

**UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION(UniMAC)  
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**FROM CHALE WOTE TO CORPORATE: EXPLORING HOW  
GHANAIAAN BRANDS INTEGRATE CULTURAL IDENTITY INTO  
BRANDING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS -A CASE STUDY OF GTP AND  
KASAPREKO.**

**by**

**SUSAN OBIRI**

**MAPRM24061**

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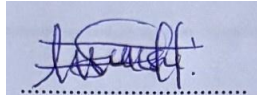
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS with MARKETING**

**NOVEMBER 2025**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research thesis is entirely my work. It has never been submitted to any other university for a degree. All references and sources used in this study have been appropriately cited and acknowledged.

**SUSAN OBIRI**



**28/11/25**

**(MAPRM24061)**

**SIGNATURE**

**DATE**

This thesis has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of thesis laid down by The University of Media and Communication-Institute of Journalism (UNIMAC)

**DR. ISAAC TANDOH**



**28/11/25**

**SUPERVISOR**

**SIGNATURE**

**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This research has been a great journey and helped me to understand an area of work that is vast and practical. It has been completed with months of hard work and dedication and would not have been possible if not for the blessing and guidance I have received from my parents, Mr. Charles Obiri (Dad) and Mrs. Regina Oparebea (Mom). To my lecturers, Dr. Isaac Tandoh and Dr. Joshua Doe, who guided, challenged and inspired my academic journey, your wisdom and nurturing minds have not only imparted knowledge but also challenged me to do more. To my colleague who became a friend and part of my academic journey Mrs. Carlene Afram, I say thank you, your love, commitment and support will never be forgotten.

Lastly, to students and future researchers in similar field, I hope this study serve as a stepping stone for further research and contribute meaningfully and have an impact on future researches as well.

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Your continuous believe in me is the reason I am here today and for that I say thank you.

To everyone who directly or indirectly contributed to the successful completion of this research, I say THANK YOU.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined how Ghanaian brands integrate cultural identity into their branding and public relations strategies, using Ghana Textiles Printing (GTP) and Kasapreko as case studies. It adopted a qualitative multiple case study design, collecting data through semi-structured interviews with brand managers, focus group discussions with consumers, and content analysis of brand communications. Thematic analysis, guided by cultural branding theory and social identity theory, revealed that both companies actively infused Ghanaian cultural symbols, local language, and narratives into their brand messaging, product design, and campaigns.

Findings showed that such cultural branding functions as powerful symbolic communication. GTP incorporated traditional motifs and local proverbs in its fabric designs and marketing, while Kasapreko infused product names, herbal recipes, and advertising with Ghanaian linguistic and cultural references. Consumers perceived these elements as authentic reflections of national identity, leading to strong emotional connections, consumer pride, and a sense of belonging. This resonance, in turn, enhanced brand loyalty and positive brand perception, as consumers viewed their patronage as an expression of leverage cultural identity in similar ways to create brand meaning and differentiation.

The study also identified key opportunities and challenges. Culturally enriched branding provided opportunities for differentiation in competitive markets and engagement with diaspora audiences, but it required balancing heritage with contemporary appeal to younger consumers to avoid appearing outdated. The research demonstrates that integrating cultural identity into branding and PR can strengthen brand equity and consumer loyalty for Ghanaian brands, as these brands become cultural icons that embody and celebrate collective identity in the market

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Chapter Introduction

Imagine sipping Alomo Bitters at a neighborhood bar while the vibrant patterns of a GTP print flash across a billboard above, both quietly telling a story older than any marketing slogan: “We are proudly Ghanaian.” From the graffiti-lined streets of Jamestown during Chale Wote to the polished boardrooms of corporations, a cultural renaissance is unfolding. Ghanaian brands are no longer just selling products, they are selling identity, heritage, and pride. In a marketplace dominated by global competition, local brands like Kasapreko and GTP have tapped into the rich Ghanaian tradition to position themselves not just as businesses, but as cultural icons. This study chapter outlines, the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance, scope, and definitions of key terms,

### 1.2 Background of the Study

As societies become more globally linked, branding and public relations (PR) have become essential for organisations seeking to distinguish themselves in competitive markets. In Ghana, cultural identity has become an important element in shaping how brands communicate and connect with their audiences. Culture, often defined as the shared beliefs, customs, arts, and social institutions of a group, which drives consumer perception and loyalty (Holt, 2004). Consequently, the integration of cultural identity into branding and PR strategies has become way for Ghanaian companies to resonate with local audiences and build authentic brand images.

