

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
FACULTY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN
BUILDING CORPORATE IMAGE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

BY

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MAPR19046

A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A
MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

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OCTOBER, 2020

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

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

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DR. ALBERT ANANI-BOSSMAN

DEDICATION

In Memory of the late Nana Ekow Abban, a father friend and the benchmark for ambition and
a launchpad for higher heights.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to a host of individuals who contributed in one way or the other towards the preparation and completion of this thesis.

First and foremost, I am particularly grateful to the Almighty God, my Creator, for His abundant grace, strength and guidance, without which nothing could have been achieved.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Anani-Bossman for his help, advice and continual support and availability from the start until the last days of this work. To him I wish to express my deep gratitude and sincere thanks. The privilege of being closely and excellently supervised is highly appreciated.

I am also grateful to my wife and best friend Eunice Abban for her unwavering support bearing me up through long nights.

Also to my family for their prayers and words of encouragement as I forged on with determination.

A very special thank you to my senior brother and mentor Kwami Sefa Kayi for your immense inspiration and support to climb higher on the educational path.

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of the study was to assess the contribution of PR in building corporate image in the tourism industry. For which reason the study set specific objectives to aid in achieving the general objective which were to assess the current image of the tourism industry in Ghana, to determine whether PR can be used to build corporate image of the tourism industry and how, as well as probing how to identify PR functions that can be used to build corporate image of the tourism industry. To pursue this course, the study proposed to adopt the quantitative approach to research where questionnaire were the data collection tool employed. The study, which was based on desktop research, observed that while the PR industry keeps growing and its contribution to the success of organizations and even individuals Naveed (2013), the Ghanaian tourism industry appears not to have taken advantage of this to build its corporate image. The literature suggests (eg. Amegbe, Owino and Kerubo, 2017; Johnston and Sheehan, 2020 etc.) time and again making it resound that PR could be used to improve corporate image of organizations and individuals alike. Also, PR functions that were identified to be able to build the corporate image of the industry included media relation, social media management, environmental scanning and boundary spanning among others (Proverbs, 2020). The study then made recommendations that the supervising Ministry, Ghana Tourism Authority as well as key stakeholders in the industry probe and champion the role of PR by recognizing and equipping the function with the necessary needs so that it can equally harness the good fruits of PR. For policy makers as well, the study recommends policies which drive at sensitizing agencies, stakeholders and the general public as a whole so that tourism will be patronized the more.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the ever-increasing competitive conditions of modern society, enterprises no longer compete only within the dimensions of products, functions, specifications and quality but also within the areas of corporate image, brand and reputation. As the concept of image is analysed, it is detected that a myriad of disciplines such as marketing, public relations, environment and management are collectively intertwined as well (Finn, D. 1961: Bozkurt, 2018).

Studies have shown that Public Relations (PR) practices positively affect corporate credibility, which is why credibility management is an important part of PR strategies (Cha, Song and Kim, 2010), as Hon (1998) states that PR's aim is to maintain an organization's image. Cornelissen (2000) further states that credibility, along with relationships with stockholders and employee satisfaction, is one of the important variables for PR effectiveness and that sustaining an organization's reputation is the most important feature of PR (Plowman et al., 2001: Kim and Cha, 2013). More practically, Kim (2001) argues that a positive effect on the reputation of the company is expected as the PR expense unit increases, which fits Cha and Kim's (2010) assertion that there is a positive correlation between the PR activities of a corporation and corporate reputation.

Adeniji, Osibanjo, Abiodun and Oni-Ojo (2015) posit the view that organisations are understandably concerned with managing their Corporate Image. This shows that there is a strong positive correlation between how people perceive an organization and the pro-corporate supportive behavior. Çetin and Tekiner (2015) argue that Corporate image is the picture emerging in the mind of target mass that any given enterprise aims to reach. In a different saying; corporate image is the accumulation of all judgments that exist in the minds

of target mass as regards the adjectives associated with a given enterprise. In addition, it refers to a compilation of all analyses related to the way enterprises are recognized and perceived by the audience. All these analyses make-up of the entire corporate image (Çetin and Tekiner, 2015).

