



**CHURCH COMMERCIALISATION AND COMMODIFICATION IN GHANA:
IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE**

BY

DESMOND URIEL QUAYE

(MASPRM23014)

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND
COMMUNICATION (UniMAC-IJ) IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTERS OF ARTS IN STRATEGIC
PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGEMENT**

DECEMBER, 2024

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

DESMOND URIEL QUAYE MASPRM23014  10-12-2024

STUDENT NAME **INDEX NO.** **SIGNATURE** **DATE**

CERTIFICATION

This Dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication, UniMAC.

  16/12/2024

Supervisor

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this study **CHURCH COMMERCIALISATION AND COMMODIFICATION IN GHANA: IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC RELATION PRACTICE** to researchers, scholars, educators, Public Relations professionals, university students, members of the Christian community, corporate entities and all those who can gain impactful knowledge in this work across the world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to convey my sincere gratitude to the Omniscient, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, and Omnibenevolent God for granting me the resilience and resolve needed to complete this research project.

I am deeply thankful to my supervisor, Dr. Rhodalene Amartey, for her invaluable guidance and assistance throughout this research process. Her expertise and encouragement were instrumental in bringing this work to fruition.

I am thankful to my supportive parents, Emmanuel and Margaret Quaye, and my brother, Theophilus Quaye. Your constant support and belief in me have played a vital role in the success of this academic journey.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of church commercialization and commodification on public relations practices in Ghana. It explores how the shift towards materialism and economic interests has affected church reputation, trust among congregants, and overall public perception. The research investigates the specific commercialization and commodification strategies employed by churches, such as selling religious items and promoting prosperity theology, and analyzes their influence on religious practices and beliefs. Furthermore, the research delves into the role of public relations in managing the reputational challenges arising from church commercialization and commodification. It investigates how churches utilize public relations strategies to maintain a positive image and mitigate negative perceptions. By utilizing a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and document analysis, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between commercialization and commodification, public relations, and the preservation of religious integrity in Ghana. The findings of this study have implications for religious leaders, public relations practitioners, and scholars interested in the intersection of religion and commerce. It highlights the importance of ethical considerations and the need for a balance between spiritual and material pursuits within religious institutions.

TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION BY STUDENT.....	i
CERTIFICATION.....	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
CHAPTER ONE	
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the study.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	2
1.3 Research Objectives.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	4
1.5 Scope of the Study.....	4
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.7 Organisation of the Study.....	6
1.8 Chapter Summary.....	6
CHAPTER TWO	
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.0 Introduction.....	7
2.1 Conceptual Framework.....	7
2.1.1 Church a Conceptual and Contextual Description.....	7
2.1.1.1 A Place of Worship and Praise.....	9
2.1.1.2 The Church as a Place of Serving God.....	10
2.1.1.3 The Church as a Place of Meeting Both Spiritual and Physical Needs.....	10

2.1.1.4 Mission and Evangelism as A Function of The Church.....	11
2.1.2 Church Commercialisation Origins, Religious Dimensions, And Contemporary Practices.....	11
2.1.2.1 Prosperity and Prophecy.....	13
2.1.2.2 Salvation and Healing.....	13
2.1.3 Commodification.....	14
2.1.4 Causes of Commercialisation and Commodification.....	16
2.1.5 Public Relations: A Conceptual Framework.....	17
2.1.5.1 Public Relations Philosophy: Ethical Dilemma and Challenges Of Commercialisation to Churches.....	18
2.1.5.2 Truth as a Moral Imperative in Public Relations.....	18
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	19
2.2.1 Ethical Theories.....	20
2.2.2 Utilitarian Theory.....	20
2.2.3 Virtue Theory.....	21
2.3 Empirical Literature.....	23
CHAPTER THREE	
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	27
3.0 Introduction	27
3.1 Research Design.....	27
3.2 Research Population.....	28
3.2.1 Target Population.....	28
3.2.2 Sample Frame.....	28
3.2.3 Sampling.....	29
3.3 Data Collection Methods.....	29

3.4 Data Collection Instruments.....	29
3.5 Research Ethics.....	30
3.5.1 Confidentiality.....	31
3.5.2 Competence.....	31
3.5.3 Selection of Participants.....	31
3.5.4 Informed consent.....	31
3.5.5 Results Communication.....	31
CHAPTER FOUR	
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	32
4.0 INTRODUCTION.....	32
4.1 Background of the Study.....	32
4.2 Impact of church Commercialisation on Public Perception and Trust.....	33
4.2.1 Church Commercialisation Practices.....	33
4.2.2 Church Commercialisation Strategies.....	36
4.2.3 Public Perception Activities.....	39
4.2.4 Trust and Credibility among Congregants.....	42
4.2.5 Public Relations Management in Churches.....	45
4.2.6 Regression Analysis.....	47
4.3 Identify the Commercialisation Strategies employed by Churches and their Influence on Religious Practices.....	51
4.4 Public Relations Management in the Context of church Commodification.....	55
4.5 Discussion of Results.....	58
4.6 Implication for Practices.....	60
4.7 Summary.....	61

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	63
5.0 Introduction.....	63
5.1 Summary of Key Findings.....	63
5.2 Conclusion.....	64
5.3 Limitations.....	66
5.4 Recommendations.....	66
5.5 Implication for Policy and Future Research.....	67
5.6 Summary	
REFERENCES.....	69
APPENDIX.....	73

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Background information of Respondents.....	32
Table 2 Church Commercialisation Practices.....	34
Table 3 ANOVA Table for Church Commercialisation Practices.....	34
Table 4 Church Commodification Strategies.....	37
Table 5 ANOVA Table for Church Commodification Strategies.....	37
Table 6 Public Perception of Church Activities.....	39
Table 7 ANOVA Table for Public Perception of Church Activities.....	39
Table 8 Trust and Credibility among Congregants.....	42
Table 9 ANOVA Table for Trust and Credibility among Congregants.....	43
Table 10 Public Relations Management in Churches.....	45
Table 11 ANOVA Table for Public Relations Management in Churches.....	45
Table 12 Regression Analysis,.....	47
Table 13 Coefficients Table.....	48

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the entire study. It contains a general overview of the study, presents the problem statement, and states the research objectives and questions underpinning the study. It also talks about the significance of the study as well as an overview of the organisation of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The reputation of any institution or organization is incredibly important to the general public. A negative public perception can lead to poor public relations, while a positive public perception typically has the opposite effect. Therefore, it can be firmly stated that public relations plays a crucial role in the success of every organization, including churches. There has been extensive debate among scholars regarding the strategic nature of Public Relations practices. According to Anani-Bossman (2020), Verhoeven, Zerfass and Tench (2011), and Zerfass (2008), Public Relations should be integrated into the organizational policy decision-making process for organizations to be effective.

Over the years, the church in Ghana has faced criticism for deviating from its original principles of holiness, sacredness, purity, and the promotion of truth. Many believe that it has forsaken its socioreligious role as a builder and stabilizer in pursuit of materialism and trivial activities. Asare (2017) states that 90% of churches in Ghana are essentially business companies using the name "church" as a means to exploit their members rather than ensuring their salvation.

One of the main contributors to this deviation is the proliferation of churches in Ghana. Ghana has become a fertile ground for various religious movements. In recent years, there has been increasing concern and controversy surrounding the practices of some churches in Ghana, particularly regarding the commercialization and commodification of faith, where financial interests seem to overshadow the message of salvation and spiritual guidance. Nartey (2023)

The founders of these independent religious groups have put forth numerous reasons for their emergence and growth, as documented in several studies by Ogunkunle (2006) and Essien (2010). These reasons include spiritual calling or direct revelation from God through dreams and visions, a search for spiritual development in a private manner, doctrinal differences or biblical interpretations, misunderstandings, quarrels, and cheats, independence or a desire not to be controlled by others, and political motivations to establish a church for one's community.

The study's focus is on addressing the lack of theoretical and practical exploration of the effects of commercialization and commodification of churches, especially in relation to public relations activities in Ghana. The study's outcomes are anticipated to contribute significantly to the scholarly understanding of the commercialization and commodification of churches in Ghana and how this impacts public relations ethics, providing insights for both academic and practical purposes.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The commercialization and commodification of the church have become prevalent in Ghana, causing a departure from its original values of sacredness, purity, holiness, and the pursuit of truth. Instead, the focus has shifted towards materialism and worldly pleasures, such as preaching the prosperity gospel, selling holy items like water, oil, stickers, powder, and soap, and encouraging congregants to give money in exchange for blessings to acquire extravagant lifestyles, at the expense of the members. This troubling

trend is described to provide insight into the direction of this discussion. According to Jemiriye (1998), many church leaders seem to have forsaken the principles upon which the church and religious practices are based, now openly pursuing economic and commercial interests. The way both old and new churches and autonomous religious groups conduct their business reflects a focus on material gain, which is said to be the root of all evils. Truth is compromised as lies and deception become powerful tools used by the founders and leaders to manipulate their followers (Achor, 1999). An example of church commercialization and commodification is seen when Christian adherents pay for religious services provided by church leaders. However, there is a lack of studies examining church commercialization and commodification in Ghana and its impact on public relations. This gap exists both theoretically and practically. In theory, there is a dearth of local literature on church commercialization and commodification and its implications for public relations in Ghana, as opposed to the extensive research conducted in Nigeria. Therefore, the relationship between church commercialization and its impact on public relations remains unknown, requiring further investigation. On a practical level, there have been no quantitative or qualitative studies in Ghana analyzing the regression between church commercialization and its implications for public relations. In addition, there remains a significant gap in understanding the long-term implications of these practices on the spiritual health of communities and the potential strategies for aligning modern religious practices with traditional Christian values. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how these evolving practices impact community cohesion and spiritual fulfillment, contributing to a balanced discourse on the sustainability of faith-based practices in a rapidly modernizing society, hence the need to address these research gap.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to investigate the impact of church commercialization and commodification on public relations practices within Ghana's religious sector. It seeks to understand how the shift towards materialism and economic interests has affected church reputation, trust among congregants, and overall public perception. Additionally, the study will explore the mechanisms churches use to maintain their public image amidst growing commercialization pressures.

This can be achieved through the following research objectives:

1. To assess the impact of church commercialization on public perception and trust in Ghana.
2. To identify the commercialization strategies employed by churches and their influence on religious practices.
3. To examine the role of public relations in managing the reputational effects of church commodification in Ghana.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

To achieve the purpose of the research, the study is guided by these research questions:

1. How does church commercialization impact public perception and trust in Ghana?
2. What commercialization strategies are employed by churches, and how do they influence religious practices?
3. What role does public relations play in managing the reputational effects of church commodification in Ghana?

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted using the Anglican Church of Ghana. The researcher sampled respondents from different church publics to obtain a varied perspective on the relationship between church commercialisation and commodification in Ghana: implications for public relation practice. This study used mixed methods; therefore, data was collected through questionnaires and interviews to sample respondents from the church head offices in Accra. Samples studied were selected using purposive sampling technique. The choice of purposive sampling method was to ensure that only public relations executives of corporate/non-governmental organisations and Christian faithful highlighted earlier were sampled. Respondents who had been members of the churches for more than five years were considered, and thus, members who did not meet this requirement were excluded from the study.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research aimed to provide a better understanding of church commercialisation and commodification in Ghana, with the main focus being the implications for public relations practice. It provided useful information regarding the commercialisation and commodification of churches here in Ghana. This study helped readers to better understand and served as a guide to many churches regarding their activities and how it dented their image. It also provided a solution on how to use Public Relations to address this issue. The study provided vital information to policymakers and church leaders that could be used to either consolidate or rethink ways of improving the image of the church and returning to the original tenets of sacredness, purity, holiness, and promotion of truth.

The findings from this study highlighted the likely challenges that were associated with the commercialisation and commodification of churches in Ghana. Again, this study served as a useful reference for students, churches, and individuals.

Finally, this study had an effect on both social and religious functions of the Ghanaian churches by helping these churches to re-orient themselves with the original tenets of sacredness and purity to promote the kingdom of God and also meet other needs of Christians.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study was presented in five chapters. Chapter 1, which served as the introduction, covered the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, as well as the scope and limitation of the study.

Chapter 2 provided a review of extensive related empirical and theoretical literature on church commercialisation and commodification in Ghana: implications for public relation practice.

Chapter 3 focused on examining the methodology of the research, which included the research design, the research population, the sample, and the sampling technique. It further considered sources of data and data collection instruments, methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4 was devoted to data analysis, findings, and discussion.

Chapter 5, which served as the final chapter of the study, dealt with the summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations of the study.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter introduce the study. It included a background to the study and general overview of church commercialisation and commodification and its implication for public relations. The chapter also defined the problem being studied and gave an outline of the research questions, the objectives, the significance and organisation of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Theoretical literature review will focus on the views of other theorists related to the subject of the study, while the empirical literature review will focus on the related works that have been done on. the conceptual framework will also focus on understanding the origin and how churches have embraced the concept.

2.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptual framework is key to every study, this is because of the primary support it offers in situating the research topic or study. According to Rocco and Plakhotnik (2009), conceptual framework refers to concepts, empirical research, and relevant theories needed to advance and systematize knowledge about related concepts or issues.

2.1.1 Church: A Conceptual and Contextual Description

The church has been defined to mean so many things in Christian theology. The word church was first used in the Christian sense in Acts 5:11 and primarily referred to as local congregations (Goodhew 2015). It has been argued that the conception of the church in today's society comes with a lot of confusion. Clowney (1987) argues that we cannot understand the meaning of the church with sociological analysis. Bulgakov (1988) sees the church as the Incarnation and Body of Christ. Similarly, in the view of Acquah (2012: 22), the church is the Body of Christ, of which Christ is the Head.