The rise of cultural festivals such as the **Chale Wote Street Art Festival** has underscored the relevance of indigenous culture in contemporary urban expression. The festival, which blends art, music, fashion, and tradition, has influenced how brands position themselves in Ghana’s urban

cultural landscape. Brands like **GTP**, a leading textile manufacturer, and **Kasapreko**, a beverage company with a strong local presence, have adopted cultural motifs and narratives in their branding strategies. These companies blend traditional Ghanaian values, symbols, language, and aesthetics with modern marketing tools to appeal to both domestic and international markets. The textile designs of GTP often incorporate Adinkra symbols, Kente patterns, and locally resonant themes to communicate stories that reflect Ghanaian heritage. Similarly, Kasapreko uses local languages, storytelling, and cultural imagery in advertising campaigns to foster familiarity and cultural pride among consumers. These practices illustrate how cultural identity is not only preserved but also commercialized within branding and PR strategies.

Despite this growing trend, there is limited academic inquiry into how cultural identity is systematically integrated into corporate branding and public relations in Ghana. This study, therefore, seeks to explore how GTP and Kasapreko, as culturally significant brands, embed Ghanaian identity into their brand narratives and communication/ Public relation strategies.

### **1.3 Statement of Problem**

Cultural identity has become a critical element in branding and public relations (PR) as organisations seek to differentiate themselves in increasingly competitive markets. In Ghana, brands such as GTP and Kasapreko have drawn heavily on cultural narratives, heritage symbols, and traditional values to establish connections with consumers. GTP integrates Ghanaian motifs and storytelling into its textile designs, while Kasapreko incorporates cultural pride and national identity into its beverage campaigns (Yeboah-Banin & Quaye, 2021). These practices suggest that cultural identity is not only a resource for market visibility but also a means of reinforcing social belonging and collective memory. However, despite their prominence, academic research has not

sufficiently examined how cultural identity is systematically integrated into both branding and PR strategies within the Ghanaian corporate context (Kosiba et al., 2018; McCarthy et al., 2023).

Existing studies in Ghana and Africa more broadly often examine cultural identity in isolation from PR practice or focus solely on consumer behaviour without connecting it to corporate strategy (Kosiba et al., 2018; Yeboah-Banin & Quaye, 2021). While such works offer valuable insights, they limit holistic understanding because branding, PR, and consumer perceptions are treated as separate domains. Meanwhile, global scholarship on cultural branding (Holt, 2004) provides frameworks for understanding symbolic consumption but is often grounded in Western contexts. These frameworks may not fully capture the unique socio-cultural dynamics in Ghana, where culture is deeply embedded in consumer identity, national pride, and brand loyalty (Meyer, 2015).

Furthermore, research has paid little attention to the dual dynamics of opportunities and challenges associated with adopting cultural identity in branding and PR. While cultural identity may enhance brand authenticity, consumer loyalty, and differentiation (Holt, 2004; McCarthy et al., 2023), it may also expose organisations to accusations of cultural appropriation, stereotyping, or alienation of diverse audiences (Arkaah, 2024). Without exploring both sides of this dynamic, branding strategies risk being understood only in celebratory terms, overlooking potential pitfalls.

Finally, comparative studies that examine how different Ghanaian brands deploy cultural identity are rare. GTP and Kasapreko represent distinct industries that are textiles and beverages, yet both leverage cultural narratives in ways that resonate with national and global audiences (Yeboah-Banin & Quaye, 2021). A comparative case study therefore offers the opportunity to identify both convergences and divergences in how Ghanaian brands deploy culture for corporate communication. Addressing these gaps is necessary for advancing scholarship in branding and PR

while providing practical insights for Ghanaian brands operating in culturally diverse and competitive markets.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The study aims to:

1. Examine how GTP and Kasapreko integrate Ghanaian cultural identity into their branding and public relations strategies.
2. Explore consumer perceptions of the cultural identity elements embedded in these brands.
3. Analyse the opportunities and challenges associated with using cultural identity as a branding and PR strategy in Ghana.
4. Compare how cultural identity is integrated across the two brands and identify similarities and differences.