Even though threats that can be related to crisis include public safety, financial loss and reputation loss, corporate image could present a source of competitive advantage (Yeo and Youssef, 2010). Some crises, such as industrial accidents and product harm, can result in injuries and even loss of lives. This assertion is made in light of the argument that corporate image can only be formed over a long time, it becomes difficult to imitate. Besides corporate image creates consumer trust and deters competitors from entering the market.

A positive corporate image, according to Lizarraga (2010), provides organizations with individual features that lead to brand recognition. Worcester (2009) in this regard notes that, this improves consumer and employee loyalty as well as corporate reputation that corporate image consists of product image, brand image and brand consumer image.

Today, the PR industry keeps growing and its contribution to the success of organizations and even individuals has been noted. Organizations now have personnel(s) who work within the organization's in-house PR department or unit depending on the structure and strength of the organization or outsourcing PR functions to PR agencies. The PR activities are but not limited to media monitoring, publicity, government relations, and reputation management and stakeholder engagement. The goal of the practice is to develop and maintain a good reputation for an organization which is why this study will seek to assess the contribution of PR in building corporate image in the tourism industry.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Mensah-Ansah, Martin and Egan (2011) assert that tourism in Ghana has become a major socioeconomic activity and one of the most important and fastest growing sectors of the Ghanaian economy. It is the fourth largest foreign exchange earner after cocoa, gold, and remittances from abroad. Ghana's tourism growth rate is about 12% per annum. Hence, the importance of tourism and its sociocultural, political, and economic values to Ghana is enormous. The tourism industry has over the years demonstrated its ability to contribute significantly towards national economic development, especially in the areas of employment generation, wealth creation, and poverty reduction at national and community levels (Mensah-Ansah, Martin and Egan, 2011).

Davies and Miles (2010) agree with the argument that the reputation of an organization is an intangible asset which synchronizes with Kim and Cha's (2013) assertion that the environments surrounding an organization affects it so much that communicating effectively with its audiences is becoming increasingly important for an organization, thus increasing the importance of effective PR and reputation management. Davies and Miles (2010) also note that when well handled, the sign of credibility, the corporate brand, is translated into having an organizational picture that is favourable to its stakeholders.

Despite the steady increase of international tourist arrivals, ISSER (2014) notes that this sector is still struggling to achieve its objectives for which reason this study becomes essential. According to the Ministry of Tourism (2013), one reason for this situation is that the country does not possess an adequately competitive image in the global tourism arena. With Mittal, Dawson-Amoah and Benyi (2013) positing that the induced image as projected by Ghana tourism Authority (GTA) does not influence organic brand images on tourists' image formation on Ghana this says quite a lot about the overall image of the industry. The relevance of this study is once again necessitated as tourism is an essential

foreign exchange earner for the Ghanaian gross domestic product (GDP) with the *Oxford Business Group* (2020) reporting that in 2017 the sector contributed GHS12.58bn (\$2.7bn) for which reason it will be in the wrong light for the GTA to be seen to make flawed projections.

Taking a cursory look at the tourism literature in the Ghanaian context, Ocran (2015) gives the impression that studies are mainly focused on efforts to establish and expand the industry, attitudes towards tourism, trends and changes in tourism business practices and contributions it makes to economic growth (Havi and Enu, 2013; Ahiawodzi, 2013). Even though there is evidence of work done from the PR perspective in tourism industry, the gap identified is to undertake a study which explores how PR can be used to build corporate image in the tourism industry in Ghana. In light of this, the study is in a position to assess the contribution PR of in building corporate image in the tourism industry.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main focus of the study is to assess PR's contribution to building corporate image in the tourism industry. However, the research set these specific objectives to aid in achieving the general objective stated above. These objectives will be;

1. To assess the current image of the tourism industry in Ghana
2. To determine whether PR can be used to build corporate image of the tourism industry and how
3. To identify PR functions that can be used to build corporate image of the tourism industry

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In line with the research objectives set, these questions will help navigate the study to arrive at the appropriate findings to address the objectives.