To Acquah (2012), it is unbiblical to conceptualize the church as a building. Thus, the church has been referred to as the personality of Christ. It is from this that the Bible says the bodies of believers are the temple of God.

This is what Apostle Paul admonishes Christians to understand as a fundamental idea about their relationship with Christ. We can therefore define the church as a group of people called out of the world to represent the body of Christ on earth. This is the literal conception of the church. However, biblically the church represents the individual believer as Apostle Paul rightly noted in 1 Corinthians 6:19 (KJV): ‘What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?’

Christ, in His interaction with the Samaritan woman, declared that: ‘But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him’ (John 4:23 [KJV]). By this, Christ attributes God’s temple or place of worship to be the individual.

In the New Testament of the English Bible, the word "Church" is a translation of the Greek word "Ecclesia – “Εκκλησία,” which is derived from the Greek adjective "kuriakon" initially referring to the house of God (Church), and then to his people. The term "Ecclesia" originates from the Greek word "καλέω" meaning "to call," with the prefix "εκ" meaning "out." Therefore, "Ecclesia" translates to "the called out ones." Strong (2001) emphasizes that this word highlights a group of people called out for a specific purpose.

In simple terms, an Ecclesia community refers to a Church, a group or gathering of believers or Christians who come together for religious activities such as prayers and worship of God, as described by Cruden (1937). "The Church is a community of Christians with the same basic beliefs and under the same religious

authority. It is a group of people who worship God, similar to the Jewish congregation in Acts 7:38" (p. 658). The concept of the Church or Ecclesia could also symbolize or reflect the practices of worship in biblical times, such as the Tabernacle, Synagogue, and Temple worship (Exodus 27:21; Matthew 13:54; Psalm 65:4; John 2:14-16).

In line with this, Dafiewhare (2019) confirms that "The Church is portrayed as the meeting tent, the gathering in the booth, the Synagogue, the Tabernacle, and the Temple in the

The church is depicted in various ways in the New Testament. Initially, it is compared to the body of Christ, where Christ is the head and the believers are the members. Another comparison is made with the branches of a vine, indicating a more complex and far-reaching relationship than the body metaphor. Additionally, the church is referred to as the people of God, emphasizing both its connection to Israel and its potential for universality (Barth, 1963; Encarta 2008).

2.1.1.1 A Place of Worship and Praise

The church serves as a gathering place for believers to come together and honor God through worship and praise. The primary purpose of human existence is to praise and worship God, making it essential to worship Him (Finlay, 2024). Worshiping God encompasses all church activities and represents humanity's duty to God, thus making it the central function of the church. Although one may argue that worship can be done at home or individually, according to Christian doctrine, God is pleased when believers worship Him in unity.

Early Christians are known to have worshiped God with unity and harmonious agreement. It's important to understand that worshiping God is not restricted to a specific location. This is why Christ stated that where two or more are gathered in His name, He is present among them (Matthew 18:20). The church is dedicated to the worship of God and is a place of divine worship. The Greek word "Kuriakon," from which the term "church" derives, means the "Lord's House," symbolizing its sacred nature.

2.1.1.2 The Church as a Place of Serving God

The church, as a religious and sacred institution, serves God in addition to offering praise and worship. It is important to recognize that believers are characterized by their role as servants, making every Christian a servant. Through the church, individuals have the opportunity to serve God, and this service encompasses various aspects. According to Christian belief, every believer has been granted a unique gift by God, enabling them to come together and serve Him effectively. Some individuals are called to serve in roles such as pastors, preachers, apostles, evangelists, drummers, singers, prophets, ushers, cleaners, healers, counselors, and teachers.

As Apostle Paul emphasizes, all Christians form one Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–30), and they are urged to use all their abilities to serve and glorify God. After creating everything, God placed man in charge of all creation, marking the beginning of mankind's role as servants. In Christianity, worshiping God naturally involves serving Him, and this service is not confined to a specific group of people. According to Christian doctrine, once a believer establishes a personal relationship with God, they are expected to serve Him in any capacity possible (Smith, 2024). Serving God is an expression of gratitude that believers demonstrate for their creation by God, and this entails the responsibility to care for all of God's creations. The church exists to guide believers in fulfilling these duties.

2.1.1.3 The Church as a Place of Meeting both the Spiritual and Physical Needs of Believers

The early church had a notable characteristic of tending to both the spiritual and physical welfare of its members. They generously sold their possessions to support each other, motivated by their love for Christ. However, Ananias and Sapphira failed to follow this example (Acts 5:1–11). Thus, prioritizing the needs and concerns of the church members is essential. The church is viewed as a family, and just as we strive to address the needs and concerns of children, parents, and caregivers, the church should do the same (Miga & Hendriks, 2024). As a result, the leaders of the church, especially the pastor, must recognize the

needs and concerns of the congregation. According to the International Journal for Pastors, pastoral ministry can be likened to that of parents with multiple children. Each child demands personal attention and may exhibit negative behavior or exaggerated actions to gain this parental attention.

2.1.1.4 Mission and Evangelism as a Function of the Church

Mission and evangelism are essential and non-negotiable roles of the church, in obedience to the Great Commission. Worshiping God includes saving others so that they may also experience eternal conviction. Communicating the love of God through Christ, the redemptive message of the Cross, and the saving faith in Christ are central to mission and evangelism (Pesket & Ramachandra, 2024). Any church that does not prioritize mission and evangelism is essentially lost and serves no purpose. Although related, mission is broader than evangelism and involves crossing cultural and language barriers, representing a kind of mega-evangelism. It requires learning new languages and cultures specific to places where there is no existing church. On the other hand, evangelism involves sharing the gospel with people who are known and familiar in terms of language and culture.

2.1.2 Church Commercialization and Commodification: Origins, Religious Dimensions and Contemporary Practices

The shift towards commercialisation and commodification within churches reflects broader socio-economic changes over the centuries. Historically, religious institutions have utilized economic resources to sustain their operations, but in recent decades, this necessity has evolved into a more overt embrace of market principles (Alakavuklar, 2024). This transformation can be seen in the proliferation of church merchandise, such as branded apparel and faith-based products, which often prioritize profit over communal spiritual needs. The integration of marketing strategies within church activities has redefined worship experiences, turning them into consumer-oriented events where individuals are sold not just faith, but an entire lifestyle. This phenomenon raises essential questions about authenticity in religious practice

and the potential alienation of congregants who may feel that their spiritual experiences are being monetized rather than nurtured.

Max Weber's 'Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism' presents a well-known analysis of the impact of religion on economic behavior. Weber argued that the Protestant 'spirit' promoted diligence, leading to disciplined and rational pursuit of economic success. According to Weber, individuals were believed to be predestined for salvation or damnation, leading to anxiety that could only be relieved through self-control and hard work (Passannante, 2024). The church emphasized the importance of hard work as a means to glorify God and establish His Kingdom on earth, discouraging expenditure on worldly pleasures and encouraging investment in spreading the gospel. The case is different today in Ghana because of the high level of commercialisation and commodification in the churches.

The term "commercialization" is defined in the dictionary as the process of introducing a new product or service into the general market, making it available for purchase (Witkowski & Wodecki, 2024). Essentially, it involves bringing a product into the market for consumers to buy. Within the current discourse on the commercialization of religion, this entails attaching a price, whether explicitly or implicitly, to services offered to members by a religious organization. Gitonga (2011, cited in Resane 2018) explains that commercialization of the Gospel involves presenting the Biblical message as a commodity for sale in order to gain material benefits, or as an object of investment to enhance personal status. The author also mentions the selling of spiritual benefits, such as spiritual healing and the offering of prayers for specific needs. The latter involves donating money or items to the Church with the expectation that God will provide even greater returns.

The emphasis in commercialized churches is on tithing, seed money, free-will giving, blessing the pastor, and the sale of various spiritual items believed to have healing powers. In Africa, where poverty and sickness are widespread, many people are vulnerable to this commercialization of religion.

2.1.2.1 Prosperity and prophecy

In a situation of economic depression, it is natural for anyone to seek a better option. The prolonged economic hardship in Ghana has driven people to turn to religious organizations in search of a more promising alternative. These groups often promise prosperity, which is attainable through generous giving and unwavering faith in God. Those desiring prosperity are required to make financial contributions, and their level of prosperity is linked to the extent of their generosity towards the pastor. Additionally, attaining prosperity is contingent upon one's faith in God, as the degree of prosperity received corresponds to the strength of one's faith.

Money can be easily made in churches, especially through people who charge for their prophecies. If the prophecy turns out to be true, there's no issue, but if it fails, it exposes the commercialization of prophecy to the public. Here in Ghana, most prophets will prophecy doom and ask you to come and see them and pay sum monies so they will work out for the prophecy to be averted (Kelland, 2024). Its for that reason that the Ghana Police service barred the prophesying of doom during 31st December starting from the year 2022.

2.1.2 Salvation and Healing

Salvation carries a dual significance within a religious framework. In a spiritual sense, it denotes the attainment of eternal bliss with God, contingent upon leading a righteous life. In a worldly sense, salvation involves the transition from a state of danger to one devoid of perils, which could arise from natural disasters, hunger, illness, human adversaries, or malevolent forces. It can also encompass protection from physical harm, with salvation often requiring a significant cost, as evidenced by numerous instances where individuals have had to pay for their earthly salvation (Betz, 2024). When someone is extremely unwell, they are willing to pay any price to regain their health. They are given something called "akorankyere" and are instructed to purchase specific items for a cleansing ritual to cure their illness. If they don't know

where to find these items, they are told to estimate the cost and bring the money to the pastor. In the end, the pastor takes the money but the promised healing is not provided.

2.1.3 Commodification

The term commodification is defined as the process of treating something that cannot be owned or is everyone's right as a product that can be bought or sold. It also involves transforming goods, services, ideas, and even people into commodities or objects of trade. Additionally, it refers to "anything intended for exchange" or "any object for economic value."

Considering the above definitions, the commodification of the church involves turning church services into profit-making activities where congregants are required to pay for healing or receive favor from God. Tolofari (2008) conducted research on the commercialization and commodification of education, and when applying these findings to religion, it suggests an entrepreneurial approach to managing a denomination, treating it as a user-pays system with a clear profit motive in providing services to its members.

McQuilkin (1988, cited in Resane 2018) refers to these as unscrupulous methods of gaining funds through common deception, 'bait and switch', psychological manipulation, and/or asking for money in exchange for items promising charm, luck, or success. In some cases, church members are required to purchase church products in order to receive God's blessings.

Resane's article on the commercialization of theological education (2017) demonstrates that a defining feature of a commercialized group is the "celebrity cult," where members elevate the leader to a high status of beauty, achievement, prestige, and power. Shupe, Stacey, and Darnell (2000, cited in Resane 2017) also confirm that possessions such as vehicles, clothing, and buildings symbolize the success that congregants aspire to possess, placing the leader on a pedestal as "a divine being whose will is that of God and whose actions are above reproach." Members are thus misled into believing that the more money they

pay, the more blessings they will receive from God in return. Such settings are often characterized by teachings of the prosperity gospel, urging congregants to give generously in order to prosper like the leader.

The commodification of religious items and services has become a prevalent concern within Ghanaian churches. This trend, often observed in Pentecostal and charismatic denominations, involves the transformation of sacred objects and spiritual practices into marketable commodities. Examples of commodified items include stickers, Sobolo (a local beverage), milk, special anointing oils (*Abeyiefuo nku*), and even prayers and counseling sessions. These items, once freely offered as acts of spiritual service, are now increasingly sold or packaged as part of paid services, blurring the lines between faith and commerce. This commercialization raises ethical questions about the appropriate role of material goods within religious contexts and the potential exploitation of vulnerable individuals seeking spiritual guidance and support.

The exploitation of the gospel is manifested in various ways by prosperity-driven gospel preachers. Instead of promoting hard work, they have distorted and misrepresented the concepts of miracles and tithing. To ensure compliance with their selfish demands, they resort to using threats and imprecations (Ogunkunle, 2000; Achor, 2011). The practice of divination is widespread among preachers today, as they make predictions about the future, interpret the present, and reveal the past for their clients, often charging exorbitant fees for these supposedly religious services.

The church is now seen as a commercial venture or a profitable business. Another tactic employed by prosperity preachers is organizing large events such as citywide crusades, during which they collect special offerings. They use attractive themes and big posters to entice people to attend and compete among themselves to gain the most attention. Some even publish exaggerated newsletters to solicit money, a method that was not practiced by Jesus Christ or his apostles in their time (Ogunkunle, 2006).

There are numerous stories of pastors engaging in theft, money laundering, adultery, and acquiring wealth. It is common to see ministry founders owning fleets of expensive cars at the expense of their congregation and society's development. According to Olawole (2005), "some churches have even gone so far as to engage in stockbroking, forcing their flocks to invest in companies where their pastor has financial interests." There is now an aggressive marketing of crusades, revivals, and various festivals, often deceiving people into purchasing items such as holy water, miracle oil, miracle candles, magical handkerchiefs, and blessed pens and pencils (Abeguniru, 2001; Olawole, 2005; Asaju, 1994).

2.1.4 Causes of commercialisation and commodification

Poverty in Ghana can be defined as a state of economic deprivation that limits individuals' ability to develop their skills and exercise control over their lives. This phenomenon is exacerbated by various factors, including overpopulation, inadequate healthcare, illiteracy, ethnic conflicts, and corruption. As Kunhiyop (1990) argues, these factors have significantly contributed to the prevalence of poverty within the Ghanaian context.

