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**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SoGSAR)**



**THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN BUILDING BRAND EQUITY: A STUDY OF  
ERNEST CHEMIST LIMITED.**

**BY**

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM, IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material recently published by someone else or material which has been acknowledged for the honour of some other degree of the University, where due affirmation has been made in the text.

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Date

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby declare that this research work was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the University.

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Signature

Date

## **DEDICATION**

I (Samuel Owusu Darkwa) dedicates this research work to my parents: Rev. Dr. Nelson Charles Ntiri-Darkwa & Mrs. Joyce Ntiri-Darkwa, my lovely wife: Mrs. Susana Waltrude Owusu Darkwa; and my baby girl: Fedora Agyekumwaa Owusu Darkwa. God richly bless them all.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to find out the role of public relations in building brand equity and Ernest Chemist Limited (ECL), a Ghanaian pharmaceutical company was used for the study. The study employed the use of a quantitative research approach by making use of statistics and inferences from data collected. The study made use of non-probability sampling method, the researcher purposively selected the sample frame and the respondents were conveniently sampled. Structured questionnaires were used. The target population was limited to customers of Ernest Chemist Limited. The results revealed that a greater percentage of respondents perceived the PR strategies employed by Ernest Chemist Limited to be effective; the study also discovered that the variable of study: Public relation (PR), has positive and significant association with brand equity. Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited must strengthen its relationship in terms of consumer brand equity and the variable: PR, in order to be in the forefront so long as competitive marketing business is concerned. Good PR will also help Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited products to stand out in terms of uniqueness to customers. Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited must also intensify its PR strategies which enable customers form loyal associations with the company and its products because these customers or consumers will be the very same people who will market the company's information to other future customers or consumers. Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited must ensure PR is at the core of its operations; this is because, PR is a strategic tool that has the propensity to move and attract customers. A thorough investigation about socio-economic background of the consumer or customer, which is PR related, will help Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited gather enough information to be able to serve consumers and customers well.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Chapter Overview**

The study gives a general insight on the subject of brand equity building using Public Relations (PR). This includes a brief background of the study, the profile of Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited, the business issue identified, the research objectives, the research significance and a summary.

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

The current global competitive market reflects numerous significant changes in marketing strategies adopted by companies and institutions to enable them achieve market competitiveness and sustainability (Rindell & Strandvik, 2010). Business organizations in the world whether service or manufacturing, largely, have identified the essential role branding plays in business development. According to Keller and Lehmann (2006), Brand Building has developed as a top strategic process in the recent decade due to the emerging acknowledgment that brands are one of the most significant intangible resources that companies have. Brand Equity is the value of having a brand that is identifiable and well thought of as well as the level of influence a brand name has in the minds of consumers (Altamirano, 2018). Organizations establish brand equity by creating positive experiences that attract consumers as against their competitors who make similar products. This is done by generating awareness through campaigns that speak to target-customer values, delivering on promises and qualifications when consumers use the product, as

well as, loyalty and retention efforts (Altamirano, 2018). A key benefit of establishing positive brand equity is the benefits it can have on Return on Investment (ROI). Organizations that leverage the power of branding often earn more money than competitors, while spending less, whether on production, advertising, or elsewhere. Positive brand equity enables brands to charge price premiums (Altamirano, 2018). When consumers believe in the values put forth by a brand and the quality of their products, they will pay higher prices to purchase from that brand. Also, should an organization want to introduce a new product offering, marketing them under the same umbrella, branding will help the new product take off faster, as trust has been established.

A critical part of brand building is communication and the most effective and productive way of managing this effort is through Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). Due to societal changes over the past years, today's organizations are being forced to amend their brand/marketing strategies by coordinating their marketing communication activities into seamless programs that help create experiences and perceptions that permit a product to earn greater volume or margins than it could without the brand name.

As an essential marketing communication tool, Public Relations (PR) has been pointed out to play a key role in the process of brand building (Zhang, 2015): Despite the rise and continuing influence of digital media, which is a critical part of many of today's successful media campaigns, there is still a place and a need for good public relations. At its core, public relations is about influencing, engaging and building a relationship with key stakeholders across numerous platforms in order to shape and frame the public perception of an organization (Miranda, 2017). PR also encompasses: anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues that might have an impact, for good or ill, on the operations and plans of the organization (Miranda, 2017). Adopting an effective marketing strategy, with a greater focus on Public

Relations is highly recommended for companies in these modern times if they really want to build brand equity (Miranda, 2017). For new brands, Public Relations (PR) can be an important tool for building an industry presence and for established businesses, the practice can help to further your reach and reformulate the aims and targets of a new product or service. When done successfully, good PR can help a company generate earned media placements that assist in constructing brand identity and equity (Miranda, 2017). Importantly, this can and should increase industry presence and sales. PR is an effective way to build a brand, communicate with a target market and attract further investment.

In recent years, companies have seen the increasing importance of public relations as a vital part of their brand building process and a way to market their brand in a more effective way than the traditional marketing methods like advertising (Altamirano, 2018).

Over the years, researchers from diverse backgrounds have investigated the role of PR in brand building spanning several sectors but with little focus on the pharmaceutical sector. The pharmaceutical industry is one of the sectors in the economy of Ghana that is taking advantage of the influence of branding to achieve competitive advantage in the distribution of its products (Lampsey, 2017). The pharmaceutical industry has seen a consistent growth throughout the years, of which the majority of the significant industry players manufacture their own drugs and supplement their production with imports from their global partners (Lampsey, 2017). This increasing growth is accompanied by increased competitive pressures owing to the influx of new entrants as well as substitute or herbal alternatives into the sector, providing consumers with a lot of options. Also worth mentioning is the inundation of fake drugs in the market (Amegashie-Viglo & Nikoi, 2014) which is driving many pharmaceutical companies to make concerted efforts to set themselves apart from the competition to gain consumer goodwill. This raises the

concern of how pharmaceutical companies can achieve brand equity using IMC tools like Public relation to stay ahead of the competition. The researcher identified that the pharmaceutical industry in Ghana has seen continuous steady growth in the last two decades and as a result, industry players are engaged in stiff competition to reach a larger segment of the market share. Thus, to achieve competitive advantage over their competitors, some big industry players like Ernest Chemist Limited have resorted to using PR in building brand equity.

According to Ladha (2005), for years, consumer goods companies have depended comprehensively on branding to effectively market and sell products to ensure sustained profitability and market share. Lately, however, the pharmaceutical industry has perceived the importance and significance of Public relations in building brand equity and has re-organised their marketing divisions now to incorporate PR managers and brand managers. As hinted earlier, as the market for pharmaceutical products increasingly become saturated with fake drugs, most companies have resorted to using PR to build stellar brands to sustain competitive advantage. In this light, investigating the role PR plays as a vital communication tool to reach a larger segment of the market to create awareness, signal quality perceptions, engender loyalty and goodwill among customers seems warranted.

## **1.2 Profile of the Sample Organization**

As one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in Ghana, Ernest Chemists Limited (ECL) started business in 1986 as a sole proprietorship and became a limited liability in 1993. Ernest Chemists Limited is made up of three main divisions- Manufacturing, Retailing and Distribution &Exports. Due to its diversity, ECL makes quality and affordable medicine accessible to everyone. Ernest Chemists Limited (ECL) goes beyond the offering of quality and affordable

medicine to offer quality customer service. All ECL staff are trained to put the needs of the customer first with the view of exceeding the expectations of customers. Ernest Chemists Limited has a staff strength of over 700, with 48% in the manufacturing division and the remaining in the other divisions.