#### **1.5 Research Objectives**

1. How do GTP and Kasapreko incorporate Ghanaian cultural identity into their branding and PR strategies?
2. How do consumers perceive and interpret the cultural identity elements in these brands?
3. What opportunities and challenges emerge when Ghanaian brands adopt cultural identity as part of their branding and PR strategies?
4. In what ways are GTP and Kasapreko similar or different in their use of cultural identity for branding and PR?

## **1.6 Scope of Study**

This study focuses on exploring how Ghanaian brands integrate cultural identity into their branding and public relations (PR) strategies, using GTP and Kasapreko Company Limited as case studies. The scope is both thematic and geographical. Thematically, the research is limited to examining the intentional incorporation of Ghanaian cultural elements such as language, traditional symbols, folklore, festivals, proverbs, and local aesthetics into the branding and PR practices of the selected companies. Specific attention will be paid to how these cultural elements are reflected in brand messaging, advertising, packaging, media relations, and corporate social engagements. The study also explores how these strategies influence brand perception and consumer loyalty among Ghanaian audiences. Geographically, the research is situated within the Ghanaian context, with data drawn primarily from Accra and Kumasi, where both brands have strong consumer visibility and conduct substantial marketing activities. This localisation allows for a focused investigation into how cultural branding resonates with diverse audiences within the country's socio-cultural landscape. Institutionally, the study limits its case studies to two companies:

- **GTP (Ghana Textiles Printing)**
- **Kasapreko Company Limited**

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative approach involving interviews with brand managers, public relations professionals, and selected consumers. Content analysis of advertising campaigns, corporate communications, and social media activity will also be conducted to understand the practical application of cultural identity in branding. The study does not cover other aspects of marketing such as “pricing, distribution, or product development” unless they are directly linked to cultural branding. It also excludes international branding activities that do not explicitly engage Ghanaian cultural themes.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity and consistency, the following key terms are defined as used within the context of this study:

- **Cultural Identity:** Refers to the shared customs, beliefs, language, traditions, values, and symbols that characterize a group of people. In this study, it specifically denotes Ghanaian cultural elements embedded in brand communication
- **Branding:** The strategic process of creating a unique image and identity for a product or company in the consumer's mind through names, designs, messages, and associations This includes visual identity, brand messaging, and emotional connections.
- **Public Relations (PR):** A strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. In this study, PR includes media relations, reputation management, cultural storytelling, and event sponsorships involving local customs
- **Cultural Branding:** The use of culturally relevant narratives, symbols, language, and values in brand strategies to establish authenticity and emotional appeal, particularly within the local or national context (Holt, 2004).
- **Consumer Engagement:** The degree to which customers interact with, respond to, and build relationships with a brand. This includes emotional connection, loyalty, and advocacy resulting from culturally resonant branding.
- **GTP:** Ghana Textiles Printing Company Limited is a textile brand recognized for incorporating Ghanaian traditional designs and symbols into its fabric production and branding.

- **Kasapreko:** A Ghanaian beverage manufacturing company known for infusing local identity into its product packaging, advertising, and corporate social campaigns.

## 1.8 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters:

- **Chapter One – Introduction:** Provides the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance, scope, and definitions of key terms.
- **Chapter Two – Literature Review:** Reviews existing academic and theoretical literature related to cultural identity, branding, public relations, and the Ghanaian market context. It also presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the study.
- **Chapter Three – Methodology:** Describes the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, instruments, and procedures for data analysis. It also discusses ethical considerations.
- **Chapter Four – Findings and Discussion:** Presents and analyzes the qualitative data collected from interviews, documents, and campaigns. Themes are developed based on the research objectives and existing theories.
- **Chapter Five – Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations:** Summarizes key findings, draws conclusions based on the study's objectives, and offers practical recommendations for practitioners and future research.