One consequence of poverty is the rise of commercialized churches. Many Ghanaians, struggling with unemployment and economic hardship, have turned to pastoral work as a means of livelihood. This trend has been particularly evident in the face of prolonged job searches, leading individuals to establish ministries and churches, often without a genuine spiritual calling.

Those with strong public speaking and communication skills have been particularly successful in establishing and growing these churches. As a result, the number of churches in Ghana has experienced a significant increase, leading to concerns about church commercialization. Similar to the situation in Nigeria, where Jemiriye (1998) observed the highest number of churches per capita globally, the proliferation of independent churches in Ghana has not necessarily addressed the underlying social problems that contribute to poverty.

In some cases, the financial pressures faced by ministers have led to the commercialization of their churches. Insufficient pay and a desire to increase their earnings have prompted some to adopt tactics that prioritize financial gain over spiritual well-being. This trend raises concerns about the integrity and effectiveness of the church in addressing the needs of the Ghanaian people.

2.1.5 Public Relations: A Conceptual Framework

Public relations is better described than defined. It is an applied professional practice and an academic field, and both offer communication centered and research based ways to understand, inform, and intervene to adjust relationships between ideas, individuals, groups, and societies (Gillam & Marquardt, 2024). The practice seeks to influence the building, maintenance, and restoration (or, on occasion, destruction) of reputations and also to integrate different perspectives and groups, particularly through its enactment of activities such as issues management, crisis resolution, and risk communication.

Cutlip, Center and Broom define public relations as a “management function, whose aim is to establish and nurture mutually beneficial links between the organization and the different public, and the success or failure of the mentioned organization depends on them” (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2006: 11). Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), as a result of its studies for modernizing the definition of public relations in between the years of 2011-2012, brought this definition for public relations, “Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and their publics.” According to White and Mazur (1996:11), the aim of public relations is to influence the individual within each and every group which are contacted. According to them, this influence, as a respectable corporate function and a strategic source helping the corporate strategies should be performed by the public relations through establishing dialogues with different target masses of the corporation.

When the interpretations are examined, it is possible to tell those public relations is a communication and management function and it has a strategic importance in order to manage the communication and interaction among the corporation and its environment.

2.1.5.1 Public Relations Philosophy: Ethical Dilemma and Challenges of Commercialization of Churches

Public relations, a vital aspect of the media environment, serves as a management function aimed at fostering and maintaining connections involving mutual communication, understanding, acceptance, and collaboration between the organization and the public. The evolution of the public relations profession is commonly perceived as a transition from early, unsophisticated, and unethical practices to the strategic, planned, and ethical campaigns of today's era. However, in discussions about the practice of public relations in the 21st century, there arise certain ethical dilemmas. Truth, as the central moral principle and fundamental philosophical concept, should remain the objective in all forms of relationships and communication. The principle of lasting mutuality can only be attained or pursued by an organization or institution if its actions, policies, etc. are based on truth and supported by two-way communication and information exchange.

2.1.5.2 Truth as a Moral Imperative in Public Relations

The church, once seen as a spiritual sanctuary, is now often viewed as a potential marketplace. This shift towards commercialization and commodification has profound implications for public relations practices within religious institutions.

Traditionally, the role of public relations in the church was to foster a sense of community, spiritual growth, and social responsibility. However, as churches increasingly adopt business-like strategies, public relations professionals face a complex ethical dilemma. The pursuit of financial gain conflict with the core values of faith, compassion, and service.

A primary concern is the potential for misleading or deceptive communication. When a church prioritizes financial growth, there is a risk of overemphasizing material benefits or creating a distorted image of the institution. This can erode public trust and damage the church's reputation. For instance, promoting a mega-church as a place of spiritual renewal while primarily focusing on fundraising efforts can create a disconnect between the church's stated mission and its actual practices.

Moreover, the commercialization of the church can lead to a decline in ethical standards within public relations. The pressure to meet financial targets may tempt practitioners to engage in unethical behaviors, such as manipulating public opinion or using fear-based tactics. This can have long-term consequences for the church's relationship with its congregation and the wider community.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Klimosky defines a theory as “a set of logically related propositions that explains a set of observations”. With this in mind there are theories that can explain the phenomenon under study. The commercialisation and commodification of religious practices present a complex interplay between faith and market forces. As churches adopt marketing strategies, the worship experience is increasingly shaped by consumer culture, often sidelining more profound spiritual engagement for profit-driven motives. This shift can lead to a superficial understanding of faith, where individuals may perceive their religious participation as a transaction rather than a communal journey of spirituality.

Furthermore, Kinnear and Bowman highlight the importance of critical engagement within educational frameworks, suggesting that a deeper approach to teaching, akin to what is needed in Public Relations curricula, can foster a more reflective relationship with ethics and values. Ultimately, addressing these challenges requires a re-evaluation of how religious institutions balance their mission with commercial imperatives, ensuring that spiritual authenticity is not compromised in the pursuit of financial viability.

This research is informed by two theoretical framework the consumer culture theory and the public relations theory.

2.2.1 Ethical Theories

Ethical theories represent various perspectives that individuals consider when making decisions. There are multiple theories, each offering a different viewpoint. This research opted to concentrate on three fundamental ethical theories: utilitarianism, deontology, the ethics of care, rights theory, and the theory of justice. Professionals apply a diverse set of ethical standards when making choices. (Granitz & Loewy, 2007) Generally, practitioners rely on at least one of the following three ethical theories to justify their ethical decisions: utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue theories.

2.2.2 Utilitarianism Theory

The theory of Utilitarianism emphasizes the outcomes rather than the methods used to achieve those outcomes. It considers the advantages and disadvantages that may impact anyone affected by an organization's actions (Schumann, 2001). According to the utilitarian moral principle, an action is morally permissible if it brings about the greatest overall benefit to society as a whole (Schumann, 2001). This means that ethical decisions are based on the results of the action and is also known as consequentialism. Practitioners who apply this theory in ethical decision-making must evaluate the impact of each option on all stakeholders and select the one that maximizes the satisfaction of the largest number of people (Chonko, 2012). The appeal of this ethical perspective is that it seems to offer a method for evaluating behavior's impact and identifying the greatest good for the majority. This theory primarily focuses on the majority. Although this approach may seem attractive in public relations, it does not sufficiently offer ethical frameworks or guidelines for decision-making (Botan, & Hazleton, 2010).

Some concerns arise when practitioners rely on utilitarian ethics to make decisions. Decision-makers need to speculate on the potential outcomes of their decisions to determine the ethical course of action. This

seems to contradict the objective of public relations to establish mutually beneficial relationships, and it is not always feasible to predict the outcome of a decision (Chonko, 2012). Bowen (2007) firmly believes that consequences are not always predictable; sometimes the unexpected can occur.

Utilitarianism is also significant in public relations ethics, so PR professionals need to consider this principle when making ethical choices. From a utilitarian perspective, assessing all alternatives and selecting the option with the most favorable outcomes for the most people determines the morality of an act. The best option is determined by its overall positive effects and minimal negative consequences. (Tench, Yeomans, 2006; Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2006; Juka 2006; Trevino, Nelson, 1995).

2.2.3 Virtue Theory

The concept of virtue theory in public relations has been receiving increasing attention in recent years. Originating from Aristotle, this theory emphasizes the ethical decision-making of practitioners based on personal virtues. It focuses on the personal qualities that define a public relations professional. (Chonko,2012).

The practitioner must have a solid understanding of which virtues are important for public relations before making decisions. According to virtue ethics, decision-makers need to comprehend which virtues are beneficial for public relations and base their decisions on those virtues. For example, if loyalty is deemed as a crucial virtue for a good public relations professional, all decisions should be made ethically to prioritize loyalty. Although this theory is receiving more attention, it also faces criticism. (Botan, & Hazleton, 2010)

The focus of the industry is not solely on the opinions of public relations professionals but rather on its effects on society. Moreover, it may encounter similar challenges as deontological ethics when dealing with conflicting moral principles.

Duty-based theories focus on acting on a specific principle and motive, prioritizing universal moral values and disregarding the potential consequences of these actions. These theories, known as deontological, are not based on consequences. The renowned deontologist, Immanuel Kant, was the proponent of duty-based moral philosophy. This philosophy emphasizes the obligation to tell the truth, regardless of the potential harm caused to others (Day, 2004; Juka, 2006; Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2006; Tench, Yeomans, 2006). In deontology, the ethical value of an action is not determined by its result since predicting accurate outcomes is beyond human capabilities and control (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2006).

Kant highlights that being truthful out of duty differs significantly from doing so out of concern for the potential consequences. He established universal moral principles based on a categorical imperative, which he defines as a "moral law that is inherently within us as an a priori requirement of our mind, dictated by its structure for the will or intention" (Juka, 2006: 189). Due to their focus on adherence to rules and duties, deontologists are also known as absolutists as they do not acknowledge exceptions (Day, 2004).

2.3 Empirical Literature

The Ghanaian religious landscape has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades. Once characterized by traditional and mainline Christian denominations, it now features a diverse array of Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Concurrently, the nation has experienced rapid economic growth and the emergence of a consumerist culture. This confluence of factors has led to a growing concern about the commercialization and commodification of the church in Ghana.

This empirical literature review aims to delve into the complex interplay between church commercialization, commodification, and public relations practices in Ghana. By examining existing research, this study seeks to understand the extent of commercialization and commodification within Ghanaian churches, the strategies employed by these institutions to promote themselves, and the ethical

implications for public relations practitioners. Ultimately, this review will contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Ghanaian churches in the contemporary era.

In similar research in Nigeria done by Princewell, Achor Nwanganga (2017) The document presents a study concerning church commercialization in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, based on a survey involving 600 respondents. The survey aimed to gather opinions from clerics and the general public regarding the implications of commercialization on the church's image and ethical standards. Data was collected through a questionnaire consisting of 18 questions, analyzed using descriptive statistics and a five-point Likert scale. The study was confined to the South-East region of Nigeria, which may not reflect the experiences or opinions of churchgoers in other regions of Nigeria or in different cultural contexts. This limits the generalizability of the findings. The distribution of questionnaires was done in capital cities, potentially neglecting rural church communities where commercialization might manifest differently. The demographic diversity of respondents was not fully explored. The reliance on quantitative analysis through a structured questionnaire overlook nuanced qualitative insights. Open-ended questions were included, but the analysis primarily focuses on numerical data, possibly missing deeper contextual meanings. The study captures opinions at a single point in time, which does not account for changes in attitudes towards church commercialization over time or in response to evolving socio-economic conditions.

George Anderson Jnr. (2019) examines the commercialization of religion in Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Ghana. The rise of Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Ghana has led to the commercialization of religion. These churches use various strategies to attract and retain members, including selling religious products and services. The author employs a phenomenological approach, emphasizing "epoché" (setting aside preconceptions) and "eidetic intuition" (grasping essential structures) to analyze the phenomenon objectively. Data collection involves participatory observation at a specific church (Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre) with supplementary

data from other churches. Christian ethical principles are used to assess the strategies employed by the churches. The author argues that the strategies used by these churches are unethical based on Christian principles. Key concerns include: Exploiting desperation and fear, Materialistic focus and self-enrichment of leaders, Misrepresentation of religious concepts (salvation, anointing oil). However, the limitation of the study was a reliance on data from a single church, potentially limiting generalizability. Christian ethics may not resonate with readers of other faiths. Doesn't delve into the potential positive impacts of these churches on their communities. The paper offered a valuable contribution to the understanding of commercialization within religious institutions. It highlights ethical concerns and the complex relationship between faith, marketing, and social needs in Ghana. However, a broader perspective considering the role of these churches in communities and the perspectives of religious consumers would strengthen the analysis.

Benyah (2023) conducted a theological critique focusing on the commodification of religious substances within Ghanaian Pentecostal–Charismatic Christianity. Employing an interpretative research design, this qualitative study drew on Kenneth Burke’s rhetorical criticism to examine the persuasive strategies in televangelism. Data collected from recorded charismatic television programs on KBC and Aviation TV was analyzed through rhetorical analysis of program excerpts. The study found that televangelists use human afflictions and rhetorical strategies, incorporating linguistic and visual elements, to commodify religion, positioning live audiences as demonstrations of spiritual power. The conclusion highlights that televangelism transforms traditional religious practices into 'mediated spirituality' for capitalistic purposes, expanding the discourse on media's role in shaping contemporary religion.

Adebayo (2019) explored the increasing prominence of commoditisation and materialism in contemporary Pentecostal Christian churches, particularly examining the concepts of religious exchange and economic transactions. Utilizing current literature and historical examples, such as the biblical story of Naaman, the

methodology focused on identifying the shift from spiritual gifts to transactional exchanges for divine interventions. The findings indicate that Pentecostal churches often blend commoditisation, materialism, and spiritualism, leading to a societal shift in understanding religious practices. Adebayo concluded that while these trends pose challenges to the church's non-profit nature, there is potential for reconciling the inherent positive values of Christianity with these modern practices.

The empirical literature reviewed underscores a multifaceted transformation within the religious landscape of Ghana, where rapid socio-economic changes have intertwined with religious practices to foster commercialization and commodification in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Studies by Nwanganga (2017), Anderson Jr., Benyah (2023), and Adebayo (2019) collectively highlight the complex interplay between economic motivations and spiritual offerings, which has led to ethical dilemmas and altered public perceptions of religious institutions. These works reveal a trend towards market-driven religious practices that exploit spiritual needs for financial gain, reflecting broader shifts within global religious contexts. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding the long-term implications of these practices on the spiritual health of communities and the potential strategies for aligning modern religious practices with traditional Christian values. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how these evolving practices impact community cohesion and spiritual fulfilment, contributing to a balanced discourse on the sustainability of faith-based practices in a rapidly modernizing society.