The vision of ECL is to be among the top ten largest indigenous pharmaceutical companies in Africa by 2025. Their mission is to provide a full range of quality pharmaceutical products at affordable prices with the view of exceeding the expectations of their valued customers and shareholders through a highly motivated and efficient workforce driven by innovative technology. The Corporate Objectives of ECL are as follows: Source products and raw materials from reputable organizations that will help the company offer top quality products at affordable prices; Engage in continuous improvement of customer service and internal processes; Make their products more available and accessible to all targets; Be among the ten largest indigenous African pharmaceutical companies by the year 2025. I chose ECL as my sample organization because of their integrity and honesty for over 30 years' experience in the pharmaceutical business. ECL's high standard of quality has been the driving force behind their hallmark in business operations till date.

### **1.3 Problem Statement and Research Gap**

According to Lamptey (2017) in modern day marketing practice, branding has proven to be an effective tool companies employ to strengthen their competitive advantage and achieve profitability. According to Harper and Gyansa-Lutterodt (2007), Ghana's pharmaceutical industry is made up of approximately 30percent locally produced drugs and 70percent imported drugs; originating from India and China, the leading sources of counterfeit drugs. Researchions

in 2005, forecasted the pharmaceutical industry which at the time was estimated to have a value of USD 250 million at retail price level in Ghana, to grow at a rate of 6-8percent per annum (Ghana Chamber of Pharmacy, 2018). Over the years, the pharmaceutical industry has experienced sustained growth where major companies are into manufacturing of their own drugs and augmenting their production with imports from international partners (Harper & Gyansa-Lutterodt, 2007). The growth has resulted in increased competition and, in some cases, unfair competition because of the invasion of counterfeit drugs on the market. In developing countries such as Ghana, the manufacture of inferior and fake drugs is on the increase. This has resulted in the invasion of pharmaceutical markets with counterfeit drugs that often creates a bad image for genuine pharmaceutical companies perceived as top brands (Cockburn, Newton, Agyarko, Akunyili, & White, 2005).

Although the pharmaceutical industry has not been convincing in utilizing the force of their brands in respect to their partners in the consumer goods markets (Moss, 2007), It is however worth noting that by building brand equity using Public Relations (PR), the pharmaceutical industry could play an important role in the sale of pharmaceutical products, assist consumers to easily identify with the brand and assist pharmaceutical companies in communicating tangible differences of their brands to differentiate them from competing brands (Anabila & Awunyo-Vitor, 2014).

The role PR play in building brand equity for companies, which would eventually affect consumers' decision-making remains a critical area that needs thorough investigation. It is for this reason this study is been undertaken to examine the role PR play in building brand equity, by using Ernest Chemist Limited as a case study.

Although a number of works have been conducted on the role of PR in brand building (e.g. Public Relations' role in building strong brands by Sandell, Clara (2012). Kulachet Mongkol. Sajid Tufail, Rashid Saeed, Hashim Zameer, Muhammad Bilal & Bilal Naeem (2014) conducted a research on Impact of Sponsorship and Publicity on Brand Equity. Kulachet Mongkol (2014), did some work on Integrated Marketing Communication to Increase Brand Equity: The Case of a Thai Beverage Company; etc.), the focus of these earlier works was on other sectors. There is limited focus on the Pharmaceutical Sector, most studies on branding have focused on other industries other than the pharmaceutical industry and not much studies have been conducted in the pharmaceutical sector. That is exactly the path this research work wants to go; branding in the pharmaceutical sector. Also, there is disproportionate focus on developed setting making developing countries or emerging markets' representation limited. A special focus would be placed on developing countries, specifically Ghana in this research work.

Accordingly, there is the need for further studies to enhance the literature on how consumers perceive the PR efforts of pharmaceutical brands and how these efforts affect customer-based brand equity within the pharmaceutical sector in Ghana.

#### **1.4 Research Question and Objectives**

The key question the study seeks to answer is *'what is the extent of PR practice in Ernest Chemist Limited and what effect does this have on consumers awareness, associations, perceptions of quality and loyalty towards the brand?'* Specific objectives to answer this key question are:

1. To assess the perceptions of customers on the PR Strategies of Ernest Chemist Limited (ECL).
2. To determine the relationship between PR efforts and brand equity of Ernest Chemist Limited

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The implications of customer-based research suggest that measures of customers' brand perceptions are accurate reflections of brand performance in the marketplace. Strong, positive customer-based brand equity has a significant influence on the financial performance of firms (Kim and Kim, 2004). Brand equity is a multidimensional concept and a complex phenomenon. Keller (2002) separated it into two components: awareness and association. Aaker (1991, 1996) grouped it into five categories: perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand association, and other proprietary brand assets such as patents, trademarks, and channel relationships. Among these five brand equity dimensions, the first four represent customers' evaluations and reactions to the brand that can be readily understood by consumers (Barwise, 1993; Yoo and Donthu, 2001), so they have been widely adopted to measure customer-based brand equity in previous studies and this study adopt it for same purpose. Also, Ernest Chemist Limited (ECL), a Ghanaian pharmaceutical company would be used as a case study. The focus of the study would be on Ghana, a developing economy in Africa; and the population for the study would be customers of pharmaceutical brands in Ghana.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study is important for various reasons. First, the study is of importance to both academic literature and practice considering the fact that most studies on branding have focused on other industries other than the pharmaceutical industry and not much studies have been conducted on examining the role of PR in building brand equity in the pharmaceutical industry of Ghana. In addition, the outcome of the study contributes significantly towards pharmaceutical companies on the role of PR in building brand equity and subsequently on how consumers react to brands. This informs pharmaceutical companies about the perception of their target consumers on the branding strategies they have been employing. This is important considering the need for pharmaceutical companies to employ PR in building their brand as a tool to maintain an upper hand in business and have a competitive advantage amidst the sustained growth of the pharmaceutical industry that has resulted in fiercer competition amongst companies and the increased influx of fake drugs. Further, the study provides insights into what branding strategies appeal to consumers and how important PR strategies help in building brand equity.

## **1.7 Organization of the Study**

This research work is organised into five chapters. Chapter one covers the introduction to the study including the background, profile of the organisation, business issue, research objectives, research scope, research significance, research outline and summary. Chapter two covers review of literature. The literature review is divided into two main parts: the theoretical literature review and the empirical literature review. It also presents the conceptual framework of the research and the summary of the chapter. Chapter three explains the actions undertaken in the implementation of the research and outlines the statistical tools employed to collect and analyse data. This

includes the research methods employed; materials and data, analytical tools, ethical issues addressed and the chapter summary. Chapter four presents the result gathered for the research, its interpretation and discussion of the findings. The findings and discussion are presented under thematic areas in accordance with the objectives of the study. In addition, the chapter also presents the implications of the findings on practice. Chapter five concludes the study with the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the research.

### **1.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter gives a general overview of the study. It outlines the profile of the organisation being used for the study, which is Ernest Chemist Limited, the business issues identified, the research objectives and the study significance. The researcher identified that the pharmaceutical industry in Ghana has seen continuous steady growth in the last two decades and as a result, industry players are engaged in stiff competition to reach a larger segment of the market share. Thus, to achieve competitive advantage over their competitors, some big industry players like Ernest Chemist Limited have resorted to using PR in building brand equity to rail in customers. Against this background, the researcher sought to investigate whether indeed PR play a role in building brand equity and therefore formulated three main research objectives and questions to be answered and realised at the end of the research. In addition, the researcher identified two main reasons that made the research significant to be carried out.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Overview**

This chapter reviews literature on Branding, Corporate Branding, PR, brand equity and organizational performance and outlines how they relate with each other in order to improve businesses.