## 1.9 Chapter Summary

Chapter One introduced the study by outlining the background, problem statement, objectives, significance, and scope. It highlighted the need to explore how Ghanaian brands such as GTP and Kasapreko incorporate cultural identity into their branding and public relations strategies. Key

terms were defined to ensure clarity study was presented. The next chapter will review relevant literature to provide a theoretical and conceptual basis for the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the study. It explores key theories, reviews relevant literature and scope of knowledge on the topic.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This section outlines the key theories guiding the study. It presents the cultural branding theory and the social identity theory and further explains how each supports the understanding of branding strategies used by GTP and Kasapreko.

##### **2.1.1 Cultural Branding Theory (CBT)**

Douglas Holt developed the cultural branding theory in the early 2000s to explain how brands acquire symbolic meaning and achieve iconic status through cultural narratives. In *How Brands Become Icons*, Holt (2004) argued that brands move beyond functional attributes when they act as cultural texts that resolve identity conflicts in society. Brands therefore become storytellers that carry myths which consumers use to navigate shared tensions and aspirations. Fournier and Alvarez (2019) add that the cultural value of brands lies in their ability to embody ideologies that matter to communities, not only in their capacity to persuade through advertising. Holt and Cameron (2010) further demonstrate that identifying ideological opportunities allows brands to embed themselves in cultural debates and sustain long-term relevance. These insights form the foundation of cultural branding and justify its use in examining how Ghanaian firms engage cultural meaning in their brand strategies.

Recent available research also underscores that cultural branding succeeds when brands recognise cultural shifts and respond with authenticity. Stephansen and Broensby (2021) explain that brands build resonance when they interpret collective anxieties and aspirations and translate them into symbolic campaigns. Global examples illustrate this logic. Nike's campaigns around race and gender have been shown to position the brand as an ally in social change rather than as a mere product provider (Adrian & Faiza, 2021). Tinder's #SingleNotSorry campaign also demonstrates how aligning with feminist discourses enabled the brand to engage cultural debates on independence and empowerment (Morris & Dobson, 2023). In Ghana, Amaniampong and Tait (2024) reveal that the integration of Adinkra symbols and traditional colour palettes into footwear branding significantly increases consumer perceptions of authenticity and heritage value. These examples suggest that cultural branding offers Ghanaian firms such as GTP and Kasapreko an effective route for aligning their products with the cultural pride of local consumers.

The digital environment has also extended the scope of cultural branding. Odoom (2023) found that campaigns which incorporate local languages, indigenous motifs, and culturally meaningful content online achieve higher engagement than generic strategies. Similarly, Nkosi (2024) shows that social media campaigns that align with the cultural values of millennial consumers drive stronger loyalty in South Africa. These findings indicate that cultural branding thrives in digital spaces where meaning is co-created and shared in real time. For Ghanaian brands this means that cultural branding is not confined to traditional media but can be expanded into interactive online platforms where consumers become part of the brand narrative. Such evidence is useful in this study because both GTP and Kasapreko are actively present in digital spaces and are likely to benefit from strategies that link cultural identity with consumer participation.

Despite its strengths, cultural branding theory has been subject to critical debate. Briciu (2020) cautions that cultural branding can become exploitative when brands borrow cultural symbols without authentic engagement. Allan (2022) highlights that in diverse societies brand messages can be politicised and misinterpreted which weakens trust rather than strengthening it. Mosley (2024) further argues that superficial use of cultural markers amounts to cultural appropriation and risks alienating communities rather than empowering them. These critiques suggest that cultural branding carries both opportunities and risks. Brands that succeed are those that treat culture with respect and inclusivity while those that mimic cultural elements without accountability are likely to lose credibility and consumer loyalty.

For the purposes of this research, cultural branding theory has been selected because it directly connects to the problem of how Ghanaian firms can embed cultural identity into branding and public relations. The study seeks to examine how culture-driven narratives influence consumer engagement and loyalty in the cases of GTP and Kasapreko. Cultural branding provides the analytical tools to explore how indigenous symbols, myths, and storytelling become resources for brand differentiation and trust. It also enables the researcher to identify how authenticity and cultural sensitivity affect consumer responses. In terms of the research variables, cultural branding explains the link between cultural identity and consumer engagement, as well as the connection between cultural storytelling and brand loyalty.