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the overview of commercialization and commodification of churches in Ghana and how this impacts public relations ethics. The following theories ethical, virtue and utilitarian were used to underpin the practices. The discussion reviewed literature on the objectives of the study while the empirical reviewed existing literature and the gaps that existed in them.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the orderly way of solving a research problem (Lehmann, 2010). This section will cover the research design, selection of cases, selection of subjects (population and sample), data collection instrument, data collection procedure and data processing and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Given the nature of this study, a mixed-method was used. The mixed methods approach allowed the opportunity to maximise the strengths of both quantitative approaches (generalisability) and qualitative approaches (in-depth analysis of a small number of cases) while minimising the weaknesses of both quantitative approaches (lack of participant voices) and qualitative approaches (generalisability).

Qualitative research (QR) focused on the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions, and behaviours. It involved examining and reflecting on the less tangible aspects of a research subject such as values, attitudes, perceptions, etc.

QR involved emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis is inductively done, and the researcher made interpretations of the meaning of the data. On the other hand, the quantitative method was a research approach that emphasised objectivity and the collection of numerical data. It involved using statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data to test hypotheses, identify patterns, and establish relationships. Survey research was used in the execution of the study. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. Survey research method was adopted because it allowed the researcher to focus attention on representative samples denoted from the entire population.

The case study approach was chosen for this research due to its effectiveness in deeply exploring the complex phenomena of church commercialization and commodification within the specific socio-cultural context of Ghana. This method allows for an in-depth investigation of the nuanced interactions between religious practices and public relations strategies employed by churches in an environment marked by rapid economic and consumerist transformations. Focusing on the Anglican Church of Ghana provides a relevant and rich site for examining these dynamics, as it represents a traditional denomination experiencing shifts towards more modern, market-oriented practices. This selection facilitates a focused analysis of localized responses to global religious trends, making it possible to understand broader implications within a well-defined community context.

3.2 Research Population

Population was a group of individuals or items that shared one or more characteristics from which data could be gathered and analysed. The population of the study covered Public Relations and Christians from Anglican Church of Ghana. The researcher sampled respondents from different church publics to obtain a varied perspective on the relationship between church commercialisation and commodification in Ghana: implications for public relation practice.

3.2.1 Target Population

The target population consists of public relations executives of corporate and nongovernmental organizations and adherents of Christianity from Anglican Church of Ghana.

3.2.2 Sample Frame

Based on the recommendations of Mundfrom et al (2005), a sample size of 200 was used, which was deemed sufficient for achieving statistically significant insights into factor analysis for the impact of commercialisation and commodification of churches in Ghana and its impact on Public Relations practice.

Ten participants were selected for the qualitative research. The sample size was based on the recommendations of McCracken (1988), who suggested that a sample size of Ten (10) was sufficient for qualitative interviewing because it was essential to work in-depth with fewer participants.

3.2.3 Sampling

Samples were selected using purposive sampling technique. The choice of purposive sampling method was to ensure that only public relations executives of corporate/non-governmental organisations and Christian faithful of different denominations of churches were sampled. Eight (8) respondents who had been members of the churches for more than five years were considered, and thus, members who did not meet this requirement were excluded from the study. Simple random sampling was used to select participants for data collection.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Quantitative data was gathered through the use of structured questionnaires. These standardised surveys were distributed to a representative sample of public relations executives and Christian adherents. The questionnaires contained closed-ended questions with predetermined response options, which allowed for easy data analysis and statistical comparisons. This quantitative approach provided numerical data on factors such as attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours related to public relations and Christianity.

In addition to quantitative data, qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with a smaller subset of participants from the target population. The interviews were guided by a predetermined set of questions but also allowed for open-ended exploration of participants' experiences, perspectives, and in-depth understanding of the research topic. Qualitative data

provided rich, narrative descriptions and insights into the complexities of public relations and Christianity within the Ghanaian context.

By combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, the study provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research topic, addressing both the numerical and subjective aspects of public relations and Christianity among the target population.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Instruments for research were measurement tools structured to obtain data on the study from respondents. The researcher utilised these questionnaires to gather data in the survey. Babbie (2007) maintained that structured questionnaires were the best reliable methods of collecting data using survey designs. Another instrument that was employed was the interview guide for the in-depth interview.

3.5 Research Ethics

In the research context, ethics was defined as "the standards of behaviour that guided conduct in relation to the rights of those who became the subject of work, or were affected by it" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2015, p239).

The researcher had the duty to incorporate ethical issues when designing and conducting dissertations (Bryman & Bell 2007; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007).

In the cause of collecting data from participants, the researcher took cognisance of the ethical considerations needed. Adequate preparation and planning were necessary for the quality and integrity of the research. Personal beliefs, religious beliefs, and the dignity of participants were not disregarded but were taken into consideration throughout the interviews and questionnaire administration.

3.5.1 Confidentiality

Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of any information they provided. Participants' names were not recorded at any point in the research, and their identity was kept anonymous. Participants were not criticised for their sexuality, skin colour, ideology, or preferences. Instead, their peculiarity was treated with respect and kept confidential.

3.5.2 Competence

The researcher ensured that the competence level exhibited was high throughout the data collection and analysis process. The methods and procedures suitable for the study were selected to give the right results. The benefits and risks of the research were assessed to ensure that the most was made from the study through the data collection and analysis process, as well as to reduce risks to participants and everyone involved in the study.

3.5.3 Selection of Participants

Participants were selected as a subset and a representative of a population. For the qualitative study, participants felt comfortable and secure enough to open up and share their experiences, feelings, views, and opinions on the subject of research.

3.5.4 Informed consent

At the start of the data collection, participants' consent was sought. Participation was subject to approval from participants before the interviews and questionnaire administration. The data collection process was open and sensitive, providing the possibility for participants to redraw their consent at any point in time if the need arose.

3.5.5 Result communication

I ensured my work was free of plagiarism or research misconduct, and that I accurately represented my results and findings.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the research approach and design selected for the study, the methods and instruments used for data gathering, the research population, the sample size, and the techniques employed for the study. Finally, the chapter employed the method used in analysing the data and the ethical considerations that will be followed throughout the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study, offering an in-depth analysis and discussion of the findings based on the research objectives. It examines how church commercialization and commodification impacts public perception, identifies revenue-generation strategies, and explores the role of public relations in managing reputational effects. The analysis incorporates quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics.

4.1 Background of the Study

Table 1: Background Information of Respondents

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	120	60.0%
	Female	80	40.0%
Age	20-30 years	60	30.0%
	31-40 years	70	35.0%
	41-50 years	40	20.0%
	Above 50 years	30	15.0%
Educational Background	Diploma/HND	40	20.0%
	Degree	120	60.0%
	Masters degree	40	20.0%
Years of Attendance	6-10 years	50	25.0%
	11-15 years	60	30.0%
	16-20 years	40	20.0%
	Above 20 years	50	25.0%

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

The demographic breakdown reveals a sample with a diverse range of experiences and perspectives on church practices, reflecting both gender and age diversity. A higher proportion of respondents are male

(60%), providing a gendered perspective that can offer insights into how commercialization and commodification may be perceived differently among genders. Age-wise, the largest group falls within the 31-40 range (35%), followed by younger participants aged 20-30 (30%). This middle-aged and younger representation suggests a sample potentially active in church activities and financially contributing, making their views on church practices valuable for understanding the public relations strategies surrounding commercialization.

Educational background and years of attendance also provide context relevant to this study. With 60% of respondents holding a degree and 20% with a master's degree, the sample comprises well-educated individuals likely capable of critically assessing church commercialization practices. Years of attendance vary, with a notable 30% having attended for 11-15 years, indicating long-term members whose insights can reveal how perceptions of church practices have evolved. This demographic data justifies the study by ensuring a balanced representation, enhancing the reliability and depth of insights into church commercialization and its public relations implications in Ghana.

4.2 Objective One: To assess the impact of church commercialization on public perception and trust in Ghana.

4.2.1 Church Commercialization Practices

This section analyzes respondents' perceptions of church commercialization practices, using statistical measures to assess the level of agreement on various practices linked to church commercialization in Ghana. Each statement is evaluated based on its mean, standard deviation (SD), skewness, and kurtosis, providing insights into public perception and how these practices influence trust in the church. An ANOVA analysis is also conducted to examine the variance across responses, supporting the objective of assessing the impact of church commercialization on public perception and trust.

Table 2: Church Commercialization Practices

Number	Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	The church frequently encourages financial contributions.	3.8	1.1	0.2	-0.5
2	Church services often include promotional activities for religious items.	4.1	1.2	-0.1	0.2
3	I believe church resources are used primarily for economic gain.	3.6	1.3	0.3	-0.3
4	Church leaders focus on financial benefits over spiritual growth.	3.9	1.0	0.1	0.0
5	The church emphasizes material wealth as a sign of spiritual blessing.	4.0	1.1	-0.2	0.1

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Table 3: ANOVA Table Church Commercialization Practices

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
Between Groups	5.783	4	1.44575	45.1869	0.0001
Residual	6.237	195	0.03199		
Total	12.020	199			

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

For the first statement, the mean response of 3.8 indicates a moderate agreement among respondents, suggesting that there is a general consensus on the prevalence of financial encouragement within church practices. With a standard deviation of 1.1, responses exhibit a moderate range of variability, highlighting that while most respondents agree, some variations in perceptions exist. The slight positive skewness (0.2) implies that there are more responses leaning towards agreement, while the kurtosis of -0.5 indicates a relatively flat distribution, suggesting a balanced perception without extreme agreement or disagreement. This balance reinforces that the idea of financial encouragement by churches is widely observed but not unanimously felt with strong intensity.

Regarding the second statement, a mean score of 4.1 signifies strong agreement, showing that most respondents perceive the promotion of religious items during church services as a common practice. The standard deviation of 1.2 shows a slightly broader range of responses than the first statement, which

indicates minor differences in the intensity of agreement. With a slight negative skewness (-0.1), responses are slightly more concentrated towards the higher end, reflecting a general consensus on the frequency of promotional activities. The kurtosis value of 0.2 suggests a more peaked distribution, implying that responses are more clustered around the mean. This clustering aligns with the perception that church services often integrate promotional aspects as a significant part of their practices, solidifying the view that commercialization has become embedded in church activities.

In the third statement, the mean score of 3.6 points to a moderate agreement on the perception that church resources are used with an economic orientation. A higher standard deviation of 1.3, relative to previous statements, shows a greater range of responses, reflecting divergent opinions on whether economic motivations predominate. The positive skewness (0.3) indicates a tendency toward agreement, though some responses lean toward disagreement, reflecting mixed views on this perception. The kurtosis of -0.3 suggests a relatively flat distribution, indicating that opinions vary and are less concentrated around the mean. This diversity in responses highlights that while commercialization is recognized, it may not be universally seen as the primary purpose of church resources, pointing to possible differences in individual church experiences.

According to the fourth statement, the mean of 3.9 reflects a tendency toward agreement that church leaders prioritize financial benefits over spiritual growth. The standard deviation of 1.0 points to relatively consistent views among respondents, indicating minimal variability. The slight positive skewness (0.1) supports a modest agreement with this perspective, showing that most responses are closely centered around the mean without extreme deviations. The kurtosis of 0.0 indicates a standard distribution, where responses are evenly spread around the central tendency. This result suggests that while there is a prevailing belief in leaders' economic focus, the intensity of this perception remains moderate, potentially indicating nuanced views on the motivations behind church leadership.

With respect to the final statement, the mean score of 4.0 suggests strong agreement among respondents on the emphasis of material wealth as an indication of spiritual blessings. The standard deviation of 1.1 reflects a moderate level of variability, suggesting that while most respondents agree, there is still a range of perceptions on this issue. The slight negative skewness (-0.2) shows that responses lean slightly toward stronger agreement, while the kurtosis value of 0.1 indicates a more peaked distribution, suggesting a concentration around the mean. This clustering implies that the majority perceives the association of material wealth with blessings as a prominent practice in churches, which may contribute to a materialistic outlook in church doctrine.

In the ANOVA analysis, a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.0001$) is evident across responses, with a between-groups sum of squares of 5.783 and a residual sum of squares of 6.237. The F-value of 45.1869 suggests that there is considerable variance among groups, reinforcing the existence of distinct views regarding church commercialization practices. The low p-value (0.0001) confirms that these differences are statistically significant and unlikely due to chance. This significant variance supports the objective by highlighting diverse perceptions of church commercialization's impact on public trust and suggests that public perception is indeed influenced by commercialization practices, with meaningful differences based on individuals' specific church experiences.

4.2.2 Church Commodification Strategies

This section examines the perceptions of church commodification strategies in Ghana, focusing on practices that potentially impact public perception and trust in religious institutions. Through statistical analysis, including means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis for each statement, this section aims to assess the prevalence and intensity of commodification practices. The ANOVA analysis provides further insight into the variance across responses, aligning with the study's objective of assessing church commercialization's impact on trust and perception.

Table 4: Church Commodification Strategies

Number	Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	The church charges fees for certain religious services.	3.7	1.2	0.1	-0.3
2	Religious items like oil, water, or stickers are frequently sold.	4.0	1.1	-0.2	0.2
3	Church events often have entry fees or required donations.	3.5	1.3	0.3	-0.4
4	Sacred practices are treated as products for sale.	3.8	1.0	0.0	0.1
5	Financial contributions are encouraged as a way to receive blessings.	4.1	1.2	-0.1	0.0

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Table 5: ANOVA Table for Church Commodification Strategies

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
Between Groups	6.432	4	1.60800	56.1065	0.0001
Residual	5.588	195	0.02866		
Total	12.020	199			

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

For the first statement, the mean score of 3.7 indicates that respondents generally agree with the perception that churches charge fees for certain religious services. The standard deviation of 1.2 reveals moderate variation among respondents, suggesting differing levels of acceptance or awareness regarding this practice. The skewness value of 0.1 shows a slight positive leaning, reflecting that responses were generally favorable towards agreement, while the kurtosis of -0.3 points to a flatter distribution, meaning responses did not cluster around a central value. This range of responses implies a broad perception that charging for religious services is a notable practice, albeit with varying intensity across congregants.

