected when

researcher has adopted the positivist epistemological approach and data is collected that can be scientifically analysed.

### **3.1.2 Content Analysis**

The method of content analysis will be employed in this report. Columbia University Libraries (2019) describes content analysis as a research method used within any data provided to assess the existence of certain terms, patterns, or values. This approach allows researchers to measure and evaluate the significance, definitions, and connections of certain terms, themes, or principles. This then lets scientists draw inferences inside the texts about the messages, the author(s), the audience, and even the community and time of the text around it. The research will primarily explore the use of secondary data in the extension.

### **3.1.3 Secondary Data**

As cited by Martins and Serra (2018), Boslaugh (2007) describes secondary data as any dataset that is not collected by the author. Secondary data may include previously collected data that is being considered to be reused for new issues for which the data collected was not originally intended (Vartanian, 2010). Martins and Serra (2018) propose that the use of secondary data in research has proven to be a valuable approach to identifying relevant data and allowing it to be used in research more regularly. Through this, study can be conducted at a faster pace without loss of quality (Martins and Serra, 2018). This research will focus principally on secondary data as a result of the methodology adopted. Such secondary data will be used to cover books , journal articles, online / internet content, and other publications on PR and its practice in general.

### **3.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

It was very important to ensure the reliability of this document, since it was, among other things, a fundamental basis for replication. The study thus worked closely with the supervisor over the entire duration of the paper for guidance. The investigator also made sure that the paper was reviewed by colleagues in order to obtain multiple viewpoints.

### **3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

The researcher followed a stringent policy of referencing all academic work or resources used for this paper to ensure ethical research ethics. This was done in an effort to refrain from committing intellectual theft and scholarly plagiarism.

### **3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The research methodology this paper adopted was discussed in this chapter. A quantitative methodology was introduced in the paper, where content analysis was used. In order to analyse the phenomenon at hand and for research purposes, this approach was limited to using only secondary data. The next chapter addresses the study's conclusions and describes the report as well as, among other items, suggesting suggestions and pointing out limitations.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings of the study. This discussion will be done by addressing the objectives set for the study.

#### **4.1 THE PERCEIVED IMAGE OF THE CAGD**

Lizarraga (2010) state that positive corporate image provides organization with individual features that lead to brand recognition, improve consumer and employee loyalty as well as corporate reputation. Worcester (2009) notes that corporate image consists of a product image, brand image, and brand-consumer image. Yeo and Youssef (2010) again state that corporate image is a source of competitive advantage due to the fact that corporate image can only be formed over a long time, it becomes difficult to imitate. Besides corporate image creates consumer trust and deters competitors from entering the market.

Yeo and Youssef (2010) stress that corporate image is influenced by information provided by the company itself and other groups. Individuality forms corporate image meaning corporate social responsibility has an influence on corporate image. Corporate image is influenced by planned and accidental activities of the company. Johnson and Zinkhan (2015) again states that one issue in measuring company image is whether the method or instrument captures an overall impression of the company.

The overall perception of a company is derived from its operating performance, the quality of its products, services, facilities, and people, its earnings ratio, its material, financial, and human resources, its wage and salaries levels, its employee benefits, and its social

performance (Little 1968: Johnson and Zinkhan, 2015). IGI Global (2020) asserts that perceived image is an individual's subjective perceptions of image. For this study, however, the researcher cannot posit the perceived image of CAGD. The reason for this is the inability of the study to collect primary data. Due to the unavailability of secondary data to buttress any assertion, this objective cannot be answered emphatically especially as Tench and Yeomans (2017) notes that corporate image is ultimately decided by the public unlike corporate personality and corporate identity which are directly controllable by the organization.

#### **4.2 THE RELEVANCE OF A GOOD CORPORATE IMAGE**

As cited in Maruf (2013), Flavian, Guinaliu, and Torres and (2005) note that the positive corporate image empowers the company to attract new customers and increase the confidence of stakeholders in the organization. Johnson and Zinkhan (2015) also argue that the corporate image plays an important role in shaping the way in which the public reacts to an organization's promotional material. This statement is reinforced by Lindgreen and Swaen (2010) by noting that a socially conscious company's corporate image provides and enhances competitive advantages, improves brand efficiency, enforces corporate image, increases customer loyalty, creates an emotional connection between the company and customers.