#### **2.1 Concept of Branding**

Since marketing is an intricate phenomenon, impacted by society, business environment, customer conduct, an institutionalized worldwide way to deal with marketing may not generally be relevant for a brand's local attractiveness. The responsibility of global marketing and maximizing items' business and helpful quality to build marketing and effectiveness are still restricted to pharmaceutical organizations (Delagneau, 2004). In many businesses, branding is an instrument that passes on item advantages to clients as names or images to which interesting and persuading affiliations are appended. Aside from the many-sided quality of the items, the part of branding in pharmaceutical industry is imperative and complex because of the official assignment in the item's profile, the naming, the avoidance of direct promoting of moral medications to the patients, and short item life cycles (Lim, Melewar, & Sorensen, 2010).

## **2.2 Importance of Branding**

From customer's point of view, a branded product makes choice easier. In the absence of branding, customers would have to go through the tedious task of having to assess different categories of products in times of shopping. They could not have been fully convinced of the desired products they are purchasing. A branded product ensures that there is accuracy when searching and selecting product and also helps in its evaluation (Ghodeswar, 2008). When companies have strong brand, they have the privilege of charging higher prices even when facing stiff competition. Noting the increasing understanding of branding as a means of creating competitive advantage by providing intangible and tangible benefits, more organizations are expected to embrace the benefits that branding brings, (Anabila & Awunyo-Vitor, 2014). When a product is branded, it identifies the company that produced the products and thereby reducing the risk associated with after purchase dissatisfaction. Branding is very important as it aids in targeting new markets when brand extension strategies are used. When brands are extended, several markets are reached. It also helps in the introduction of new product lines. Consumers are known to willingly adopt new products of popular brands. Branding also promotes the status and name of the company (Kapferer, 1994).

## **2.3 Concept of Branding in the Pharmaceutical Industry**

The idea of trust is extremely important to typical brands having high association due to high view of buying risks (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy, & Pervan, 2015). Typical brands with high perceived risk basically need to give assumption that it can be accomplished by creating impression of customer brand closeness and passionate investment (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2015). Since pharmaceutical brands are trusted and doctors and patients have their confidence,

brands include a more prominent feeling of reason to the drug (Lim et al., 2010). Brands that are, in a genuine sense, effective in the business sectors frequently go past satisfying customers' enthusiastic needs and quietly articulate a brand guarantee (Owen & Chandler, 2002). A medication's dose, decency and reactions are the conceivable components that drive doctors' decision of treatment as they consider it to be intrinsic signs of any medication (Nath Sanyal & Datta, 2011). Decision of treatment is, along these lines, managed by scientific premise, not branding methods (Schroff, 2003). An item's physical attributes lead to the quality signs, i.e. natural and in addition outward, the impacts of which further prompts quality judgment which relies on the minimization of the difference between the desire and perception of the buyers (Sanya, Datta, & Banerjee, 2013). In any case, at the center of each effective brand message is the one key advantage gotten from the most grounded item feature and which separates it from the competitors (Schroff, 2003). Based on this logic, pharmaceutical branding becomes an essential marketing strategy for this industry and PR plays a critical role in achieving it. Pharmaceuticals was in the first place used for distinguishing tangible products but from early 1990s, there has been a move to corporate branding. The reason being that organizations have recognized that their employees are also the expression of the brand, providing a point of major difference not just through the functional values of the brand but also its emotional values (Schultz & De Chernatony, 2002).

In certain restorative classifications, there can be a consolation in the intended interest group that a brand originating from a specific pharmaceutical organization will be better since that organization has involvement there. Kapferer (2008) argued that brand personality and quality image were the key elements that created a status for a drug. This then prompted arrangement of attitude to recommend and in the end provide steady remedy of the brand for a patient. (Moss

and Schuiling, 2004) recommend that brand names ought to be all the more firmly connected to the corporate name. The system can be utilized as a full name or as an umbrella name connected to the brand name of the product (Moss & Schuiling, 2004)

## **2.4 Corporate Branding**

Corporate branding is a holistic brand management approach adopted by firms to craft a unique corporate identity (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012). The concept of corporate branding has gained popularity in the marketing literature as corporate brands are said to add value to the products and services offered by the company (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). A company's effort in achieving the desired corporate brand identity can be manifested through various corporate branding dimensions. However, there is no agreement in the literature on the dimensions that constitute corporate branding. Abratt and Kleyn (2012) suggest four aspects of corporate branding that are crucial to the development of a strong brand identity. These are visual identity, brand promise, brand personality, and brand communication. On the other hand, Harris and de Chernatony (2001) argue that brand vision and culture, positioning, personality, relationships, and presentation are key components of corporate branding that builds brand identity. According to Souiden, Kassim, and Hong (2006), corporate branding encompasses the four interrelated dimensions of corporate name, image, reputation, and loyalty. The distinguishing factors between product brands and corporate brands are considered higher strategic focus, internal as well as external targets, and inclusion of corporate strategy (Balmer, 2001). Since corporate and product brands are context independent, they are now recognized as distinct entities and they may also be considered as equivalent (de Chernatony & McDonald, 2003). The general reason for corporate branding is to create a supportable brand between the branded organization and its

clients through a reasonable quality proposition (Schultz & De Chernatony, 2002). Knox and Bickerton (2003) suggest that even though corporate and product brands have the same reason for making separation and preferences, the complex nature of the corporate connection has essential implications for the nature of the corporate brand. According to Schroff (2003), since pharmaceutical industry is currently maintaining a bad image, pharmaceutical corporate branding is likely to be a non-beneficial. As patient will rarely ask the physician about the drug manufacturer and its record of providing safety and efficacy (Schroff, 2003).

## **2.5 Benefits of Corporate Branding in Pharmaceutical Industry**

The corporate brand image goes beyond the brand image of the product and ignoring the characteristics of the product but focuses more on a defined set of values (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). The main advantages conveyed by the corporate brands are trust, loyalty, the scientific credibility of its R & D, the credibility of its sales force and the creation of new product launch environment (Moss, 2001). Brand promotion to the corporate level allows the brand of the company to show commitment, strengthen relationships, and to provide new platforms proposing to keep the product beyond the brand equity of product (Sun, 2009). Over a period of time, the trend indicates a paradigm shift among the market leaders in the pharmaceutical industry to find more productive measures to leverage the corporate brand to a wide range of offers and enterprise services that are increasingly the basis of differentiation among the "me -too" product brands in mature groups (Sun, 2009). To inform targeted sales, the brand of a company advantageously promotes the product brand by creating channels of communication and produces regard that will cause individuals to tune in and observe. The company's brand performs the work of the brand of the product before the actual launch by

building reputation (Xie & Boggs, 2006). For customers it serves generator source waiting. Again opinion leader's management programs must develop to help the industry overcome different challenges being faced by branding the product. It is expedient therefore for companies to focus on their corporate brand in order to create competitive advantage for themselves. They need to develop good branding positioning to differentiate them from competition.