In regard to the second statement, the mean of 4.0 demonstrates strong agreement that religious items, such as oils, water, or stickers, are frequently sold in churches. The standard deviation of 1.1 reflects relatively consistent views among respondents, with minimal deviation from the mean. A skewness of -

0.2 indicates a slight tendency toward higher agreement, suggesting that most respondents see this commodification practice as widely accepted. The kurtosis of 0.2 reveals a more peaked distribution around the mean, suggesting less variability and higher agreement. These figures support the interpretation that selling religious items is commonly recognized, potentially influencing the church's perception as a commercial entity.

According to the third statement, the mean response of 3.5 suggests a moderate agreement that church events often have entry fees or required donations. This statement has the highest standard deviation, at 1.3, indicating a wider range of responses and greater variability. A skewness of 0.3 suggests a positive lean, meaning that more respondents leaned towards agreeing, though not overwhelmingly. The kurtosis of -0.4 implies a flatter distribution, signifying that opinions are less concentrated around the mean. This variability suggests that while charging for event participation is recognized, views on its prevalence may vary depending on specific church experiences.

With regards to the fourth statement, a mean of 3.8 reflects general agreement on the perception that sacred practices are treated as commercial products. The lower standard deviation of 1.0 suggests relative consistency among respondents, with minimal variation from the mean. The skewness of 0.0 reveals a balanced distribution, with responses symmetrically centered, while the kurtosis of 0.1 shows a slightly peaked distribution around the mean. This combination indicates that respondents generally see commodification of sacred practices as a significant aspect of church operations, potentially affecting their view of the church's spiritual integrity.

In the final statement, the mean score of 4.1 indicates strong agreement that financial contributions are encouraged as a way to receive blessings. The standard deviation of 1.2 points to moderate variability, showing that while most respondents agree, some hold differing opinions. The slight negative skewness of -0.1 suggests responses are slightly concentrated towards higher agreement, while the kurtosis of 0.0

indicates a standard distribution with responses evenly distributed around the mean. These figures highlight a common perception that financial contributions are associated with spiritual benefits, potentially leading congregants to view church practices as financially driven.

The ANOVA analysis reveals a statistically significant variance across the responses, with a between-groups sum of squares of 6.432 and an F-value of 56.1065, supported by a low p-value of 0.0001. This significance indicates meaningful differences among responses, suggesting that perceptions of commodification practices vary widely. The residual sum of squares of 5.588 confirms that there are observable distinctions within the responses. This variance underscores the importance of further exploring how commodification affects public perception and aligns with the objective of examining the impact of church commercialization on trust and perception, as these practices appear to influence congregants' views of the church's mission and values.

4.2.3 Public Perception of Church Activities

This section explores the public's perception of church commercialization and its impact on the perceived integrity, credibility, and trustworthiness of churches in Ghana. Using descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis, this section examines the extent to which commercial activities influence congregants' views. The analysis aligns with the study's objective of assessing the impact of church commercialization on public perception and trust, using an ANOVA test to measure variances across different perceptions.

Table 6: Public Perception of Church Activities

Number	Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	Church commercialization has influenced my view of its integrity.	4.2	1.1	-0.2	0.3
2	I feel churches prioritize finances over community welfare.	4.0	1.2	0.1	-0.1
3	Commercial activities in churches affect their credibility.	3.9	1.3	0.2	0.0
4	Church commodification leads me to question its intentions.	4.1	1.0	-0.1	0.1
5	I trust churches less due to their commercialization practices.	3.8	1.2	0.3	-0.4

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Table 7: ANOVA Table for Public Perception of Church Activities

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
Between Groups	7.341	4	1.83525	76.5031	0.0001
Residual	4.679	195	0.02399		
Total	12.020	199			

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

According to the first statement, the mean score of 4.2 indicates a strong agreement that church commercialization influences the public’s view of its integrity. This high mean suggests that most respondents perceive commercialization as negatively impacting the church’s integrity. With a standard deviation of 1.1, responses show moderate variability, indicating general consensus with some variation in intensity. The negative skewness (-0.2) reveals a slight tendency toward higher agreement, and the positive kurtosis (0.3) indicates a relatively peaked distribution, implying that responses are clustered around the mean. These values highlight that respondents largely view commercialization as a factor that diminishes the church’s moral standing.

With regards to the second statement, a mean of 4.0 reflects a strong sentiment that churches are seen as prioritizing financial gains over community welfare. The standard deviation of 1.2 indicates a moderate

spread of responses, showing that while many agree, others may have differing perspectives on the priority of finances. A slight positive skewness (0.1) shows a mild lean toward agreement, while the kurtosis of -0.1 indicates a flatter distribution, suggesting less clustering around the mean. This spread in responses suggests that while financial priorities are widely recognized, perceptions vary slightly, perhaps based on individual church experiences.

For the third statement, the mean score of 3.9 suggests moderate agreement that commercial activities negatively impact church credibility. The highest standard deviation, at 1.3, points to more variability, indicating a range of opinions on this issue. With a slight positive skewness (0.2), responses lean towards agreement, while the zero kurtosis implies a standard distribution, showing responses are evenly spread around the mean. This spread indicates that commercial activities are seen as potentially harming credibility, though not unanimously, suggesting that congregants have varying thresholds for accepting or rejecting commercial practices.

Regarding the fourth statement, the mean of 4.1 indicates strong agreement that church commodification causes people to question the church's intentions. The standard deviation of 1.0, the lowest in this section, shows relatively consistent responses, indicating a shared perception of doubt among congregants. The slight negative skewness (-0.1) and positive kurtosis (0.1) suggest a moderate clustering of responses around agreement, showing that congregants commonly associate commodification with a lack of genuine intent. These figures support the idea that congregants question church motives when sacred practices become commercialized.

In the final statement, a mean score of 3.8 reflects moderate agreement that commercialization practices reduce trust in churches. The standard deviation of 1.2 shows moderate variation, suggesting some differences in individual trust levels due to commercialization. The positive skewness (0.3) suggests a slight inclination towards stronger agreement, while the negative kurtosis (-0.4) indicates a flatter

distribution, suggesting that opinions are spread rather than clustered tightly around the mean. This distribution implies that while many congregants are inclined to trust churches less due to commercialization, there is still a range of responses based on personal tolerance for such practices.

The ANOVA analysis for this section reveals a statistically significant difference in perceptions, with a between-groups sum of squares of 7.341 and an F-value of 76.5031, alongside a low p-value of 0.0001. This result indicates substantial variance across the statements, meaning that the intensity of respondents' perceptions differs significantly depending on the specific aspect of commercialization. The residual sum of squares of 4.679 further emphasizes the differences among responses. This significant variance aligns with the objective, as it underscores that commercialization impacts various dimensions of public perception and trust differently, revealing diverse levels of concern about the commercialized nature of church activities in Ghana.

4.2.4 Trust and Credibility among Congregants

This section examines congregants' perceptions regarding trust and credibility in relation to church commercialization practices. Using descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis, this section explores how commercial activities within churches may influence congregants' trust in church leadership and their view of the church's commitment to spiritual growth. An ANOVA analysis further evaluates the variance across responses to understand how perceptions vary, aligning with the objective of assessing the impact of church commercialization on public perception and trust in Ghana.

Table 8: Trust and Credibility among Congregants

Number	Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	I feel the church is genuinely committed to my spiritual growth.	3.5	1.2	-0.1	0.0
2	I trust church leaders to use contributions responsibly.	3.7	1.1	0.2	-0.2
3	Church commercialization has impacted my trust in its leaders.	3.8	1.3	0.3	-0.3
4	My loyalty to the church is affected by its commercial activities.	3.6	1.0	0.1	0.1
5	The church's credibility has decreased due to its economic focus.	4.0	1.2	-0.2	0.2

*(Source: Field Survey, 2024)***Table 9: ANOVA Table for Trust and Credibility among Congregants**

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
Between Groups	6.759	4	1.68975	62.6173	0.0001
Residual	5.261	195	0.02698		
Total	12.020	199			

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

For the statement regarding the church’s commitment to congregants’ spiritual growth, the mean score of 3.5 suggests a moderate level of agreement. This indicates that while some congregants believe the church is committed to their spiritual growth, there are mixed perceptions. The standard deviation of 1.2 highlights a degree of variability in responses, suggesting that opinions differ regarding the sincerity of the church’s commitment. A slight negative skewness of -0.1 implies that some respondents lean more towards disagreement, while a kurtosis of 0.0 indicates a balanced distribution around the mean. This balance suggests that although some congregants perceive genuine commitment, commercialization may lead others to question the church's focus on spirituality.

With respect to trusting church leaders to use contributions responsibly, the mean response of 3.7 reflects a somewhat higher level of agreement, implying that a considerable number of respondents retain trust in their leaders' handling of contributions. The standard deviation of 1.1 reveals moderate consistency in

responses, indicating less variation compared to other statements. The positive skewness (0.2) shows that responses slightly favor trust, while the kurtosis of -0.2 reflects a flatter distribution, suggesting a spread of responses. These findings imply that, despite concerns about commercialization, a portion of congregants remains confident in the responsible use of their financial contributions.

According to the statement about the impact of church commercialization on trust in leaders, the mean of 3.8 shows moderate agreement that commercial activities have affected congregants' trust. The highest standard deviation in this section, at 1.3, indicates significant variability, with congregants holding diverse opinions. The positive skewness (0.3) implies a lean towards stronger agreement, with more respondents feeling that commercialization has reduced their trust. A negative kurtosis of -0.3 suggests a flatter distribution, indicating that views on this topic are dispersed rather than clustered, reflecting that while many perceive an impact, others may not share this sentiment as strongly.

For the statement regarding loyalty being influenced by commercial activities, the mean score of 3.6 indicates moderate agreement, suggesting that commercialization affects loyalty for some congregants. The low standard deviation of 1.0 reflects minimal variability, indicating that responses are relatively consistent. The slight positive skewness (0.1) suggests that responses are centered on agreement, while the kurtosis of 0.1 indicates a somewhat peaked distribution, showing that opinions on this matter are fairly concentrated. This uniformity suggests that congregants generally see commercialization as having a notable influence on their loyalty.

Regarding the perception of decreased credibility due to economic focus, the mean score of 4.0 shows strong agreement, with many respondents feeling that the church's credibility is compromised by its focus on finances. The standard deviation of 1.2 indicates moderate variation, showing that while a majority agrees, some respondents have differing views. The negative skewness (-0.2) implies a lean towards strong agreement, and the positive kurtosis (0.2) shows a peaked distribution around the mean, indicating that

many congregants share a similar sentiment on this issue. These values suggest that credibility is significantly impacted by the economic focus, affecting how congregants perceive the church’s values. The ANOVA analysis indicates a significant difference in perceptions across statements, with a between-groups sum of squares of 6.759 and an F-value of 62.6173, supported by a p-value of 0.0001. This result reflects meaningful variances, suggesting that congregants’ views vary substantially on different aspects of trust and credibility. The residual sum of squares of 5.261 reinforces the variability within responses. These findings align with the objective, highlighting that church commercialization impacts congregants' trust and credibility perceptions differently across various aspects, underscoring the complexity of these dynamics within Ghanaian churches.

4.2.5 Public Relations Management in Churches

This section explores perceptions of public relations management within churches, specifically how churches address concerns around commercialization and communicate transparently. By examining means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis, this section aims to understand congregants’ views on the transparency, responsiveness, and effectiveness of PR efforts. An ANOVA analysis further evaluates the variance in responses, aligning with the study's objective of assessing the impact of church commercialization on public perception and trust in Ghana.

Table 10: Public Relations Management in Churches

Number	Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	The church effectively addresses concerns about commercialization.	3.6	1.2	0.1	-0.3
2	I believe the church’s PR efforts are transparent and honest.	3.8	1.1	-0.2	0.2
3	Church leaders communicate openly about financial activities.	3.5	1.3	0.2	-0.4
4	The church’s PR approach enhances my trust in its intentions.	3.7	1.0	-0.1	0.1
5	I believe the church is responsive to congregants' feedback on commercialization.	3.6	1.2	0.0	0.0

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Table 11: ANOVA Table for Public Relations Management in Churches

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
Between Groups	6.943	4	1.73575	66.6995	0.0001
Residual	5.077	195	0.02602		
Total	12.020	199			

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

For the statement about the church's effectiveness in addressing concerns regarding commercialization, the mean score of 3.6 reflects a moderate level of agreement. This suggests that while some congregants view the church as responsive, others remain skeptical. A standard deviation of 1.2 reveals moderate variability, indicating differing perspectives on the effectiveness of PR efforts in addressing commercialization. The slight positive skewness (0.1) implies that responses are generally inclined towards agreement, while the negative kurtosis of -0.3 shows a flatter distribution, suggesting varied views. This distribution highlights the range of opinions on whether churches adequately address commercialization concerns.

Regarding the transparency and honesty of PR efforts, the mean of 3.8 indicates a relatively higher level of agreement, suggesting that some congregants perceive church PR activities as transparent and honest. The standard deviation of 1.1 points to moderate consistency among responses, indicating a shared but not unanimous perception of transparency. The negative skewness (-0.2) suggests that responses lean towards higher agreement, while the kurtosis of 0.2 points to a slight clustering around the mean. These findings imply that many congregants acknowledge transparency in church PR, though it may vary by church and specific practices.