1. What is the current image of the tourism industry in Ghana?
2. Can PR be used to build corporate image in the tourism industry and if so how?
3. What PR functions can be used to build corporate image in the tourism industry?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In appreciating the relevance of this study, an important feat to note has to do with how the study portrays the diverse nature of PR and how diverse it could be as the link is drawn in the tourism industry. This will be done by giving a background to the relevance of corporate image as well as how to build it and by extension highlight roles PR can play in building corporate image before narrowing down to the tourism industry which is the focus of this study. All this will in the long run help enlighten the role PR plays in building corporate image of the tourism industry which will further add on to academic materials on the subject matter.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study will be organized into four (4) parts themed as chapters. Chapter One will be the introductory part of the paper while Chapter Two will have the theoretical grounding of the study. It will also have a section for the discussion of theories and related studies. The third Chapter will be the research methodology. This will address the methodological approach the study intends to adopt. The fourth part, Chapter Four, will provide details on how the study will contribute to research. This will cover the summary of findings conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In an effort to include relevant knowledge that would help enrich and shape the report, this chapter covers literature reviewed for this research work. It is also necessary to state what has been done in this field of research, as it helps to understand the claims made.

2.1 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.1 The Excellence Theory

Graen and Schiemann (2013) report that the Excellence theory is the first generalized PR theory which was formulated as a result of a 15-year review of communication management best practices known as the Excellence Review. In PR and communication management, the Excellence Theory is a theory of excellence and productivity that defines how PR makes organizations more successful, how it should be structured and handled to contribute to organizational effectiveness, and how to assess the economic value of PR (Macnamara, 2012).

First of all, the theory highlights the importance of PR to an organization and the society where it operates, in accordance with the quality of relationships that an organization has with its publics (Grunig, 2002). The theory asserts that it must be part of strategic management in order for PR to make a contribution to an organisation (Grunig, 2008). The theory, further notes that organizations must solve the problem and meet the interests of both the manager and stakeholders in order for an organization to be successful, and must recognize its different audiences that are influenced by the decisions made by the

organization or those who want the organization to solve a problem important to them. The company needs to search the world to recognize these audiences, which is the contribution of PR to strategic management (Grunig and Grunig, 2008).

The theory also assumes that organizations ought to interact with their customers symmetrically, making it easier to establish quality, long-term relationships with them. The organization is likely to set and achieve goals desired by both the organization and its publics through symmetrical contact (Grunig and Grunig, 2008), because a good partnership is important and crucial to the organization's survival. Grunig and Grunig (2008) clarified that this is because, in adverse situations such as litigation, legislation, law and negative coverage, a successful partnership decreases costs. It also decreases the risk of making decisions that could have adverse effects on various stakeholders and increases the probability of the business delivering products or services required by different stakeholders and eventually its foundation.

The Excellence Theory presents four broad categories of characteristics of an outstanding PR function, which is how the PR function should be structured to achieve optimum benefit, in addition to describing the benefit of communication to an organization (Kim, Hung-Baesecke, Yang and Grunig, 2013). As a management function, tasks, models and the organization of the contact function, these characteristics are in the general areas of PR.

According to Laskin (2012) who adds that PR has a range of functions that are useful in stirring organizations' affairs, by maintaining an excellent PR apparatus organizations have become important in recent years. Molnár (2008) states that, unlike in recent times when the mass media was not as common, what was known in one part of the world frequently did not enter other regions, but it became very necessary to be able to manage information with the evolution of communication. A PR feature, such as analysis, management of social media and environmental scanning, can be used by organizations in their communication efforts.