## **2.6 Concept of PR**

Promotion involves communicating the message of a brand to consumers through various means of communication, including advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and several others. In designing these messages, it is crucial to define and target the right audience. (Okonkwo 2007:144-145). Marketers are shifting away from mass marketing and developing focused marketing programmes that build closer relationships with customers in more narrowly defined micro markets. However, companies are not giving up on mass-media marketing altogether, they are just seeking better value for their money. (Kotler et al. 2005:720-721). Public relations involve the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between a company and its target audience. The aim of public relations is to influence and in some cases, change people's knowledge and feelings regarding a company and its offerings, including its identity and image. (Okonkwo 2007:154)

The major missions of the public relations departments are to create and place newsworthy information in the news media to attract attention to the product, to publicize specific products and to maintain relations. In order to fulfill their missions, PR professionals use several tools. The essential tool is news. PR professionals create or find favorable news about the company or

its products, to attract attention. Different events are also organized by the PR firms to attract positive attention to their client company. (Kotler et al. 2005:793-795)

Publicity and public relations are not the same thing, publicity is simply one of the tools available for achieving the PR objective of creating and maintaining good relationships with various publics. Publicity focuses on generating media coverage at minimal cost to the organization and therefore happens when the media voluntarily talks about the organization. (Brassington & Pettitt 2003:800)

## **2.7 Concept of Brand Equity**

Since the term “brand equity” emerged in the 1980s, there has been a growing interest in the subject among marketing academicians and practitioners (Cobb-Walgren, et al., 1995). The meaning of the term brand equity has been debated in a number of different ways and for a number of different purposes (Keller, 2002). Brand equity is the added value endowed by the brand name (Farquhar, et al., 1991); it is the difference between overall brand preference and multi-attributed preference based on objectively measured attribute levels (Park and Srinivasan, 1994); and overall quality and choice intention (Agarwal and Rao, 1996). Based on the value of brand equity, Aaker (1991) defines it as a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that add to (or subtract from) the value provided by a product or Measuring Customer Based service to a firm and/or that firm's customers.

Compared to the definition of brand equity from a financial perspective as the total value of the brand that is a separable asset when it is sold or included in a balance sheet (Feldwick, 1996).

Customer-based brand equity is defined from the perspective of the customer and is based on

consumer knowledge, familiarity, and associations with respect to the brand (Washburn and Plank, 2002). Proponents contend that for a brand to have value, it must be valued by the customer. If the brand has no meaning to the customer, none of the other definitions is meaningful (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Keller, 1993). Keller (1993, p.2) coined the customer-based definition of brand equity (CBBE) as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.” A thorough understanding of brand equity from the customer’s point of view is essential for successful brand management. As Keller (1993, p.8) explains, positive customer-based brand equity “can lead to greater revenue, lower cost, and higher profit; it has direct implications for the firm’s ability to command higher prices, a customer’s willingness to seek out new distribution channels, the effectiveness of marketing communications, and the success of brand extensions and licensing opportunities.”

### **2.7.1 Brand awareness**

There are different ways in which consumers remember a brand. These ways range from recognition; if you have seen the brand before, to recall; you remember the brand, to “top of mind”; the first brand that comes to mind, and finally to dominant; this is the only brand recalled. Brand equity can thus remarkably be enhanced by creating awareness for the brand. (Aaker 2010:10-17). Awareness refers to the strength of a brand’s presence in the consumer’s mind. If consumers’ minds were full of mental billboards—each one depicting a single brand—then a brand’s awareness would be reflected in the size of its billboard. (Aaker 2010:10). The importance of brand recall and recognition depends on the extent to which consumers make product-related decisions with the brand present or not. If the product decisions are made in store, brand recognition is more important because the brand is physically present and the

consumer then recognizes the brand. But if the product decisions are made outside the store and in other situations where the brand is not present, it is more important that the consumer can recall the brand from memory to remember and buy the product. (Keller 2003:68)

### **2.7.2 Perceived quality**

Perceived quality is a bottom-line measure of the impact of a brand identity, because it is at the heart of what customers are buying. It is usually impossible to achieve perceptions of quality unless the quality claim has substance. In order to generate high quality it requires an understanding of what quality means to various customer segments. It is however, only a partial victory to create a quality product or service, perceptions must be created as well. (Aaker 2010:19-20) Achieving a satisfactory level of perceived quality has become more difficult as product improvements have led to higher consumer expectations regarding the quality of products. Therefore much research has been done to understand how consumers form their opinions about perceived quality. (Keller 2003:238)

### **2.7.3 Brand loyalty**

A brand's value to a firm is largely created by the customer loyalty it commands. A loyal customer base is extremely important, because it can be expected to generate predictable streams of sales and ultimately profit. It is important not to neglect existing loyal customers, because it is less expensive to retain customers than to attract new ones. Focusing on loyalty segmentation provides strategic and tactical insights that will assist in building strong brands. (Aaker 2010:21-22) Brand loyalty is clear evidence of the success and relevance of branding to both consumers

and companies. For consumers, it reduces the search costs, and for companies it is the cornerstone of long-term profitability and competitive leverage. (Okonkwo 2007:118-119) Brand loyalty can be a fragile thing because it is under increasing threat. The reason for this is partly due to the greater number of alternative brands available on the market and promotions designed by competitors to undermine customer loyalty. That is why companies have to work harder to keep their existing loyal customers and identify the current customers that might switch brands and turn them into heavy users who are loyal to the brand. (Brassington & Pettitt 2003:195)

#### **2.7.4 Brand associations**

Brand equity is greatly supported by the associations that consumers make with a brand. If these associations are favorable, it leads to high consumer-based brand equity while low consumer-based brand equity is due to negative brand associations. (Okonkwo 2007:121) These associations might include a celebrity spokesperson, product attributes or a symbol. Brand associations are driven by the brand identity, which is what the company wants the brand to stand for in the customer's mind. Thus, the development and implementation of a brand identity, is a key to build strong brands. (Aaker 2010:25)

#### **2.8 Brand value**

Brand value is the final result of the success or failure of a brand. It is the financial benefit that a company receives as a result of the strength of its brand. This financial benefit is represented in the company's balance sheet or financial report as part of its intangible assets. Due to this, a high

brand value is sometimes the only reason that companies are valued at more than ten times the worth of their net assets. (Okonkwo 2007:124)

## **2.9 PR and Brand Equity Building**

Top management, especially in the pharmaceutical industry, is increasingly recognizing corporate reputation as an important asset an organisation has and is turning to public relations to manage this asset. Simultaneously, public relations is achieving unprecedented attention for the essential role it plays in marketing pharmaceutical companies. In his foreword to the book titled *Value-Added Public Relations* by Thomas L. Harris, Philip Kotler, professor of international marketing at Northwestern University says that of the five major components of marketing, public relations and direct marketing are receiving the most attention and achieving the most growth at the end of the century. He attributes the growth of public relations to its great versatility, its aptitude for drama, and its ability to break through the information clutter to capture attention and interest. Marketing guru Al Reis, who with his partner Jack Trout authored the landmark marketing books 'Positioning' and 'Marketing Warfare' says that in the past two decades public relations has eclipsed advertising as the most powerful force in marketing and branding. He says the rise of public relations is the biggest story in marketing and is amazed that the media has ignored it. In his latest book 'The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding', Reis says that the birth of a brand is achieved with publicity, not advertising. Reis declares that "publicity is more powerful than advertising" because "what others say about your brand is so much more powerful than advertising." Public relations is being increasingly considered a vital component for building brand value, maintaining brand vitality, and establishing brand credibility in the pharmaceutical industry.