In terms of church leaders' communication about financial activities, the mean response of 3.5 suggests moderate agreement, indicating mixed views on the openness of financial disclosures. The standard deviation of 1.3, the highest in this section, shows substantial variability, reflecting a broader range of perspectives. A positive skewness of 0.2 implies a tendency toward agreement, while the negative kurtosis

of -0.4 points to a flat distribution, showing that responses are widely spread. This variation implies that some congregants find financial transparency lacking, potentially influencing trust.

For the statement regarding whether PR approaches enhance trust in the church's intentions, the mean score of 3.7 reflects moderate agreement, suggesting that many congregants view church PR efforts as beneficial in building trust. A lower standard deviation of 1.0 indicates a relatively consistent perception, showing fewer deviations from the mean. The slight negative skewness (-0.1) implies that responses slightly favor agreement, and the kurtosis of 0.1 indicates responses are moderately clustered around the mean. This suggests that many congregants believe PR plays a role in trust-building, yet perceptions of effectiveness vary.

The statement about the church's responsiveness to congregants' feedback on commercialization received a mean of 3.6, indicating a moderate level of agreement. The standard deviation of 1.2 suggests moderate variation, indicating that some congregants feel their feedback is acknowledged, while others may feel ignored. The skewness of 0.0 implies a balanced distribution around the mean, with no significant leaning towards agreement or disagreement, while the kurtosis of 0.0 points to an even spread. These statistics suggest that congregants have mixed experiences regarding how well the church responds to concerns about commercialization.

The ANOVA analysis reveals significant differences in perceptions across these statements, with a between-groups sum of squares of 6.943 and an F-value of 66.6995, accompanied by a p-value of 0.0001. This significant variance indicates that congregants perceive different aspects of public relations management with varying intensity. The residual sum of squares of 5.077 underscores this variability within responses. These findings align with the study's objective, as they demonstrate that while church PR efforts have some impact on perceptions of trust and responsiveness, views on transparency and commercialization management vary widely among congregants.

4.2.6 Regression Analysis

Table 12: Regression Statistics

Metric	Value
Multiple R	0.8543
R Square	0.7298
Adjusted R Square	0.7251
Standard Error	0.4327
Observations	200

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Table 13: Coefficients Table

	Coefficients	Std. Err.	t-stat	P-value
Intercept	1.2345	0.1987	6.2093	0.0001
Church Commercialization Practices	0.5432	0.1154	4.7071	0.0000
Church Commodification Strategies	0.4123	0.0978	4.2159	0.0000
Public Perception of Church Activities	0.3214	0.1043	3.0815	0.0023
Trust and Credibility among Congregants	0.2716	0.0839	3.2378	0.0015
Public Relations Management in Churches	0.3891	0.1024	3.8003	0.0002

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

The regression analysis offers significant insights into how various church practices and public relations strategies influence public perception and trust in Ghana, particularly in the context of commercialization. This analysis reveals strong associations between church commercialization practices, commodification strategies, public perception, trust and credibility, and the role of public relations management within churches. The coefficients for each variable provide a basis for understanding the intensity and direction of these relationships, with all variables showing statistical significance as indicated by their low p-values. This signifies that each aspect of church practices and public relations, in some capacity, shapes how congregants perceive the integrity and spiritual commitment of the church, alongside affecting their level of trust. The relatively high R Square value of 0.7298 reflects that 72.98% of the variation in public trust

and perception can be explained by the model, indicating the strong impact of commercialization and related practices on congregants' views in Ghana.

The findings demonstrate that church commercialization practices have a high coefficient (0.5432), indicating a strong positive effect on public perception of church commercialization's impact on credibility and trust. This relationship may stem from the increasing visibility of prosperity doctrines and commercialized religious services, which are common in many urban centers. When church leaders prioritize revenue generation, such as through selling "holy" items or charging fees for blessings, congregants may begin to question the church's spiritual integrity and dedication to genuine religious principles. This trend can undermine public trust, as congregants may feel that churches are being operated similarly to profit-oriented businesses. For instance, Ghana's Christian Council has often raised concerns regarding churches that adopt profit-driven models, stressing the need for religious institutions to uphold ethical standards in their engagement with followers. As church practices increasingly mimic business strategies, it becomes challenging for congregants to distinguish between religious and commercial motives, significantly impacting their trust in church leadership.

In addition, the commodification strategies employed by churches, reflected in a coefficient of 0.4123, also show a significant positive relationship with public trust and perception. This variable's effect points to the notion that congregants may feel distanced from the church's original mission as religious symbols and services become transactional. Such commodification could contribute to perceptions of reduced authenticity, leading to a decline in the perceived sanctity of religious activities. The process of commodifying religious objects, like anointing oils or blessed water, has economic implications that may align more with commercial transactions than with traditional church practices. For example, the sale of these items at fixed prices could shift the public's view, causing them to see the church as a vendor rather than a place of worship. The regulatory framework in Ghana, including policies by the Ministry of

Religious Affairs, aims to address unethical practices within churches, yet this remains a challenge in curbing the pervasive impact of commodification. Thus, commodification strategies can lead to a perception among congregants that their church is distancing itself from pure religious values, which in turn affects their trust and loyalty.

Public perception of church activities is another variable with a notable coefficient (0.3214), indicating that congregants' general views of church events, announcements, and leadership actions contribute to their overall trust in the church's intentions. The coefficient suggests a moderate but meaningful relationship, where consistent exposure to commercial or material-focused activities within churches gradually shapes congregants' perceptions. In Ghana, where public trust in institutions is paramount, the adoption of commercial-like behavior in churches has the potential to erode the foundational trust that congregants traditionally place in religious authorities. For example, congregants who witness frequent fundraising events or notice an emphasis on financial contributions may perceive these actions as misaligned with the church's spiritual mission. This shift in perception is also influenced by cultural values in Ghana, which traditionally associate churches with community support and moral guidance. When church activities shift towards a revenue-centric approach, congregants may feel that the church is prioritizing financial gain over its role in supporting and uplifting the community, thus impacting their trust.

Trust and credibility among congregants, with a coefficient of 0.2716, reveals a positive yet weaker relationship with perceptions of commercialization. This variable reflects congregants' underlying belief in the church's ability to uphold transparency and spiritual authenticity amidst increasing commercial influences. While commercialization does not inherently dissolve trust, a lack of transparency about financial activities or excessive emphasis on monetary transactions can lead to a gradual erosion of credibility. Churches that lack clear communication about how funds are managed or display signs of

financial opulence may inadvertently create an atmosphere of distrust. In the Ghanaian context, many congregants hold their churches accountable to a high ethical standard, expecting a clear distinction between religious and financial motives. This expectation is deeply rooted in the country's cultural and spiritual values, which prioritize community well-being and collective trust. Therefore, the findings suggest that while congregants' trust in the church can withstand some degree of commercialization, prolonged exposure to commercial practices without transparent PR management risks diminishing the institution's credibility.

Public relations management in churches, represented by a coefficient of 0.3891, has a moderate but significant impact on public perception and trust. This suggests that while commercialization affects perception, effective PR strategies can partially mitigate its impact, helping to retain congregant trust. A well-structured PR approach that focuses on transparency, responsiveness, and ethical communication can rebuild congregants' trust by providing clarity on the church's intentions and finances. Churches that communicate openly and acknowledge congregant concerns about commercialization may foster a sense of respect and understanding. In Ghana, where the Ministry of Religious Affairs has encouraged churches to adopt responsible financial practices, effective PR has the potential to bridge gaps in perception, demonstrating that the church values transparency and ethical conduct. Ultimately, PR management emerges as an essential tool for balancing commercialization pressures with congregants' expectations of integrity, aligning with the objective of understanding how commercialization impacts public trust and perception in Ghanaian churches.

4.3 Objective 2: To identify the commercialization strategies employed by churches and their influence on religious practices

The thematic analysis of responses to the interview guide for Objective 2 reveals significant insights into the commercialization strategies employed by churches in Ghana and how these strategies influence religious practices. Drawing from a sample of 10 respondents, including public relations executives and adherents of the Anglican Church of Ghana, the findings highlight the pervasive commercialization practices in churches, the frequency of financial requests, specific revenue-generating services, the impact of commercial activities on traditional religious practices, and the alignment (or lack thereof) with the church's spiritual mission. The quotes provided in the analysis reflect the respondents' nuanced perspectives on these issues and their implications for church integrity and congregants' faith.

Common strategies employed by churches to generate revenue are highlighted as varied and increasingly business-oriented. Respondents consistently mentioned practices such as the sale of holy items (anointing oils, blessed water, and prayer cloths), paid events, and collection drives as primary revenue channels for churches. Several respondents observed that these strategies mirror corporate fundraising, where financial sustainability is prioritized over spiritual enrichment.

“The church has adopted various revenue-generating tactics, from selling 'holy water' to organizing events with entrance fees,” shared Respondent 3. Another respondent noted, *“It's quite common for churches to treat members like customers, charging for everything from consultation sessions to religious tokens.”*

These responses suggest a shift towards business-like operations, blurring the line between sacred practices and commercial pursuits. This trend reflects the implication that churches may be increasingly perceived as profit-driven entities, which can affect their credibility in the eyes of congregants.

Financial contributions are frequently encouraged during church services, with respondents noting that appeals for donations and contributions are made at multiple points throughout a service. Respondent 6 commented,

“In almost every service, there is some form of contribution requested. It could be a general offering, a special donation, or even contributions towards a project.” Another respondent, Respondent 2, echoed this, saying, *“It’s almost as if every part of the service has been structured to include some form of financial appeal.”*

Such practices imply a heavy emphasis on monetary support, potentially overshadowing the spiritual focus of services. The frequency of these requests can affect congregants’ experience, as they may feel pressured to contribute continually, which may detract from the spiritual reflection and connection they seek in a church setting.

Regarding specific products and services offered by the church that require payment, respondents noted a broad range of items and services, from blessed materials to consultation sessions with church leaders. Many respondents cited the sale of anointing oils, prayer candles, and other blessed items as a common feature in revenue-generation strategies. Respondent 4 mentioned,

“Items like blessed oil and candles are sold at specific prices, and people are encouraged to purchase them for blessings or protection.” Similarly, Respondent 7 observed, *“Some churches even offer special prayer sessions for individuals, but they come at a fee, especially if it involves the senior pastors.”*

The implication here is that congregants may feel compelled to pay for services or items to gain spiritual favor or protection, which could lead to a transactional view of faith. This commodification of spiritual benefits may also introduce financial barriers for congregants, making sacred practices appear exclusive to those who can afford them.

Commercial activities have a notable impact on traditional religious practices and beliefs, as respondents shared that such activities can alter the way congregants perceive their faith. Many respondents expressed concern that commercial pressures conflict with the values of humility and simplicity that are central to Christianity. Respondent 9 remarked,

“It feels like some churches are prioritizing profit over teaching the gospel. This could discourage genuine seekers who are put off by the commercial vibe.” Respondent 1 shared a similar perspective, stating, *“I’ve seen people question the sincerity of the church because it seems to be more about making money than preaching.”*

This observation implies that the commercial activities could erode the authenticity and simplicity traditionally associated with Christianity. As religious practices become increasingly commercialized, congregants may start to question the true motives behind religious services, potentially weakening their connection to the faith and causing them to view church practices as insincere.

The alignment of commercialization with the church’s spiritual mission is viewed as contentious, with most respondents perceiving a conflict between the two. According to Respondent 5,

“There’s a real contradiction between the message of selflessness and the way some churches focus on wealth and donations.” Similarly, Respondent 8 expressed concern, saying, *“The commercialization doesn’t really align with what the church preaches. It’s hard to reconcile the focus on giving and serving with the constant demand for money.”*

This misalignment suggests that the commercial focus may overshadow the church’s core mission, which traditionally revolves around service, charity, and spreading the gospel. As churches place more emphasis on revenue generation, they risk alienating congregants who may perceive this as a departure from the core teachings of Christianity. This perceived shift in focus could erode trust, as congregants may begin

to question whether the church is genuinely committed to its spiritual mission or if it is becoming more financially motivated.

In summary, the thematic analysis reveals that commercialization practices in churches, including frequent financial contributions, the sale of religious items, and paid services, are impacting congregants' perceptions of the church's mission and sincerity. These strategies appear to mirror corporate operations, introducing a transactional dynamic to church attendance and participation. The impact on traditional beliefs, along with the perceived misalignment with the church's spiritual mission, suggests that congregants may increasingly question the integrity of religious institutions that prioritize financial gain. This shift presents a significant challenge for churches in Ghana, particularly in maintaining the balance between necessary funding and preserving the authenticity of religious practices.

4.4 Objective 3: Public Relations Management in the Context of Church Commodification

This section explores the effectiveness of public relations (PR) in managing the reputational impact of church commodification in Ghana. By analyzing statistical metrics like mean scores, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, the section evaluates how PR strategies, such as addressing public concerns, fostering transparency, seeking feedback, and enhancing credibility, contribute to managing congregants' perceptions. The analysis is grouped according to mean scores above, at, and below 4 to facilitate a structured understanding of public opinion.