2.1.1.1 How the theory relates to the study

The relevance of this theory again hinges on how PR could be harnessed to properly position the Ghanaian tourism industry in the minds of tourists and other stakeholders so that the industry can reach its full potential. Langerak (2018) observes that every organization in the present day environment is understandably concerned with building and sustaining its corporate image for which reason most organizations strive towards a positive corporate image. For instance, accepting to undertake social responsibility and taking an active interest in the well-being of its stakeholders could enable the industry gain long-term benefits in terms of community support, loyalty and the fostering of good will and dovetails into the essence of maintaining a good corporate image which translates to the overall reputation in the long run. Langerak (2018) further adds that this could be achieved only by taking also into account such aspects as stakeholders' perception and employees' behaviour, and not just creating attractive buildings, uniforms, logos and slogans.

As Kim et al. (2013) notes, maintaining an excellent PR apparatus as an organization has become relevant over the past years especially because PR has a number of functions which comes in handy in steering the affairs of organizations (Ishaq, 2012). In the case of this study, maintaining a positive corporate image is as essential making profit for shareholders as Tsai and Yang (2010) espouse. Bearing in mind the evolution that PR has undergone and continues to undergo, PR function such as research, social media management and environmental scanning are activities the industry can harness to respond to the ever changing dynamics in doing operating so that the industry can be seen to be on top of issues and proactive.

2.2 PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) as cited by Wallrich (2020) defines PR as the management through communication of perceptions and strategic relationships between an organisation and its internal and external stakeholders. In the same vein, the Public Relations Society of America (2020) explains that while evolving with the changing roles and innovations of technology, the definition of PR has been defined in many ways but defines PR as a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006) as well introduce the perspective that PR is the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationship between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends.

Among the various functions of PR, Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006) posits that **Community Relations, Employee Relations, Government Relations, Public Affairs and Media Relations are essential to carrying out PR task.** Community Relations for instance is saddled with the function of actively planning and continuing participation with and within a community to maintain and enhance an organization's to the benefit of both the organization and the community. This can involve partnerships, volunteer activities, philanthropic contributions and public participation and corporate social responsibility (Waters, Tindall and Morton, 2010).

The function of Employee Relations that Griffin, Bryant and Koerber (2020) espouses **involves** dealing and communicating with the internal publics of an organization which could include team building and employee empowerment. **Government Relations is also a way PR** interacts with legislative and government agencies on behalf of an organization (Rhodes, 2018). This is closely linked with the **Public Affairs function of PR which encompasses** dealings with government and groups with regard to societal (public) policies, action and

legislation. Unlike Government Relations, where the practitioner works strictly on behalf of an organization, Public Affairs is also concerned with the effect of public policies, actions and legislation on its publics. This is usually referred to as lobbying in some literature (AgilityPR, 2020).

2.3 IMAGE MANAGEMENT

Corporate image is the sum of corporation related beliefs, experiences, information, emotions and impressions that occur in the mind of public (Kim, Lee and Prideaux, 2014). Dutton and Duckerich (1991) in Gürlek, Düzgün and Uygur (2017) indicate that corporate image is the concrete outcome of opinions, emotions, impressions and interactions of stakeholders regarding the corporation. On the other hand, Barich and Kotler (1991) define corporate image as one of non-physical components of the corporation and perceptions or images of stakeholders regarding the corporation (Gürlek, Düzgün and Uygur, 2017). Christensen, Morsing and Cheney (2008) suggest that reputation comprises the image and that a dent on the image could affect the reputation negatively.