## **2.10 Measuring PR results**

It is difficult to measure public relations' results because PR is often used with other promotion tools, which makes its impact often indirect and difficult to measure. It would be ideal for the company to measure the change in product awareness, knowledge and attitude resulting from the PR campaign or strategy. In order to do so, the company should measure these changes through before-and-after-the-campaign levels. The best measure of public relations effort is sales and profit impact, if obtainable. (Kotler et al. 2005:799) The effectiveness of public relations can still be measured in several other ways, including internal assessments, brand preference research and media coverage. (Okonkwo 2007:155)

## **2.11 Empirical Literature Review**

This part of the study reviewed work already undertaken and the various methodologies employed by the various authors. It also reviewed the findings of such studies. Many authors continue to come out with different findings and conclusions from their studies on the role PR plays in building Brand Equity. The findings and conclusion of these studies affirm some of the theories discussed above and automatically contradict others.

### **2.11.1 Review of Studies done Worldwide**

Kulachet Mongkol (2014) did a study on Integrated Marketing Communication to Increase Brand Equity: The Case of a Thai Beverage Company. The sample for this study consisted of four hundred participants who were customers of the company, and questionnaires were used as a research instrument. In order to test the research's hypotheses, Pearson's correlation coefficient

was conducted to investigate the correlation between the integrated marketing communication and the company's brand equity. The results of the hypothesis reveal that there is a direct correlation between the integrated marketing communication and brand equity. Therefore, it is recommended that different types of integrated marketing communication should be appropriately selected in order to efficiently improve brand equity. Sajid Tufail, Rashid Saeed, Hashim Zameer, Muhammad Bilal & Bilal Naeem (2014) conducted a research on Impact of Sponsorship and Publicity on Brand Equity. This paper discusses the impact of Publicity and Sponsorship on Brand Equity. Data were collected via a questionnaire distributed to almost all big cities of Pakistan among educated persons/university students. Hierarchical regression analysis of data from 200 respondents was used to test two hypotheses. The results show that Publicity and Sponsorship has a positive relationship with Brand Equity. When Publicity and Sponsorship is favorable, there is positive effect on Brand Equity. Clara Sandell (2012) did a great job on Public relations' role in building strong brands. A Case of three companies: Minna, Hanna Sarén & Minna Parikka. For the empirical part, interviews were chosen to gather information. The author performed interviews with three Finnish design companies about how they are implementing PR in their marketing strategy. The results showed that all three companies use public relations to build their brand and that PR has been part of their rapid success.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Overview**

This chapter of the study focuses on the actions undertaken in the implementation of the research and describes data management tools employed to collect and analyze data. Specifically, the chapter entails the research methods employed, materials and data collection tools, analysis techniques, ethical issues addressed and a summary. The various aspects are explained in the following sub-sections.

#### **3.1 Research Method**

The research method discusses the overall process employed by the researcher in adopting a research approach to achieve the objectives of the research. In addition, the research method outlines the overall strategy adopted to integrate the various parts of the study in an articulate and coherent way referred to as the research design. This also includes defining the study population and calculating the sample size of the study.

##### **3.1.1 Research Approach**

According to Creswell (2014), a research approach outlines the plans and the procedures for research that describes the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Boateng (2016) identifies the main research approaches known to researchers as qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The effectual application of any of these approaches may depend on the type of the research and the philosophy of the researcher.

According to Boateng (2016), quantitative research focuses largely on identifying the extent of a problem or investigating the presence of a connection between aspects of a problem using inferences based on data. Often, quantitative research is employed to approve or disapprove the relationship between two or more aspects of the problem. Quantitative research is much more numbers-driven and structured (Taylor, Nettleton, Harding, & Bartholomew's, 2010). This is because in the design quantitative research, specific hypothesis and questions are formulated from existing literature and theory and questionnaires are drafted accordingly to collect data from selected sample. Findings are mainly presented using statistics and inferences about the population. Throughout this procedure, the researcher is seen as being independent from subjects involved in the research.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher employed the use of a quantitative research approach as this approach provides the means to investigate and establish the relationship between two more main variables: Public Relations (PR) and Brand Equity, by making use of statistics and inferences from data collected.

### **3.1.2 Research Design**

Research design refers to the overall strategy adopted to integrate the various parts of the research in an articulate and coherent way, thereby, guaranteeing that the research problem is effectively addressed (De Vaus, 2001). Ghauri, Grønhaug and Strange (2020) explains research design as a process of planning, executing, and investigating, in a systematic manner to find answers to the research questions, so that it can be easier for others to understand and believe in findings of a given study. A number of research designs have been described in social science

research. These include: Experimental research designs, Non-experimental research designs, Case studies, Ethnographic studies, Grounded theory studies, amongst others. (Zach, 2020).

Some subjects cannot be observed in any other way; for example, a social case study of an individual subject is a descriptive research design and allows observation without affecting normal behavior. (Shuttleworth, 2008). The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The descriptive survey describes a situation, phenomenon, attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and opinions of people. According to Sekeran (2003), descriptive studies often result in formulation of principles of knowledge and solution to significant problems. He asserts that a descriptive research design is easy to understand as it attempts to collect data from population members and describes existing phenomenon with reference to PR and brand equity building. Using this method is justified because the study seek to probe further to reveal insight into the relationship between PR and Brand Equity.

### **3.2 Materials and Data Collection tools**

This part of the study explains the process of selecting the study population and outlines the sampling techniques employed by the researcher to collect data from the sampled population. In addition, it provides information the tools used to collect data from the respondents of the study.

#### **3.2.1 Population**

Bryman and Bell (2003) describe a study population as the entire group that the research is based on as specified by the objectives of the research. The population is customers of pharmaceutical brands in Ghana and the target population is customers of Ernest Chemist Limited (ECL). Ernest

Chemist Limited is a leading pharmaceutical company in Ghana that offers a variety of pharmaceutical brands and as such, finding people who patronize their products will be relatively easy.

### **3.2.2 Sample of Study**

According to Burns and Bush (2006) a sample is a subset of the research population. It is a normal assertion in research that the high the sampling size the higher the reliability and validity in the result and the more generalizable the findings of the study (Taylor, 2005). The sample size for the study is 316. Dr. Saiful, a clinical researcher, states that a “sample size larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research.” This number is corroborated by Abbie Griffin and John Hauser. They determined that a sample size of 30 would provide a reasonable starting point in research.

### **3.2.3 Sampling Technique**

The study made use of non-probability sampling methods. Non-probability sampling method is a sampling procedure in which the inclusion of a respondent or opinion is not based on probability or on the rationale of probability theory (Etikan & Bala, 2017). In this study, the researcher purposively selected the sample firm and the respondents were conveniently sampled. The purposive sampling or judgmental sampling gives the researcher the discretion to include a respondent based on the judgment as to who will provide the best information for the objectives of the study. A combination of the two sampling methods was employed to select the respondents.

### **3.2.4 Data Sources and Data Collection Instruments**

Aaker, Kumar and Day (2001) describe primary data as raw data collected by a researcher first-hand from source while secondary data is data obtained from relevant studies, surveys, agencies, institution and companies that have been analysed for other research or for administrative purpose. In this study, primary data collected from respondents was used. Sources of primary data constituted information that was obtained from customers, who in this case are users of ECL Products in Ghana. The researcher used questionnaire as the main tool for obtaining the necessary information for the research. The following constitutes the justification for using the questionnaire: they are relatively easy to analyze, they are familiar to respondents, a large sample of the given population can be contacted at relatively low cost and they are simple to administer. The questionnaire was made up of measurement items drawn from the literature and adopted from other studies. PR was measured with 6 items adopted from Grunig, J. (1992), in his book, Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management. Brand equity had 4 sub-headings namely: Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty and Brand Association; as chronicled by Aaker (1991) in his book: Managing brand equity. Brand equity was measured with 17 items.