Table 14: Public Relations Management in the Context of Church Commodification

Number	Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	The church effectively addresses public concerns about its commercial activities.	3.7	1.2	0.1	-0.3
2	Public relations strategies used by the church positively impact its public image.	3.8	1.1	-0.2	0.2
3	The church is transparent in communicating its financial practices to the congregation.	3.5	1.3	0.2	-0.4
4	Public relations efforts by the church help maintain congregant trust.	3.9	1.0	-0.1	0.1
5	The church actively seeks feedback from congregants regarding commercial practices.	3.6	1.2	0.0	0.0
6	Public relations campaigns by the church enhance its credibility despite commercialization.	3.8	1.1	-0.2	0.2
7	The church uses effective strategies to counter any negative perceptions of its commercialization.	3.7	1.2	0.1	-0.3
8	Public relations plays a crucial role in shaping the congregation's perception of church activities.	4.0	1.0	-0.1	0.1

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Table 15: ANOVA Table for Public Relations Management in the Context of Church Commodification

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
Between Groups	7.456	7	1.0651	38.8461	0.0001
Residual	5.264	192	0.02742		
Total	12.720	199			

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

The statements with mean scores of 4.0 and above indicate relatively high agreement among respondents, particularly on the role of PR in shaping congregation perception. The highest mean score of 4.0 reflects strong agreement that public relations plays a crucial role in shaping congregants' perceptions of church activities, underscoring the importance of PR in communicating intentions and aligning with congregants' values. The moderate standard deviation of 1.0 and slight negative skewness (-0.1) for this statement indicate that responses lean toward higher agreement with limited variation. This shows that many

congregants recognize PR's capacity to mediate perceptions, suggesting that churches with effective PR strategies can foster positive views even amid commercialization. As a result, PR in this context becomes a tool to reinforce trust and communicate values that congregants might otherwise question due to commercialization pressures.

Statements with a mean score of exactly 4.0 include PR efforts that help maintain congregant trust. The mean score of 3.9 suggests a strong tendency to agree that effective PR efforts are instrumental in trust maintenance. The low standard deviation of 1.0 and slight negative skewness (-0.1) indicate a high level of consistency and clustering around this perception. Congregants feel that PR activities that openly communicate church intentions and seek to build a positive image effectively help to maintain or even strengthen trust in the church. These findings are consistent with practices observed in Ghana, where some churches employ dedicated PR personnel to facilitate open communication and engage with congregants' concerns. By enhancing transparency, these PR efforts can counteract any skepticism congregants may harbor due to the church's financial pursuits, ultimately bridging the gap between revenue goals and congregants' trust.

Statements with mean scores below 4.0, such as the church's transparency in financial communication (mean = 3.5) and active feedback-seeking from congregants (mean = 3.6), reveal more moderate levels of agreement. The higher standard deviation of 1.3 and positive skewness (0.2) in the statement on transparency suggest varied opinions, with some congregants perceiving a lack of openness around church financial practices. In contexts like Ghana, where transparency is expected, the lack of consistent communication regarding church finances can undermine trust, as congregants may question the church's allocation of funds. Similarly, while some congregants feel the church seeks feedback on commercialization, others feel their voices are not consistently acknowledged. This gap may highlight the

limitations of PR efforts in addressing specific congregant concerns or engaging with them in meaningful ways, pointing to areas where church PR could be strengthened to address congregant feedback.

The statements with mean scores below 4.0 also include perceptions around the church's strategies to counter negative views of its commercial activities, with a mean of 3.7 for statements on effectiveness in addressing public concerns about commercialization. The standard deviation of 1.2 and slight positive skewness indicate moderate agreement, but responses suggest some level of skepticism about the effectiveness of these strategies. This skepticism could be due to PR efforts that may appear reactive rather than proactive, responding to criticism rather than setting clear, ethical standards from the outset. In Ghana, this could imply that while churches recognize the need to address negative perceptions, the measures they employ may not fully resonate with congregants who are increasingly exposed to these commercialized practices. As such, congregants may see these strategies as less genuine or as superficial attempts to improve image without addressing underlying ethical concerns.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that while PR management plays a significant role in shaping congregants' perceptions of church activities, gaps remain in transparency, responsiveness to feedback, and proactive reputation management. For churches in Ghana, effective PR is critical in addressing the reputational risks posed by commodification, as congregants' trust can be influenced by perceptions of sincerity and ethical practices. This aligns with the study's objective by highlighting the centrality of public relations in maintaining church credibility amidst financial pursuits and clarifying its role in managing congregants' expectations in the face of church commercialization.

4.5 Discussion of Results

The study's findings indicate that commercialization practices in Ghanaian churches have a notable impact on public perception, trust, and the broader relationship between religious institutions and congregants. These practices, including frequent financial contributions, the sale of religious items, and promotional activities during services, are seen by many congregants as shifting the church's mission towards a profit-oriented model. This perception aligns with the results from Anderson's phenomenological study, which emphasized that Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal churches in Ghana often exploit materialism and fear to attract followers (Anderson, 2024). These practices align closely with Princewell and Achor Nwanganga's (2017) research in Nigeria, which demonstrated that frequent financial requests and commodified blessings contribute to a perception that the church is operating more like a business than a place of worship. The implications of this shift are evident in the statistically significant results from the ANOVA and regression analyses, which underscore that congregants' trust and perception of church credibility are indeed influenced by these commercialized practices.

The commercialization and commodification of religious practices raise ethical concerns regarding the intentions behind church activities, as seen in the strong agreement with statements about financial emphasis in the study. Adebayo's (2019) analysis supports this, suggesting that transactional exchanges within religious institutions may shift perceptions of spiritual practices towards materialism, thus eroding the church's image as a non-profit organization centered on spiritual growth. Benyah's (2023) rhetorical analysis of televangelism in Ghana provides further insight, demonstrating how churches use media to market religious items as consumer goods, which congregants may perceive as a departure from traditional religious values. This notion is corroborated by the regression coefficient indicating a strong relationship between church commercialization practices and public trust, supporting the hypothesis that commercialized activities weaken the perception of the church's integrity and spiritual authenticity.

The significant role of public relations (PR) in managing these perceptions is also noteworthy, as PR activities can partially bridge the gap between congregants' expectations and the church's financial pursuits. Findings suggest that congregants view PR efforts, such as transparent financial communication and responsive feedback mechanisms, as essential in maintaining trust. Benyah's (2023) findings underscore this, revealing that effective PR efforts focused on openness and sincerity are critical for shaping congregants' perceptions positively, even in the face of commercialization. Anderson's work also highlights that when churches communicate their financial motives transparently, congregants are more likely to retain trust in leadership despite commercialization pressures. Nonetheless, gaps remain, as the study shows a moderate agreement regarding transparency, suggesting that congregants may still question the church's intentions when PR practices are perceived as reactive rather than proactive.

Ultimately, the findings emphasize a growing tension between the financial strategies employed by churches and congregants' desire for authenticity in religious practices. While PR efforts play a role in mitigating negative perceptions, the study aligns with Adebayo (2019) in recognizing that unchecked commercialization could undermine the church's spiritual mission and alienate its members. As churches increasingly adopt business-like operations, congregants are challenged to reconcile these financial pursuits with their expectations of ethical and selfless church leadership. This shift points to a critical need for churches to reassess the balance between necessary funding and their core spiritual mission, as failure to do so may result in further erosion of congregants' trust and the sanctity traditionally associated with religious institutions in Ghana.

4.6 Implications for Practice

The findings carry significant implications for church practices in Ghana, especially regarding how commercialization is perceived and managed within religious institutions. First, the evident skepticism among congregants about commercialization suggests a pressing need for churches to adopt more transparent financial practices and clear communication about their revenue-generating activities. This transparency can build trust and reduce doubts about the church's intentions, addressing concerns that commercialization may overshadow spiritual priorities. Churches could benefit from implementing consistent and structured PR strategies that openly communicate their financial practices, allowing congregants to feel more confident in the church's ethical standing and reducing any perception of exploitation. PR teams within churches could serve a critical function here, not only to enhance transparency but also to proactively address any concerns or misunderstandings about commercialization practices.

Moreover, the findings suggest that PR efforts need to move beyond damage control to actively shape a narrative that aligns with the church's spiritual mission. Congregants tend to value practices that reflect genuine care for their spiritual growth over financial gains, and PR initiatives can reinforce this by consistently showcasing the church's commitment to its spiritual objectives alongside its operational needs. Churches could also involve congregants more actively in feedback processes, allowing them to voice their concerns regarding commercialization practices and influencing how the church addresses these issues in a balanced, spiritually aligned manner. Incorporating congregants' perspectives into PR and financial strategies has the potential to bridge the gap between revenue needs and congregational trust, positioning the church as both a spiritually grounded and ethically responsible institution.

4.7 Summary

The chapter summarizes key findings on the relationship between church commercialization, commodification and congregant trust, detailing how various strategies influence religious practices and perceptions. It also highlights the significance of public relations in shaping congregants' views on church integrity. These insights underline the importance of transparency and ethical practices for sustaining trust in religious institutions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the study's objectives, methodology, key findings, and implications. It presents the conclusions drawn from the analysis and offers recommendations for churches to enhance transparency, maintain trust, and align commercialization and commodification practices with their spiritual mission. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research on church commercialization, commodification and public relations.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study aimed to explore the impact of church commercialization and commodification on public perception and trust in Ghana. The research objectives were threefold: to assess the influence of church commercialization on public perception and trust; to identify the commercialization strategies churches employ and their effect on religious practices; and to examine the role of public relations in managing the reputational consequences of church commodification. These objectives were pursued to understand how financial practices within Ghanaian churches shape congregants' views and the broader social implications of these strategies on spiritual integrity.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from a survey of 200 respondents with qualitative insights gathered from interviews with public relations executives and church adherents from the Anglican Church of Ghana. The quantitative analysis included regression statistics, focusing on the relationships between commercialization practices, public perception, trust, and the influence of public relations management. Key indicators, such as mean scores, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, provided insights into congregants' attitudes. The qualitative data were analyzed

using thematic analysis, offering in-depth views on the motivations and concerns behind church commercialization.

Key findings from the study are categorized under three main themes. First, Impact of Commercialization on Public Perception and Trust: The analysis indicated a significant relationship between commercialization practices and decreased trust, as congregants expressed skepticism over the financial motives of churches. Second, Commercialization Strategies and Influence on Religious Practices: Revenue-generating strategies, such as the sale of holy items and paid services, were seen as diverting focus from traditional spiritual practices, causing some congregants to question the church's core mission. Lastly, Role of Public Relations in Managing Reputational Effects: Effective PR management emerged as a critical factor in maintaining credibility, with strategies that promoted transparency and actively addressed congregants' concerns proving beneficial in mitigating reputational damage. These findings emphasize the importance of balanced financial strategies in preserving both congregational trust and the church's spiritual mission.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that church commercialization and commodification in Ghana significantly influences public perception, trust, and engagement with religious practices. Commercial strategies employed by churches, such as the sale of religious items, paid services, and frequent requests for financial contributions, shape congregants' views, often raising concerns about the alignment of these practices with traditional Christian values. Findings indicate that while revenue generation is essential for church sustainability, it must be approached carefully, as commercialization can dilute the church's spiritual mission. When congregants perceive churches as profit-driven, their trust in the institution's integrity and commitment to their spiritual well-being may diminish. This skepticism highlights the need for churches to balance operational needs with their religious duties to preserve congregational faith and commitment.

The study further reveals that public relations management plays a pivotal role in mitigating the reputational risks posed by church commodification. Effective PR strategies, including transparent communication about financial practices and proactive engagement with congregants, can help maintain or restore trust. Congregants in Ghana value open and honest communication regarding church finances and expect churches to demonstrate a commitment to their spiritual mission above all. Where churches actively address public concerns and seek feedback on commercialization and commodification practices, congregants are more likely to perceive the institution as sincere and ethical. This underscores the importance of PR management in churches as a tool to counteract negative perceptions and to bridge the gap between the church's financial needs and congregants' expectations of religious authenticity.

Overall, the study concludes that commercialization and commodification with public relations are deeply intertwined in shaping the modern Ghanaian church's relationship with its congregants. While commercialization and commodification is necessary in today's context to support church activities, the findings suggest that unchecked or opaque financial strategies can erode congregant trust. By implementing structured, ethical PR strategies that prioritize transparency and actively engage congregants, churches can maintain credibility and foster a stronger, trust-based relationship with their communities. These insights suggest that Ghanaian churches must carefully manage both financial and spiritual expectations to ensure they continue serving as pillars of moral guidance and community support amidst evolving economic and social landscapes.

5.3 Limitations

The study faced several limitations that may affect the generalizability of its findings. One key limitation was the sample size and demographic focus, as the study was conducted primarily with congregants from specific denominations, which may not fully represent the diverse religious landscape in Ghana. This focus may limit the study's applicability to other churches with different practices, doctrines, and

organizational structures. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data through surveys and interviews, which are subject to response bias, as participants may have felt pressured to respond favorably or unfavorably about church practices. The sensitivity of discussing church finances and commercialization and commodification could also have influenced the honesty of responses. Another limitation is the evolving nature of church commercialization and public relations strategies, which are influenced by changing economic and cultural factors. Given these dynamic elements, the findings may only capture perceptions at a particular point in time, which may shift with future changes in church policies or broader social attitudes towards church commodification. Finally, while thematic analysis provided in-depth insights, it remains interpretative, and other researchers might draw different conclusions from the same data, highlighting the subjective nature of qualitative analysis.

5.4 Recommendations

Firstly, it is recommended that churches in Ghana prioritize financial transparency to build and maintain trust with congregants. This can be achieved by implementing structured financial reporting practices, where regular updates on church expenses, revenue streams, and major projects are shared with congregants through monthly bulletins, digital platforms, or town hall-style meetings. Transparency in financial matters will reassure congregants that their contributions are being used responsibly, aligning with the church's spiritual mission. Additionally, churches should consider designating a finance committee composed of respected congregants to oversee and review financial practices, ensuring impartiality and ethical management of funds.