If image can impact the reputation of the organization, as suggested, Christensen et al. (2008) argues that organizations should manage their corporate images and can be shaped to portray an intended image or a construed image (Brønn, 2010). Cornelissen (2011) opines that this symbolic construction should be deliberate and critical as it helps stakeholders perceive the organization through carefully-designed lenses. This suggests a critical role corporate communication plays in constructing a good, “official self-image” (Gürlek, Düzgün and Uygur, 2017) and that organization’s success in generating its desired image is only as successful as how it is received, internalized, and accepted by stakeholders, based on what they hear, see and experience, and this is continually and mutually negotiated with stakeholders.

As Wan and Schell (2007, p. 27) argued, image is examined at two levels, first, what and how the organization portrays itself to be through “skillfully designed communication”; and second, the stakeholders’ perceptions based on “understandings and interpretations” (Wan and Schell, 2007, p. 27). Two processes at work here, the cognitive (i.e. what one knows about the organization) as well as affective or emotional (how one feels about the organization) components (Avraham and Ketter, 2008; Dowling, 2001). Thus, an image can be constructed (by the organization) or ascribed (by stakeholders) as Pomeroy and Johnson (2009) note that a positive corporate image can be gained through social responsibility activities they carry out implying that positive corporate image could increase customer loyalty and this may provide sustainable competitive advantage (Gürlek, Düzgün and Uygur, 2017). To this end, image management is important to an essential activity organizations should take note of.

2.4 THE TOURISM SECTOR

In Ghana, the travel and tourism industry contributed a total of 2.8 million U.S dollars to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2017 which accounted for 6.2 percent of Ghana’s total GDP (World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC], 2017). The industry directly provided more than six hundred thousand jobs in 2017. Ghana is currently the sixth largest tourism market in West Africa and was ranked 103rd among 185 countries on the power and performance ranking by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2017). The National Tourism Development Plan (2013-2017) indicates that the opportunities in the tourism industry are so numerous but are not yet fully exploited and more marketing is needed to create more awareness.

The tourism sector is one of the most growing sectors all over the world. Ghana’s Tourism industry has experienced steady growth almost every year in the past and the expectations are

the same in the following years (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2015). Generally, Tourism as an industry has helped in the creation of wealth and generation of employment in many countries. It creates alternative income generation activities and it can be a tool for economic empowerment for rural communities (WTTC, 2016). Africa as a continent is also enjoying some continued growth in the tourism industry. For instance, Africa travel and tourism represents an emerging market of 31 million travellers with more than \$12.4 billion in revenues (UNWTO, 2015).

According to the Act 817 of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana entitled Tourism Act, 2011, the GTA is mandated to promote the sustainable development of the tourism industry internationally and within the country. The vision of GTA is to be the main driver for the growth of Tourism and to see Ghana become the leading sustainable Tourist Destination in West Africa by 2026. This can be achieved through the use of social media and other promotional strategies (GTA Strategic plan, 2016).

The tourism industry in 2015 employed an estimated 393,000 people directly and indirectly from hotels, restaurants travel trade, entertainment, recreational, tourist sites managers etc. (Sagnarigu Assembly Profile, 2015). The principal generating Markets are USA, Overseas Ghanaians, West African countries (Nigeria, Togo and Cote D'Ivoire) European countries (UK, Germany, France and The Netherlands). Tourism potentials in Ghana are immense and diverse. Also, the country has natural, historical, cultural and other man-made attractions as well as being the central location on the world map. Another reason is, the country is politically and economically stable ((GTA Annual Report, 2017; Dogbe, 2019). The GTA has promised to continue to promote the tourism industry internationally and within the country, and has recently started using social media to promote tourism sites throughout the country (Dogbe, 2019).

2.5 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

In general, Sarstedt, Wilczynski and Melewar (2012) claim that corporate image and credibility are regarded as an asset that gives the company the ability to distinguish itself in order to increase its market share, revenues, gain new customers, maintain existing customers, neutralize the behavior of rivals and, above all, their market success and survival. Abd-El-Salam, Shawky and El-Nahas (2013) for instance argue that if a client has a positive view of a company and has established customer loyalty, the corporate reputation created over time could be useful in handling a crisis.