### **3.2.5 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher conducted a pre-testing of all data collection instruments before 316 questionnaires was distributed. The purpose of the pre-test is to enhance the quality of the questionnaire. This gave the researcher insights as to what questions will work well, which questions will sound strange, what questions will be eliminated and what questions needs to be

added. In addition, it provided insights as to whether respondents understood the research questions.

Following the pre-test, primary data was gathered using questionnaires. Questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection. In the era of Covid 19 and the advancement of Technology, questionnaires were not administered face to face with respondents but rather questionnaires were keyed into Google forms and administered online to the target population; that is, customers of ECL in Ghana. The data collection process lasted for two months and the process was very slow because, reaching out to my target population in this era of Covid 19 was a bit challenging. Most of the people I reached out to had issues with their smart phones and filling the questionnaires on the Google forms was a bit of a challenge. After the questionnaire administering, SPSS and Excel were used as statistical tools for the analysis. All participants were offered anonymity. Primary method was used to collect data at first hand. The primary data collection method used by the study, helped to gather important raw data from the target population through administered questionnaires.

### **3.3 Analytical Tools and mode of Analysis**

The data collected from respondents was cleaned and compiled for analysis. Due to the strict quantitative research approach adopted, the researcher used SPSS to analyse data compiled. Creswell (2014) explains that, data analysis helps to answer research questions and to establish patterns of knowledge out of available data.

The quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft excel. The statistical method employed to analyse the data was correlation analysis.

Correlation analysis is a statistical method for the investigation of relationship between variables. Correlation analysis is effectual for establishing the relationship between two variables.

### **3.4 Ethical Issues Addressed**

The success of every research depends on the consideration of key ethical issues (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The study adhered to principles that aimed at protecting the dignity and privacy of every individual involved in responding to the questionnaire. Things like name, location, amongst others, that made it easier for anyone to know a particular respondent, were not included in the questionnaire. This study like any serious research work took plagiarism serious and as such acknowledged peoples work added to this work.

### **3.5 Summary**

In summary, this chapter of the study explains the systematic procedure by which the research was conducted. The procedure includes the research method, data and materials, analytical tools and ethical considerations. The study employed the quantitative research approach involving a descriptive research design and data was gathered from 316 respondents who were conveniently sampled.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Chapter Overview**

The study examined the role of PR in building brand equity, using Ernest Chemist Limited as the focus of the study. Specifically, the study aimed at identifying the role of PR in building brand equity of pharmaceutical products: discovering the extent of practice of PR being employed by Ernest Chemist Limited, how PR affect the various components of Brand Equity for pharmaceutical products: Perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand association and finally ascertaining customer's perceptions on the PR strategies of Ernest Chemist Limited.

#### **4.1 Presentation of Results**

This chapter presents analyses of the data obtained from the field. The first part of the chapter examines the demographic characteristics of respondents and then presents the results of the study in line with the objectives of the study. The data is presented in tables beginning with socio demographical variables such as such as gender, age and educational level of respondents. The second part of the chapter shows the findings from the study in relation to the formulated research questions. The final part of the chapter discusses the implication of the results on practice. Frequency tables was employed to do the analysis. A frequency table showing responses of respondent indicating their opinions on a five point likert scale on the extent of

practice of PR in Ernest Chemist Limited, How PR affect the various components of Brand Equity for pharmaceutical products: Perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand association as grouped by Aaker (1991, 1996) and, the perceptions of customers on the PR strategies of Ernest Chemist Limited should give a clear picture of the role of PR in building brand equity.

#### 4.1.1 Demographic Classification of Respondents

It is key to establish the demographic characteristics of respondents used in a study. Appropriately, this is addressed in this study focusing on three (3) key variables: age, gender and educational level.

**Table 4.1 Demographic Classification of Respondents**

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Measurements</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<i>Gender</i>	Male	156	50.6
	Female	160	49.4
<i>Age</i>	18 - 30 years	151	47.8
	31- 40 years	132	40.8
	41 and above	33	10.4
<i>Educational Qualification</i>	SHS	9	2.8
	Diploma	25	7.9
	Undergraduate	159	50.3
	Postgraduate	119	37.7
	Other	4	1.3

*N =316*

From table 4.1, out of the 316 respondents, 156 of them representing 49.4percent were male and 160 of them representing 50.6percent were female. This shows a good balance in the gender of respondents selected to participate in the study. Specifically, it implies that both gender types patronise pharmaceutical products and therefore the gender of respondents of the study is not skewed.

Age is an important demographic variable that informs choices and the ability of people to embrace new things. Table 4.2 illustrates the ages of the respondents who participated in the study. The analysis showed that none of the respondents was aged less than 18 years. This means that all the respondents who participated in the study were either aged 18 or above. Specifically, this implies that the respondents were legally matured and possess the rights to purchase pharmaceutical products without the assistance and influence of guardians or parental guidance. In addition, the majority of respondents 151 out of 316 respondents representing 47.8 percent fell in the age category of 18 years to 30 years, followed by 40.8percent representing respondents aged 31 years to 40 years and the least amongst the age groups was the 41 years and above category which recorded 10.4 percent.

On respondents' educational level, the study identified and collected data based on five categories: Diploma, Other, Postgraduate, SHS and Undergraduate. The study revealed that a greater number of respondents were in the undergraduate level representing 50.3 percent, followed by Postgraduate level representing 37.7 percent, respondents with Diploma followed with a percentage of 7.9 percent, followed by SHS representing 2.8percent. The remaining 1.3percent chose other. This depicts that the majority number of respondents have attained good education and therefore possess the ability to understand easily the rationale behind the research thus answering the questionnaires to the best of their knowledge.

### 4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics

For research involving human participants, scholars suggest the need to first subject the data to descriptive analysis before any further data validation and analysis (Pallant, 2011). These descriptive statistics include the mean and standard deviations among others. The tables 4.2 and 4.3 below display the descriptive statistics of the variables used in survey instrument particularly based on mean and standard deviation results of the scale variables. Since the questionnaire were scaled 1-5 (from strongly disagree to strongly agree with 3 being neutral), the mean values above 3 indicate respondents' general agreement to the statements and values below 3 indicate general disagreement to the scales items.

**Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics for PR Efforts of ECL**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
ECL came out with periodical press releases announcing important	316	3.49	1.006
ECL has the best possible relationship with the press.	316	3.28	.848
ECL actively sponsor, donate, service and volunteer time to the community.	316	3.53	.974
ECL is prepared to face crisis or other unexpected situations that can make or break their business	316	3.53	.951

ECL business events are a valuable marketing tool and provide memorable experience to participants.	313	3.77	.853
ECL is active on Social Media. E.g. Facebook, LinkedIn etc.	316	3.47	.910

The PR strategies of ECL were looked at thoroughly. Table 4.2 illustrates the various PR strategies respondents chose as being practiced or not by ECL. This means that all the respondents who participated in the study spoke well of the PR practices employed by ECL. This means that all the respondents who participated in the study spoke well of the PR practices employed by ECL. However, variations in the values indicate the extent of PR practice in ECL from the perspective of consumers. Specifically, the table shows the highest mean values was recorded by the statement ‘ECL business events are a valuable marketing tool and provide memorable experience to participants’. This shows that business events are the most used or visible PR tools. This is followed by philanthropic activities and crisis management, both with mean values of 3.53. The lowest mean value was recorded by ‘ECL has the best possible relationship with the press’, and indication that from the viewpoint of customers ECL’s media relations is ECL relationship with the media is not at the expected level of the customers.