More specifically, this theory aligns with the research objectives in distinct ways. The first objective, which examines how GTP and Kasapreko use Ghanaian cultural identity in branding, is grounded in Holt's (2004) argument that brands achieve meaning when they act as cultural texts. The second objective, which assesses how cultural narratives influence consumer engagement, is supported by studies such as Odoom (2023) and Nkosi (2024) that show how culturally resonant

campaigns enhance interaction and loyalty. The third objective, which explores how public relations strategies reinforce cultural branding, draws on the principle that cultural storytelling must be communicated authentically and strategically to resonate with diverse audiences. Mapping cultural branding theory to these objectives ensures that the study remains theoretically grounded and contextually relevant while also highlighting how the theory guides the interpretation of variables and findings.

In guiding the analysis this theory enables the study to move beyond descriptive accounts of branding practices toward an interpretation of how cultural narratives function in shaping consumer behaviour. It will guide the assessment of cultural identity and public relations strategies as independent variables that influence consumer engagement as a mediating variable and brand loyalty as an outcome. By applying cultural branding theory, the study can interpret whether the use of Ghanaian symbols, myths, and languages genuinely builds consumer trust or whether it reflects superficial cultural borrowing. The theory therefore serves as a lens for evaluating not only the presence of cultural elements but also their authenticity, emotional power, and strategic value. In interpreting results, the theory ensures that findings are not treated as isolated observations but as part of a broader narrative about how culture operates as a resource in branding within Ghana's competitive marketplace.

### **2.1.2 Social Identity Theory (SIT)**

The Social Identity Theory was introduced by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the late 1970s to explain how individuals define themselves through group membership. The theory argues that people categorise themselves and others into groups such as ethnicity, nationality, or profession as a way of structuring social reality (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These categories give rise to ingroups to which individuals feel a sense of belonging and outgroups that are often perceived with bias or

competition. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), individuals enhance their self-esteem when their ingroup is seen as superior to others. This process of categorisation, identification, and comparison influences not only attitudes but also communication patterns and behaviours. Later scholars such as Harwood (2020) and McLeod (2023) have shown that the theory provides a flexible framework for understanding identity in both face-to-face and digital contexts.

The central tenets of Social Identity Theory are social categorisation, social identification, and social comparison. Social categorisation refers to the way people sort themselves into groups to understand where they belong. Social identification involves adopting the norms, values, and behaviours of one's group to reinforce group cohesion. Social comparison then occurs as people seek to evaluate their group positively against others, which contributes to stronger loyalty and self-esteem. Ellemers and Barreto (2018) demonstrate that threats to group identity can trigger defensive loyalty and stronger emotional attachment to the group. Roccas and Brewer (2002) expand the framework by introducing the idea of social identity complexity, which highlights how individuals manage multiple overlapping identities in complex societies. These ideas make the theory applicable to societies like Ghana where individuals simultaneously belong to ethnic, cultural, and national groups.

The theory has been widely applied across different disciplines including communication, leadership, marketing, and digital studies. In crisis communication, for instance, leaders who appeal to shared group identity are more likely to earn trust and cooperation (Gleibs, 2025). In digital media, studies reveal that users form stronger online communities with people who signal shared identities through their profiles and content (Choi et al., 2023). In organisational research, the theory is used to explain how employee loyalty and commitment emerge from a sense of shared organisational culture. These applications show the theory's relevance across diverse contexts,

especially in environments where identity is central to decision making. For this study, the theory provides a useful way of examining how consumer identity shapes brand engagement and loyalty in Ghana.

Despite its strengths, Social Identity Theory has been subject to critique. Demirden (2021) argues that it places too much emphasis on cognitive processes and fails to address the emotional and cultural dimensions of identity fully. Harwood (2020) adds that the minimal group experiments used in its early development are too artificial to capture the richness of real-life group dynamics. To address these concerns, later scholars have integrated concepts such as group-based moral emotions and collective pride to enrich the framework (Integrating Moral Outrage, 2022). These developments suggest that the theory is evolving and becoming more inclusive of cultural and emotional dimensions. Such refinements are significant for Ghana where cultural identity is not only a matter of categorisation but also one of pride, emotion, and community belonging.