This is supported by the observation from Bravo, Montaner and Pina (2010) that corporate image is generated as a result of communication processes through which organizations develop and disseminate a clear message that constitutes their strategic intent; purpose, vision, objectives and identity that reflects the core values they cherish (Abd-El-Salam, Shawky and El-Nahas, 2013). Bartleby (2020) adds that the concept of public image or reputation is the idea and perception of a company generated by the general public. The perception of an entity and the legitimacy it holds in society is the public image (Bartleby, 2020). As it is closely linked to corporate image, the secret to a successful public image is corporate branding. Virvilaite and Daubaraitė (2011) found that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) had a positive impact, even though it was not the most relevant factor that could affect the corporate image by indicating possible variables.

While Tench and Yeomans (2017) describe the concept of corporate image as how individuals perceive a person or an organization, they also suggest that corporate reputation is an image created as a result of the interaction of an individual's beliefs, emotions, feelings and experiences (Tench and Yeomans, 2017). However, Kim and Lee (2010) explain that corporate credibility is a major factor in creating consumer loyalty, among other variables in which Balmer and Greyser (2009) note the need to recognize the crisis of the corporate brand

is highlighted. It is beneficial for an company to continue maintaining a strong public image in the view of Bartleby (2020) as it allows them to generate an opinion as loyal and trustworthy about them as it will help stand out from the competition of other competitors and ensure an excellent public profile.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

An empirical review of literature applicable to this research was presented in this chapter with the aim that relevant knowledge will be collected to help shape and enrich the research. The next chapter introduces the methodology of analysis adopted by this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

For any research to be carried out there must be an objective and a purpose for doing so because research is in two-fold; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory of which Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) note the manner in which research questions are structured makes the difference. Descriptive studies in Kumar's (2018) view are more formalized and typically attempts to describe a situation, problem, phenomenon, service or programme with stated hypothesis or investigated question. For example, the living conditions of a community, or describes attitudes towards an issue while explanatory research tries to establish and clarify why and how there is a relationship between two aspects of a situation or phenomenon (Kumar, 2018). This type of study tries to explain why certain things happen the way they do. For example, a researcher may collect data to explain the reasons why sales of particular products/services suddenly dropped. The reason might be probably because of a new, better product/service, or recession may be catching up with the purchasing power of consumers. However, this study will take the descriptive approach.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Maxwell (2012) describes the research design as the framework for data collection and analysis that helps scientists distribute their resources by making important decisions which Sileyew (2019) add is the plan for the overall research strategy and provides an

overview of what the researcher will do from developing the hypothesis. With Kumar (2018) noting that there are three key approaches to research namely, qualitative, quantitative and the mixed methods. Kowalczyk (2016) espouses the view that researchers have a choice of three basic methods to choose from when carrying out research, depending on a number of factors involved in the research. Qualitative research method describes the kind and quality of a subject while interpreting and attempting to understand an event while quantitative research method tests hypotheses and makes predictions by using measured amounts and ultimately describe an event by using figures (Techo, 2016). On the mixed method, Tashakkori, Johnson and Teddlie (2020) explain that the researcher uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to completely describe an event which Creswell (2011) asserts cancels out biases characteristically associated with quantitative or qualitative methods. This study will however adopt the quantitative method of research.