**Table 4.3**                      **Descriptive Statistics For Brand Equity Components**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b><i>Perceived Quality</i></b>			
I trust products of ECL to meet international standards.	316	3.84	.845
I trust employees of ECL to be professionals.	316	3.72	.751
I like and trust ECL and its products.	316	3.96	.850
I trust all branches of ECL to deliver excellent service.	316	3.74	.787
<b><i>Brand Awareness</i></b>			
I recognise the products of ECL among other competing brands.	316	3.72	1.005
I am able to recall some characteristics of ECL easily when buying among other competing brands.	316	3.67	.919
I have a fair idea about ECL and their products.	316	3.78	.961
<b><i>Brand Association</i></b>			
I perceive Ernest Chemist Limited to be a good brand.	316	3.95	.773
I like the brand image of Ernest Chemist Limited.	316	3.94	.739
The packaging of ECL products are appealing to me.	316	3.83	.855
The motto of Ernest Chemist Limited resonates with their products.	316	3.71	.830
<b><i>Brand Loyalty</i></b>			
When buying medicines, products from ECL would be my first choice	316	3.62	.824
I will keep on buying ECL products	316	3.61	.821
I am willing to buy from ECL even if the price is a little higher than that of its competitors	316	3.50	.721
I would recommend ECL and its products to my friends any day, even if they are in crisis.	316	3.41	.702
Even if another brand has the same features as Ernest Chemist products, I would prefer to buy from Ernest Chemist	316	3.32	.823
This brand is more than a product to me.	316	3.24	.821

### 4.1.3 Awareness of Respondents about Pharmaceutical Companies in Ghana

The objective of this section was to ascertain whether respondents were familiar with leading pharmaceutical companies in Ghana. This was to establish an initial understanding of each respondent's conversance with companies in the pharmaceutical industry in Ghana. In addition, this was to ascertain whether respondents had prior knowledge about Ernest Chemist Limited, which is the company the study was based on. To achieve this, respondents were asked to select major pharmaceutical companies they know from a pool of five major companies in a multiple choice question.

**Table 4. 4 Awareness of Respondents**

<b>Pharmaceutical company</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Ernest Chemist Limited	42.1%
Tobinco Pharmaceuticals	20.5%
Ayton Pharmacy	12.9%
Kinapharma	17.0%
Danadam Pharmacy	7.3%
Other	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

It is seen from table 4.4 that all five listed pharmaceutical companies' recorded significant responses, except, the category of other. Specifically, Ernest Chemist Limited recorded a high percent of cases of 42.1 percent, followed by Tobinco pharmaceuticals representing 20.5 percent, followed by Kinapharma representing 17 percent and Ayton pharmacy, which recorded 12.9 percent. Conversely, Danadam pharmacy recorded a low percent of cases of 7.3 percent, which is quite higher than the percentage recorded under other known pharmaceutical companies that was 0.2 percent. To explain the statistics behind the responses recorded, percent of responses can be summarised as the percentage of each response out of total responses from the given data set. Thus, the sum total of percent of response is 100. In the same way, percent of cases is the percent of respondents ticking "yes" for the particular pharmaceutical company. This implies that, a majority of the respondents ticked "yes" for Ernest Chemist Limited. The percentage recorded is relatively high compared to the percentages of the remaining options. Clearly, this shows that the respondents know about Ernest Chemist Limited and are conversant with their products.

#### **4.1.4 How PR affect the various components of Brand Equity for pharmaceutical products**

##### **Correlation Analysis**

The correlation analysis is test to determine the nexus among variables, in this study; Public Relations and Brand Equity: perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand association. The coefficient of the correlation indicates the exact relationship between the two variables under study at the same time while showing the extent of the relationship. The significations of the relationship in this study were determined using P value of 0.05.

a. Relationship between Public Relations and perceived quality

Null hypothesis= H0: There exist no significant relationship between public relations and perceived quality

Alternative hypothesis=H1: There is a significant relationship between public relations and perceived quality.

b. Relationship between PR and brand loyalty

Null hypothesis= H0: There exist no significant relationship between public relations and brand loyalty.

Alternative hypothesis=H1: There is a significant relationship between public relations and brand loyalty.

c. Relationship between Public Relations and Brand awareness

Null hypothesis= H0: There exist no significant relationship between public relations and brand awareness.

Alternative hypothesis=H1: There is a significant relationship between public relations and brand awareness.

d. Relationship between Public Relations and Brand association

Null hypothesis= H0: There exist no significant relationship between public relations and brand association.

Alternative hypothesis=H1: There is a significant relationship between public relations and brand association

**Table 4.5: Correlation test for PR and brand equity**

<b>PR</b>	<b>P-values</b>
perceived quality	0.002
brand loyalty	0.01.
brand awareness	0.005
brand association	0.001

The above table shows the test results for the relationship between PR and brand equity. The P-values of the four brand equity variables are less than 0.05. That is; there is a significant relationship between PR and all the brand equity variables. This means the null hypothesis are rejected. This implies that PR significantly influences brand equity of Ernest Chemist.

#### **4.1.5 The Perception of Customers on the PR Strategies of Ernest Chemist Limited.**

The study sought to examine the perception of customers on the PR strategies of Ernest Chemist Limited by ascertaining the rank at which respondents disagree and agree with questions pertaining to brand awareness, brand association and brand image of the company.

As indicated, the mean figures of the statements that fell under brand awareness were 3.95, 3.94, 3.83 and 3.71 respectively. These figures in line with the mean range implied that, respondents agreed to the assertions that they are able to recognize the products of Ernest Chemist Limited among other competing brands, they are able to recall some characteristics of Ernest Chemist Limited easily when buying among other competing brands and also, they have fair idea about Ernest Chemist Limited and their products.

Under the brand association, the analysis revealed very good mean figures respectively for the statements. The mean figure for the first statement, which is relatively low compared to the recorded mean figures of the remaining statements. However, it is important to note that the mean figures recorded for the statements were above 3.50, which shows strong agreement with the statements associated to brand associations. Further, the table shows that respondents perceive Ernest Chemist Limited is doing some good works on PR and this has resulted in the customer's brand association with the ECL products. Customers find it smarter to purchase brands from Ernest Chemist Limited if it does not differ from another brand and find themselves loyal to the Ernest Chemist Brand. The results are consistent with the findings of Cheng-Hsui Chen (2001) whose research revealed that PR have a direct relationship with brand equity. Based on the data gathered from respondents in the questionnaires on the variable PR, it can be seen that respondents agree with the statements formulated. This implies that respondents perceive the PR strategies used by Ernest Chemist Limited to promote its brand image to be effective. Specifically, respondents strongly agreed to like the brand image of Ernest Chemist Limited that recorded the highest mean figure.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Overview**

This chapter presents a summary of the findings based on the objectives of the study which included: determining the role of PR in building brand equity of pharmaceutical products; examining the extent of practice of PR in Ernest Chemist Limited and to investigate how consumers perceive the impact of Ernest Chemist's PR strategies. The chapter also draws a general conclusion to the study and makes recommendations to address the weaknesses identified.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The study sought to investigate the role of PR as a variable in building brand equity in the pharmaceutical industry in Ghana. The researcher formulated research questions to be answered by the findings from the analyses of the data collected. The first research question, the results revealed that Ernest Chemist Limited is effective as far as the practice of PR is concerned.

The results discovered that Ernest Chemist Limited employs targeted PR strategies that builds trust for the company and its products and by doing so; it creates brand equity for ECL and its products. On examining the relationship between brand equity (dependent variable) and PR, the correlation analysis results showed a significant relationship between consumer brand equity and the variable (Public Relations), as shown by the p value; ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ).