In a crisis, however, attempts to protect the image and credibility of an entity are important. It is necessary to note, from a PR viewpoint, that a crisis produces a knowledge vacuum. It is assumed at that point in time that something bad has happened and is potentially affecting an entity and its stakeholders. Therefore, people want to hear more about the crisis immediately. The need to fix the gap of information created by a crisis puts a premium on efficient communication (Barton, 2001). During a crisis, PR professionals should not necessarily throw details at stakeholders. Crisis communication must be strategic to be effective.

According to Tench and Yeoman (2017), this is a key to managing the corporate image during the crisis, especially in the case of transport operations in the private sector.

Sarstedt, Wilczynski, and Melewar (2012) also claim that corporate image and credibility are seen as an asset that gives the company an ability to distinguish itself in order to increase its market share, revenues, gain new customers, maintain existing customers, and neutralize the behavior of rivals and, above all, their market success and survival. Kim and Lee (2010) also argue that another significant element in the overall assessment of service quality is corporate image.

### **4.3 THE WAYS CAGD CAN PROTECT ITS CORPORATE IMAGE**

It has been suggested that PR is a very critical method for handling the corporate picture. Rank (2016) states that companies see that they will benefit from meeting the public's needs and aspirations. This is why, in the business world, PR is in high demand. Community Relations, Employee Relations, Government Relations, Public Policy, and Media Relations are among the different PR roles that can be used to preserve the corporate image of organizations in order to carry out PR activities such as reputation management (AgilityPR, 2020). Community Relations has the purpose of consciously organizing and continuing to communicate with and within a community in order to sustain and develop an entity for the good of both the organization and the community. Partnerships, voluntary programs, philanthropic donations and civic engagement and corporate social responsibility may be involved in this (AgilityPR, 2020).

Davis (2004) in Hailu (2018) also states that if an organization disregards CSR as a necessity, this poses significant causes for concern as it has a direct impact on the organizations' corporate image. The failure of an organization to protect its reputation could lead to the degradation of the image and brand of the business or organization, which could generate

negative public opinion in turn (Botan and Hazleton, 2010). These could pose a threat to organizations to prevent them as a whole from achieving their goals and achievements. Doing this is what we call reputation management in an structured and systematic way (Christensen and Gornitzka, 2019). The status of an organization is essential for its organizational well-being as well as its capacity to function effectively in deciding the significance of reputation management (Carpenter, 2014).

### **4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the findings of the study. This was done by addressing the objectives set in the study. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendation of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the final section of the study. The chapter presents a summary of the study as well as a conclusion and a recommendation of the study.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

According to Grunig (2013), excellent PR units are structured as integrated functions and are distinct from other managerial functions. An integrated PR unit is capable of responding quickly to problems and allocating resources to resolve issues without delay (Grunig, 2013). Kim and Lee (2010) suggest that a corporate image arises from the net consumption interactions of a customer; thus, the corporate image is influenced by expectations of service quality. For these purposes, the brand image can be harmed if the corporate image is not secured, which is a derivative of the expectations of capacity and social responsibility of consumers. The study focused on the evaluation of the perceived CAGD image. In carrying out the analysis, the study then identified the following goals. The first one was to decide the CAGD's perceived picture. The second was to find out how relevant a good corporate image is and the third was to explore ways in which CAGD can safeguard its corporate image.

This study found out that as much as corporate image is like a swinging pendulum, organizations which are socially responsible tend to have the goodwill of the public. Although corporate image is outside the direct control of the organizations, Johnson and Zinkhan (2015) notes that the organizations can influence and shape its image through the

corporate identity it chooses to project. Therefore, corporate image is derived partially from corporate characteristics (Johnson and Zinkhan, 2015). For this reason, organizations can resort to embarking on CSR activities to garner goodwill from the publics which helps build their corporate image. This could be done by instituting policies that will embed CSR into the annual forecast and budgeting. This will in the long run translate to becoming a norm in the corporate sector.

## **5.2 RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS**

The researcher provided the history of the organization of the study in order to provide a proper meaning when representing the originality of the study. The research further affirms that the entire activities of companies are viewed and that a corporate image represents the overall credibility and prestige of an organization. With the hindsight of the results, I stress once again that the services of PR practitioners are not used by all or company. However, in the face of unexpected circumstances such as crisis, the benefits that these individuals or organizations are lacking include the lack of skilled and skilled services to guide their affairs.

## **5.3 RECOMMENDATION**

Drawing on the literature reviewed and findings made, the study recommends that all organizations should pay special attention to their corporate image. Even though not mandatory, organizations should bear in mind that the perceived image their publics have about them is likely to affect their long term reputation. Also, further studies should be geared towards exploring other sides of the PR practice. This can also help examine the conclusions made by this study as well as possibly coming up with multiple perspectives.

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