3.2 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative research is concerned with the collection and analysis of data in numeric forms and tends to emphasize relatively on large scale sets of data (Park and Park, 2016) and heavily depend on quantitative information, i.e. numbers and figures (Mujis, 2010). The data can be statistically analysed using SPSS for windows, SAS, Excel, Statview among others (Saunders et al., 2009). Quantitative research is often used in hypothesis testing with an example being a researcher wanting to find out why certain groups of people prefer certain product, to find out the answer to this issue the researcher might have to conduct an interview or make questionnaires asking them what the characteristics for their preference of choices are (Brannen, 2017). Typically the technique for quantitative method of research is survey

which is carried out through questionnaires or interviews; telephone interview, personal interview, mail interview (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.3 RESEARCH POPULATION

In the view of Etikan and Bala (2017), a sample population is a well-defined group of people or items with similar characteristics that are the main focus of a scientific analysis, adding that researchers do not evaluate every person in the population because it is costly and time consuming due to the large population sizes. With this background and with study in mind, the population for the study will be tourists in the Greater Accra Region. This population was selected from Osu in line with Yankholmes and Akyeampong's (2010) account that the bustling cosmopolitan population and nightlife activities of the suburb compare with that of the central business district of Accra. This has made it a popular rendezvous for both international tourists and visitors to the capital. Such is the popularity and legacy of 'Oxford Street' that it can best be described as 'the most Oxford Street outside of England' not forgetting that Yankholmes and Akyeampong's (2010) assertion that many tourists who visit World Heritage Sites consider their visits to be valuable experiences that lead to repeat visits and recommendations to other people.

3.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Kandola, Banner, O'Keefe-McCarthy and Jassal (2014) argue that sampling is essentially the selection of a segment or subset of the entire research population so that the selected component will represent the entire population, which is why Grove, Burns and Gray (2012) add that a study sample is a sub-set of the population from which it was taken and must be of a sufficient size to justify it. Setia (2016) believes that, because of the large sample sizes,

researchers are often unable to test every individual in the population because it is too costly and time-consuming, which is why researchers use sampling methods to obtain population samples.

3.3.1 Sampling technique

Morse (2010) is of the opinion that sampling occurs when a section or subset of a larger community of prospective participants is evaluated by researchers and the findings are used to make statements that refer to that larger group or population. The type of sampling technique of a researcher will affect their ability to generalize the study population's sample results and the type of statistical tests you will apply to the data, as noted by Kumar (2018). Christensen, Johnson, Turner and Christensen (2018) suggest that the process of selecting a sample is an important part of the sound testing design that involves two types of sampling designs, namely non-probability sampling designs and probability sampling designs.

Non-probability sampling is a common technique in qualitative research where, according to Christensen et al. (2018), researchers use their decision to choose a sample while probability sampling provides the same probability of being selected for each participant. According to Christensen et al. (2018), researchers assume that simple random sampling is the most fundamental form of probability sampling. Furthermore, Acharya, Prakash, Saxena and Nigam (2018) argue that if samples are correctly collected from relatively small samples, accurate statements can be made about a population with a fairly high degree of confidence, which is why Frey (2018) states that simple random sampling is a probability method for selecting a subset or sample from a larger population in such a way that each portion is selected from a larger population. This study will thus select hundred (100) tourists who patronize any of the tourist sites to be the research respondents. It is well established in tourism literature according to Alegre and Garau (2010) that both overall tourist satisfaction and a tourist's intention to return are partially determined by his/her assessment of the

destination's different attributes. For this reason, this study anticipates that tourist will be in the better place to evaluate and respond to the research questions.

3.3.2 Data Collections Procedure

Primary sources provide raw information and first-hand evidence which includes interview transcripts, statistical data, and works of art while a primary source gives you direct access to the subject of your research and secondary sources provide second-hand information and commentary from other researchers (Cln, 2013). The study will employ both sources of data as the primary data will be generated through the administering of questionnaires and the secondary data obtain from materials such as books, journal articles and other publications with relevant information in relation to the study. Primary data obtained will be analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) alongside the use of visuals such as tables and graphs to aid the descriptive nature of the study.

3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

This section presents the concerns of the correctness of the researcher's behaviour towards the participants in the study, which will start by informing the research participant extensively providing an overview of the study and how it will impact them while touching on the potential risks and benefits, while notifying them that they have the right to refuse to participate if they wish to do so at any point. Another significant ethical issue that will be considered in this research process is to do with the strict policy of maintaining confidentiality of respondents, which will be accomplished by ensuring and insisting that there will be no disclosure of names or personal information in the analysis, but only concrete details that will help answer the research questions will be used.