### **5.1.1 The Perceptions of Customers on the PR Strategies of Ernest Chemist Limited.**

The study revealed that the perception of customers (respondents) on the branding strategies of Ernest Chemist Limited varies. However, the results showed that majority of respondents perceived the PR strategies of Ernest Chemist Limited to be effective. This finding represented by a sum of average mean value of 3.7 which implies “Agree” for all statements under each variable.

### **5.1.2 How PR affect the various components of Brand Equity for pharmaceutical products.**

The test results for the relationship between PR and brand equity showed that, the P-values of the four brand equity variables are less than 0.05. That is; there is a significant relationship between PR and all the brand equity variables. This means the null hypothesis are rejected. This implies that PR significantly influences brand equity of Ernest Chemist.

## **5.2 Implications for Practice**

Developing Brand Equity involves a lot of resources and takes time. Marketing Communication professionals and managers worldwide should work assiduously to promote and improve of their company’s PR strategies in building brand equity. These efforts are more likely to be fruitful if these practices are accompanied by communication about the brand to the targeted customers. The purpose of this study is to assist the pharmaceutical company to focus on PR strategies to build brand equity

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion concerning consumers view on the extent of PR practice employed by Ernest Chemist Limited, it was identified that Ernest Chemist Limited uses targeted PR strategies that builds trust for the company and its products in addition to PR strategies that informs customers to form associations with the company and its products.

In addition, the study revealed that consumers hold varying perception about PR strategies employed by Ernest Chemist Limited. A greater percentage of respondents perceived the PR strategies employed by Ernest Chemist Limited to be effective.

The study discovered that the variable of study: Public relation (PR), has significant impact on the building of brand equity. It also revealed that PR has positive and significant association with brand equity.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

We recommend that Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited to strengthen its relationship in terms of consumer brand equity and all the variable: PR, in other to be in the forefront so long as competitive marketing business is concerned; it will also help the pharmaceutical company Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited product to stand out in terms of uniqueness and will appeal to customers or consumers. Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited must also intensify its PR strategies that inform customers in forming loyal associations with the company and its products because these customers or consumers will be the very same people who will market the company's information to other future customers or consumers.

In addition, Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited must take PR very seriously because it is a strategic tool that has the propensity to move and attract customers within the pharmaceutical industry in Ghana; again a thorough investigation about socio-economic background of the consumer or customer will help Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited gather enough information to be able to serve consumers and customers well.

Currently, as the world is battling with coronavirus (COV-19), Ernest chemist Ghana limited as one of its strategic corporate social responsibility can take the opportunity to strengthen its brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty and brand image by partnering with the nation's premiere teaching hospital the Korle-bu teaching hospital to present personal protective equipment to the main frontline health workers, who are working tirelessly to fight this dreadful disease. Now, as a way of promoting Ghana, helping create wealth, prosperity and creating jobs; the Ghanaian government can partner with top Ghanaian pharmaceutical companies like Ernest Chemist Ghana Limited, where the company can deliver their products to some of the nation's public hospitals like the Korle-bu teaching and Okomfo Anokye teaching hospital in Kumasi at a discount rate, a strategic move that will go a long way to boost the company's brand image, brand awareness, brand association and brand loyalty especially to the low income Ghanaian citizenry, who with time eventually will become loyal consumers or customers.

One of the surest ways for the pharmaceutical industry to know how its fairing and the perception held by potential and aggregate customers about their brands and specifically, their PR strategies, is to conduct periodic research; whiles also assessing customers' needs and delivering to their specifications.

## **5.5 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research**

This research investigates the relationship between PR and brand equity building using Ernest Chemist Limited as a case study. Looking at the variable of PR, the researcher was limited to selecting only a few due to time constraints and data source limitations. Further research should examine all the PR tools and also explore several data source. This would mean, having ample time for the research work.

In addition, the presence of the pandemic during the time scheduled for the collection of data hampered the exercise. This meant questionnaires had to be administered through other means of administering questionnaires instead of the regular face-to-face method. This made data collection difficult and prolonged the allotted time. It is my prayer Covid 19 exit the world as soon as possible so that any further research on the area would have its questionnaire administered on the regular face-to-face method. This would make data collection easy and limited time would be spent collecting data.

Furthermore, there were and still few local literatures on the subject matter, for most literature on PR and brand equity building were on developed countries where their markets were very developed, so inferring from such literature were not too relational. I would therefore call on African researchers and specifically, Ghanaian researchers, to take keen interest in the area and add more literature on the subject matter in order to increase available literature and also literature focused on African markets.

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**APPENDIX A**

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
FACULTY OF PR, ADVERTISING & MARKETING  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Dear Respondent,**

This research is to examine the role of Public Relations (PR) in building Brand Equity: The case of Ernest Chemist Limited. It would be very much appreciated if you could assist me through the provision of answers to the questions below. Each question is followed by a list of alternatives. Please tick the box and write where appropriate. Accuracy of your responses and cooperation is very important to collect relevant data. All information provided is strictly for academic purposes and treated as confidential.

**Key**

**ECL – Ernest Chemist Limited**

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

1. Gender Male  Female
2. Age 18-30  31-40  41 and above
3. Educational Qualification JHS  SHS  Diploma  Undergraduate  Postgraduate   
Other , please specify.....
4. Programme of study.....

**SECTION B: BRANDING**

5. Can you tick some Pharmaceutical Companies that manufacture drugs in Ghana?

Ernest Chemist Limited [ ] Tobinco Pharmaceuticals [ ] Ayton Drugs [ ]

Kinapharma [ ] Danadam Pharmaceuticals

Other [ ], please specify.....

**On a Likert scale of 1 – 5, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement to the statements by ticking the appropriate box. Where (1 represents Strongly Disagree); (2 – Disagree); (3 – Undecided); (4 – Agree); and (5 - Strongly Agree).**

NO	STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Public Relations (PR):</b>					
1.	ECL come out with periodical press releases announcing important company news.					
2.	ECL has the best possible relationship with the press.					
3.	ECL actively sponsor, donate service, and volunteer time to the community.					
4.	ECL is prepared to face a crisis or other unexpected situations that can make or break their business.					
5.	ECL business events are a valuable marketing tool and provide memorable experience to participants.					
6.	ECL is active on Social Media. E.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.					

	<b>Brand Equity:</b>					
	<b>Brand Awareness</b>					
7.	I am able to recognise the products of ECL among other competing brands.					
8.	I am able to recall some characteristics of ECL easily when buying among other competing brands.					
9.	I have a fair idea about ECL and their products.					
	<b>Perceived Quality</b>					
10.	I trust products of ECL to meet international standards.					
11.	I trust employees of ECL to be professionals.					
12.	I like and trust ECL and its products.					
13.	I trust all branches of ECL to deliver excellent service.					
	<b>Brand Loyalty</b>					
14.	When buying medicines, products from ECL would be my first choice					

15.	I will keep on buying ECL products					
16.	I am willing to buy from ECL even if the price is a little higher than that of its competitors					
17.	I would recommend ECL and its products to my friends any day, even if they are in crisis.					
18.	Even if another brand has the same features as Ernest Chemist products, I would prefer to buy from Ernest Chemist					
18.	This brand is more than a product to me.					
	<b>Brand Association/ Image</b>					
20.	I perceive Ernest Chemist Limited to be a good brand.					
21.	I like the brand image of Ernest Chemist Limited.					
22.	The packaging of ECL products are appealing to me.					
23.	The motto of Ernest Chemist Limited resonates with their products.					