This study adopts Social Identity Theory because it directly connects to the research problem of how cultural identity strengthens consumer-brand relationships. Consumers often align themselves with brands that reflect the values, symbols, and narratives of their cultural group. Amponsah-Twumasi (2016) showed that Ghanaian firms like Kasapreko already use cultural narratives on social media to build strong communities of loyal followers. Saeedi (2025) also emphasises that when consumers see their identity reflected in brand messaging, they are more likely to feel emotionally connected and supportive. These findings support theory's relevance to this study by showing that brand loyalty in Ghana cannot be explained solely by product attributes but also shared identity and cultural alignment.

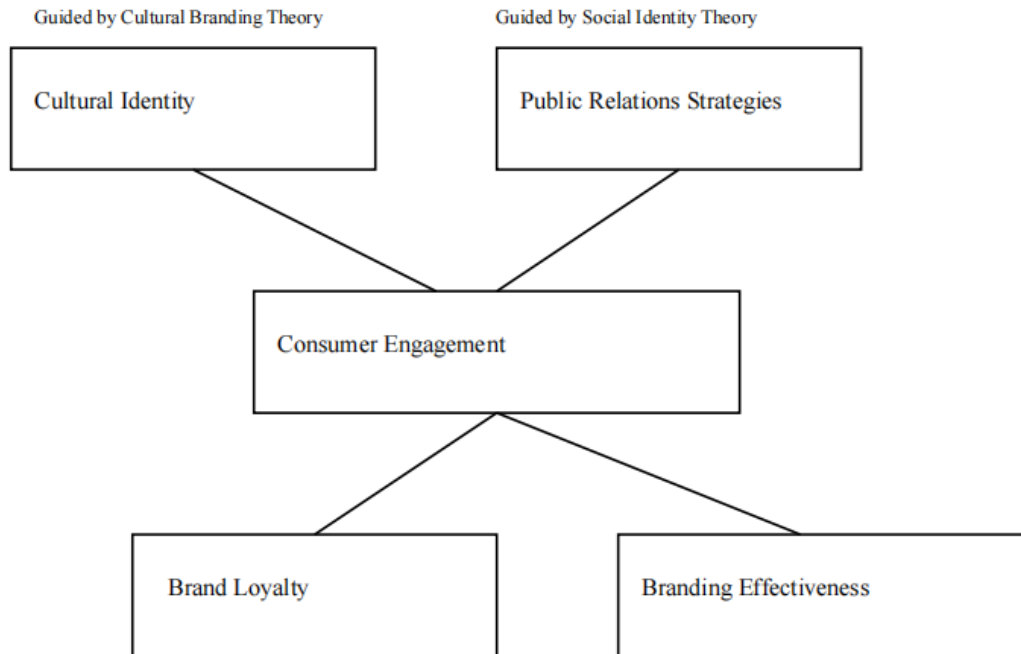
In mapping the theory to the research objectives, Social Identity Theory serves several roles. The first objective of examining how GTP and Kasapreko integrate Ghanaian cultural identity is

illuminated by the idea of social categorisation, since consumers identify with brands that express their cultural ingroup. The second objective of assessing consumer engagement is linked to social identification, as engagement often signals that consumers see themselves reflected in the brand's values and practices. The third objective of exploring how brand loyalty emerges is explained by social comparison, as consumers remain loyal when they perceive their ingroup brand as more authentic, trustworthy, or prestigious than alternatives. By linking each objective to a component of the theory, the study demonstrates that Social Identity Theory is not only conceptually relevant but also practically useful in structuring the analysis.