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented an overview of the methodological approach this study adopted in furthering the objectives it sought to achieve. The next chapter presents a summary and conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

4.0 SUMMARY

The main focus of the study was to assess the contribution of PR in building corporate image in the tourism industry. However, the study set specific objectives to aid in achieving the general objective stated above. These objectives were to assess the current image of the tourism industry in Ghana, to determine whether PR can be used to build corporate image of the tourism industry and how, as well as probing how to identify PR functions that can be used to build corporate image of the tourism industry. To pursue this course, the study reviewed a number of empirical literature to enrich the grounding of the study in literature. This added to the aptness of arguments and discussion.

The study observes that while the PR industry keeps growing and its contribution to the success of organizations and even individuals Naveed (2013), the Ghanaian tourism industry appears not to have taken advantage of this to build its corporate image. The literature suggests (eg. Amegbe, Owino and Kerubo (2017), Johnston and Sheehan (2020) etc.) time and again making it resound that PR could be used to improve corporate image of organizations and individuals alike. Also, PR functions that were identified to be able to build the corporate image of the industry included media relation, social media management, environmental scanning and boundary spanning among others (Proverbs, 2020).

4.1 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The study presents a better understanding and need to undertake a corporate image building endeavour from the lenses of key players in the tourism industry of Ghana. Using this study as a base, further work could be done to properly contextualise this phenomenon under probe

in a way which reflects the Ghanaian outlook. Further, this study could help stakeholders in the tourism industry appreciate the influence PR has and how it can be harnessed so that they can draft policies that would specifically place the discipline in the dominant coalition. For academia and the discipline as a whole, this study attempts to carve a path to developing a branch of PR focused function of Tourism PR.

4.2 RESEARCHER'S REFLECTION

The researcher in an attempt to assess the contribution of PR in building corporate image in the tourism industry dwelt on reviewing empirical literature which makes the study firmly grounded in factual discussion and presentation of arguments. Also, the study was guided by findings from other researchers which helped this study appreciate the diverse nature of PR as it was found to play a significant role in the broader tourism ecosystem.

4.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The failure to collect primary data due to complications arising from the outbreak of the Corona Virus pandemic (COVID-19), which forced the study to be configured into a desk research where secondary data was the primary source of data relied on, was a key weakness of the study. The inability of the study to generate primary data to an extent prevented the introduction of different perspectives in the discussion of the phenomenon the study sought to probe.

4.4 CONCLUSION

While exploring the contribution of PR in building corporate image in the tourism industry, it is worthy of note that the unseen power of PR can be very detrimental to organizations who downplay its usefulness. As a resulting effect, this study concludes that as much as the tourism industry continues to grow, having a positive corporate image will come in handy in case the tourism industry runs into a crisis situation and public opinion begins to build. To this end, organizations and stakeholders in this industry should endeavour to invest in PR activities such as community relations and environmental scanning so that they can effectively improve their corporate image.

4.5 RECOMMENDATION

In this section, the study makes recommendations for the discipline, policy making and further studies. The study recommends that the supervising Ministry, GTA as well as key stakeholders in the industry probe and champion the role of PR by recognizing and equipping the function with the necessary needs so that it can equally harness the good fruits of PR. For policy makers as well, the study recommends policies which drive at sensitizing agencies, stakeholders and the general public as a whole so that tourism will be patronized more. For instance, the GTA could correspond with its sector Ministry and echo its needs so the Authority can top notch so that Ghana becomes a preferred destination in the sub-region and in the world as a whole. On further studies, the study recommends that other researchers attempt or replicate this study along the lines comparing the role PR plays in developing strategic investments such as Corporate Social Responsibility.

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