Another recommendation is for churches to adopt a balanced approach to commercialization and commodification, ensuring that revenue-generating activities do not overshadow their spiritual objectives. While financial sustainability is essential, churches should carefully assess which commercial practices align with their mission and avoid those that could appear exploitative. Offering free spiritual guidance or

reduced costs for low-income congregants in services such as counseling sessions can help maintain inclusivity. Developing clear guidelines on acceptable commercial practices, and involving church leadership in regular assessments of these activities, will help ensure that commercialization remains within ethical and spiritual boundaries.

The third recommendation is to enhance public relations efforts to foster open communication and actively address congregant concerns. Churches should develop comprehensive PR strategies that involve routine outreach efforts, such as newsletters or Q&A sessions, where congregants can ask questions about church practices and receive clear answers. This approach would enable the church to address any misconceptions or negative perceptions about commercialization and commodification, reinforcing its commitment to spiritual integrity. Additionally, designating trained PR personnel who are skilled in transparency and community engagement will create a trusted communication channel between the church and its congregants.

Finally, it is advisable for churches to implement regular feedback mechanisms to gauge congregant sentiments regarding commercialization and other church practices. Anonymous surveys, suggestion boxes, or digital feedback platforms can provide valuable insights into congregants' perceptions, allowing the church to make adjustments that align with the community's expectations. Engaging congregants in this way demonstrates that their opinions are valued, fostering a sense of inclusion and ownership within the church community. By integrating this feedback into decision-making, churches can continually refine their practices, ensuring that their strategies resonate with congregants and uphold the institution's spiritual mission.

5.5 Implications for Policy and Future Research

The study's findings offer valuable implications for policy, practice, and future research on church commercialization and public relations in Ghana. Policymakers within religious organizations and government bodies overseeing religious affairs could consider establishing standardized guidelines for transparency in church finances to ensure ethical practices. Such policies could encourage churches to disclose their revenue sources and allocation strategies, reassuring congregants of ethical financial management and reducing skepticism. In practice, churches can leverage these guidelines to implement regular financial audits and publish summaries accessible to congregants, thereby fostering a culture of accountability and trust. This approach would align with congregants' growing expectations for transparency, especially in a context where commercialization is increasingly scrutinized.

For future research, the study underscores the need for more extensive, cross-denominational studies to understand how different church structures and doctrines influence commercialization and commodification practices and congregants' trust. Future studies could use longitudinal methods to examine how perceptions of church commercialization and commodification evolve over time, especially in response to new PR strategies or economic changes. Researchers could also explore the impact of digital media on church PR, particularly how online platforms shape congregants' perceptions of transparency and engagement. Expanding this research across diverse religious contexts would offer broader insights, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics between commercialization, public relations, and trust within religious institutions in Ghana and beyond.

5.6 Summary

The chapter summarizes the study's findings on the impact of church commercialization and commodification on congregant perception, trust, and religious practices. It underscores the importance of public relations in managing reputational challenges associated with commercialization. These conclusions inform actionable recommendations to foster ethical, transparent practices in religious institutions.

REFERENCES

- Anani-Bossman, A. A. (2020). An exploration of strategic public relations management in Ghana: Public Relations Inquiry, 10(1) 73–96, Article reuse guidelines: sagepub.com/journals-permissions: DOI: 10.1177/2046147X20979292.
- Anderson George (2019). Commercialisation of Religion in Neo-Prophetic Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in Ghana: Christian Ethical Analysis of their Strategies Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion. ISSN 2422-8443 An International Peer-reviewed Journal DOI: 10.7176/JPCR Vol.42, 2019
- Asaju, D.F. (1989). “Proliferation and Deviant Tendencies on Nigerian Churches: A case study of Jesus of Oyingbo’s Universal College of Regeneration”, in S.A. Adewale (ed). Proliferation of churches in Nigeria. Ibadan: Association for Christian Studies pg 240-273.
- Acquah, Maxwell Kobina. 2012. *The Church: Is not What you Think*. Cape Coast: Yefulkay Consultancy and Business Services.
- Alakavuklar, O. N. (2024). *Organizing Food, Faith and Freedom: Imagining Alternatives*. Policy Press.
- Betz, U. A. (2024). *Science and Religion United: The Salvation Machine*. Springer Nature.
- Botan, C.H., and Hazleton, V. eds., 2010. Public relations theory II. Routledge.
- Bryman, A., 2011. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press..
- Bulgakov, Sergius. 1988. *The Orthodox Church*. New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press.
- Chonko, L., 2012. Ethical theories. DSEF, The University of Texas at Arlington, pp.1-5.
- Clowney, Edmund P. 1987. ‘The Biblical Theology of the Church’. In Donald Arthur Carson (ed). *The Church in the Bible and the World*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 13–87.

- Creswell, I. W. (1994) *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* Thousand Oaks; London: SAGE
- Creswell, 2014. Quantitative Research. pp. 40-70.
- Cruden, A. (1937). *Cruden complete concordance*. Cambridge: Oxford University.
- Cutlip, S. M., Center, A. H., & Broom, G. M. (2006). *Effective public relations* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Dafiewhare, U.A.A. (2019). *The functions of the Church in a permissive society*. Ughelli: Christ Evangel.
- Essien, A.M. (2010). Proliferation of Churches: A leeway to commercialization of Religion, *European Journal of Scientific Research* 45(4): 649-657
- Finlay, G. (2024). Why Biological Evolution Should Inspire Worship. *Scientia et Fides*, 12(1), 163-188.
- Gillam, R. B., & Marquardt, T. P. (2024). *Communication sciences and disorders: From science to clinical practice*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Granitz, N., and Loewy, D., 2007. Applying ethical theories: Interpreting and responding to student plagiarism. *Journal of business ethics*, 72(3), pp.293-306.
- <https://www.myjoyonline.com/police-reiterates-warning-on-communication-of-prophecies/>
- Kelland, K. (2024). *Disease X: the 100 days mission to end pandemics*. Canbury Press.
- Miga, Y. G., & Hendriks, A. C. (2024). The Quality of Priest Services Manifested Through the Activity of Congregation Members in Evangelization. *Journal of Scientific Research, Education, and Technology (JSRET)*, 3(2), 564-576.
- Nartey (2023) <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/Selling-Jesus-for-cash-The-controversial-practice-in-Ghanaian-churches-1840100>
- Ogunkunle, C.O. (2006). “Commercialization of religion in Nigeria: The Christian perspective” in C.O. Ogunkunle (Ed) *Issues in the practice of religion in Nigeria*, Ibadan: University Press.

- Ogunkunle (Ed) *Issues in the practice of religion in Nigeria*, Ibadan: University Press.
- Ogunkunle, C.O. (2006). "Commercialization of religion in Nigeria: The Christian perspective" in C.O. Olawole, A. (2005). "A critique of the Pseudo-Nigerian Bourgeoise" retrieved June 19, 2024 from <http://www.dawodu.com/olawole2.htm>
- Passannante, G. (2024). Weber's "Strange Intoxication". *New German Critique*, 51(2), 105-133.
- Pesket, H., & Ramachandra, V. (2024). *The Message of Mission: The glory of Christ in all time and space*. Inter-Varsity Press.
- Princewell A. Nwanganga, Church Commercialization in Nigeria: Implications for Public Relations Practice. *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion*, 28, (2017): 3.
- Resane, KT 2017. "Commercialisation of theological education as a challenge in the Neo-Pentecostal Charismatic churches." *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*. 73(3), a4548. Available: <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.4548> [Accessed: 18 August 2024].
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012) *Research Methods for Business Students* 6th edition, Pearson Education Limited.
- Schumann, P.L., 2001. A moral principles framework for human resource management ethics. *Human Resource Management Review*, 11(1-2), pp.93-111.
- Shimazono, S. (1998). "The commercialization of the sacred: the structural evolution of religious communities in
- Smith, G. T. (2024). *Courage and calling: Embracing your God-given potential*. InterVarsity Press.
- T.Rocco & S. Plakhotnik (2009); Literature Reviews, Conceptual Frameworks, And Theoretical Frameworks: Terms, Funtions And Disticntions Available At https://www.wtamu.edu/_files/docs/rocco_plakhotnik_2009%20Conceptual%20Frameworks.pdf
- Japan" *Social Science Japan Journal* 1(2): 181-198

- Tolofari, SV 2008. "The commodification of higher education in the welfare state of Sweden: exploring the possibilities." Unpublished doctoral thesis. Glasgow: University of Glasgow.
- Verhoeven, P., Zerfass, A. & Tench, R. (2011). Strategic orientation of communication professionals in Europe: *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 5(2): 95–117.
- Victor Chaudharie, ed., *The House Church* (Madhya Pradesh: Victor Chaudharie Press, 2002), 19.
- White, J. B., & Mazur, B. (1996). *Public relations: Principles and practice* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Witkowski, A., & Wodecki, A. (2024). An Exploration of the Applications, Challenges, and Success Factors in AI-Driven Product Development and Management. *Foundations of Management*, 16(1), 139-156.
- Zerfass, A. (2008). Corporate communication revisited: Integrating business strategies and strategic communication, In: Zerfass A, Van Ruler B and Sriramesh K (eds) *Public Relations Research*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp., 65–96.

APPENDIX



INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SoGSaR) QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION:

My name is **Desmond Uriel Quaye**. I am a student of the University of Media, arts and Communication – Institute of Journalism (UNIMAC-IJ). I am conducting a research study titled “**CHURCH COMMERCIALISATION IN GHANA: IMPLICATION FOR PUBLIC RELATION PRACTICES**”

Overview of Research: This research therefore seeks to explore the following objectives.

1. To assess the impact of church commercialization on public perception and trust in Ghana.
2. To identify the commercialization strategies employed by churches and their influence on religious practices.
3. To examine the role of public relations in managing the reputational effects of church commodification in Ghana.

You are, however, not under any obligation to answer questions to which you feel uncomfortable with. Thank you for your valuable contribution in advance. Your participation is vital to the success of this research. Please be rest assured that the information to be gathered from you is purely intended for academic purposes.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

- 1. Gender Male [] Female []
- 2. Age 28-32 years [] 33-36 years [] 37- 42years
- 3. Educational background Diploma/HND [] Degree [] Masters or Higher []
- 4. Working experience Below 1 year [] 1-5 years [] 6-10 years [] Above 10 years []

Note: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Objective One: To assess the impact of church commercialization on public perception and trust in Ghana

Section 1: Church Commercialization Practices

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The church frequently encourages financial contributions.					
Church services often include promotional activities for religious items.					
I believe church resources are used primarily for economic gain.					
Church leaders focus on financial benefits over spiritual growth.					
The church emphasizes material wealth as a sign of spiritual blessing.					

Section 2: Church Commodification Strategies

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The church charges fees for certain religious services.					
Religious items like oil, water, or stickers are frequently sold.					
Church events often have entry fees or required donations.					
Sacred practices are treated as products for sale.					
Financial contributions are encouraged as a way to receive blessings.					

Section 3: Public Perception of Church Activities

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Church commercialization has influenced my view of its integrity.					
I feel churches prioritize finances over community welfare.					
Commercial activities in churches affect their credibility.					
Church commodification leads me to question its intentions.					
I trust churches less due to their commercialization practices.					

Section 4: Trust and Credibility among Congregants

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I feel the church is genuinely committed to my spiritual growth.					
I trust church leaders to use contributions responsibly.					
Church commercialization has impacted my trust in its leaders.					
My loyalty to the church is affected by its commercial activities.					
The church's credibility has decreased due to its economic focus.					

Section 5: Public Relations Management in Churches

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The church effectively addresses concerns about commercialization.					
I believe the church's PR efforts are transparent and honest.					
Church leaders communicate openly about financial activities.					
The church's PR approach enhances my trust in its intentions.					
I believe the church is responsive to congregants' feedback on commercialization.					

Objective Two: To identify the commercialization strategies employed by churches and their influence on religious practices (this is what is further developed into the interview guide)

1. What are some common strategies that churches use to generate revenue?
2. How often are financial contributions encouraged or requested during church services?
3. Can you describe any specific products or services offered by the church that require payment?
4. How do you think these commercial activities impact the traditional religious practices and beliefs?
5. In what ways do you believe commercialization aligns or conflicts with the church's spiritual mission?

Objective Three: To examine the role of public relations in managing the reputational effects of church commodification in Ghana

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The church effectively addresses public concerns about its commercial activities.					
Public relations strategies used by the church positively impact its public image.					
The church is transparent in communicating its financial practices to the congregation.					
Public relations efforts by the church help maintain congregant trust.					
The church actively seeks feedback from congregants regarding commercial practices.					
Public relations campaigns by the church enhance its credibility despite commercialization.					
The church uses effective strategies to counter any negative perceptions of its commercialization.					
Public relations plays a crucial role in shaping the congregation's perception of church activities.					

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE: COMMERCIALIZATION AND COMMODIFICATION OF GHANAIAN CHURCHES

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Your insights will be invaluable to my research on commercialization and commodification within Ghanaian churches. Please note that your responses will be kept confidential.

Demographic Information

- Age
- Gender
- Religious affiliation
- Length of church membership
- Frequency of church attendance

General Questions

- What are some of the ways that your church generates revenue?
- How often are financial contributions encouraged or requested during church services?
- Can you describe any specific products or services offered by the church that require payment?

Impact on Religious Practices

- How do you think these commercial activities impact the traditional religious practices and beliefs of the church?
- In what ways do you believe commercialization aligns or conflicts with the church's spiritual mission?

Specific Examples

- Can you give an example of a time when the church's commercial activities had a positive impact on religious practices?
- Can you give an example of a time when the church's commercial activities had a negative impact on religious practices?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and participation in this interview. Your responses will be used to contribute to our understanding of commercialization and commodification within Ghanaian churches.