Finally, the theory guides the interpretation of results by offering a lens through which consumer responses can be understood. If consumers show higher engagement with branding that incorporates indigenous symbols, the theory suggests this is because they perceive the brand as an extension of their ingroup identity. If loyalty appears stronger among consumers who emphasise cultural pride, the theory interprets this as a function of positive social comparison. The framework, therefore, helps the study explain how cultural branding and public relations strategies influence not only individual attitudes but also collective identity processes. This interpretive power ensures that findings are understood in relation to the dynamics of group belonging and cultural pride, which are critical in Ghana's branding landscape.

## **2.2 Conceptual Framework**

## Conceptual Framework Diagram



The conceptual framework of this study illustrates how cultural identity and public relations strategies influence consumer engagement and ultimately shape brand loyalty and branding effectiveness. Cultural identity and public relations strategies serve as the independent variables in this framework. When brands authentically incorporate cultural narratives, symbols, and local languages, and when they communicate these through effective public relations practices, they create meaningful points of connection with their consumers. These points of connection are expressed through consumer engagement, which is treated as a mediating variable that captures the depth of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural involvement with a brand. Strong engagement then leads to brand loyalty, measured in repeated purchases and advocacy, as well as branding effectiveness, which reflects overall recognition, market equity, and consumer trust.

The framework is grounded in Cultural Branding Theory, which provides the rationale for focusing on cultural identity as a core independent variable. Holt (2004) and Holt and Cameron (2010) argue that brands gain strength when they act as cultural texts that embody myths and symbols reflecting collective tensions and aspirations. In the Ghanaian context, this means that GTP and Kasapreko are more than commercial entities, they function as cultural custodians whose storytelling affirms national pride. The theory guides the analysis by showing that consumer engagement emerges when brands provide narratives that resonate with shared identity, and that loyalty is sustained when these narratives remain authentic over time (Fournier & Alvarez, 2019; Stephansen & Broensby, 2021). Thus, cultural branding clarifies how symbolic resources such as Adinkra motifs or local proverbs move from brand imagery into consumer attachment.

At the same time, Social Identity Theory explains why consumers respond to these cultural narratives in ways that strengthen brand loyalty. Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986) argue that individuals categorise themselves into groups and derive self-esteem from favourable comparisons between their ingroups and outgroups. Applied to this study, consumers engage more deeply with brands that reflect their cultural ingroup, such as Ghanaian heritage or national identity. Harwood (2020) and Ellemers and Barreto (2018) confirm that group identity fosters loyalty and emotional connection, especially when cultural pride is at stake. This supports the study's argument that public relations strategies which amplify cultural identity will reinforce engagement and loyalty because consumers see the brand as an extension of their social identity. In this way, Social Identity Theory guides the interpretation of consumer behaviour as an outcome of identity processes rather than simply individual preferences.

By integrating these two theories, the framework offers a coherent explanation of how cultural and identity-driven branding works in practice. Cultural Branding Theory emphasises the supply side

of branding, where firms use myths, symbols, and narratives to construct cultural relevance (Holt, 2004). Social Identity Theory highlights the demand side, where consumers adopt these brand narratives as part of their ingroup identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Together they explain the full cycle: brands create cultural meaning, consumers internalise it as identity, and this process leads to engagement, loyalty, and long-term brand equity. Mapping this to the study objectives, the first objective is addressed by examining how brands employ cultural identity (Cultural Branding Theory), the second by analysing how consumers engage with these identities (Social Identity Theory), and the third by assessing how public relations strategies act as the channel that strengthens this cultural alignment. The framework therefore ensures that both the theoretical and empirical analysis are aligned to the research problem.

## **2.3 Definition of Key Concepts**

This section provides clear definitions of the main terms or concepts used in the study. These concepts aid in expanding the knowledge on the topic.

### **2.3.1 The Concept of Branding**

Branding is defined as the strategic process by which organisations create a unique identity for their products or services in the minds of consumers. It involves the deliberate use of names, symbols, colour schemes, packaging and messaging to craft an image that differentiates a brand from its competitors (Kotler & Keller, 2020). A strong brand identity not only aids recognition and recall but also fosters emotional attachment and trust over time (Shagyrov & Shamoi, 2024). In Ghana, this process often incorporates cultural artefacts such as Adinkra symbols or local textiles to ground brands in national identity and appeal to consumer pride (Odoom et al., 2023). For example, footwear brands that integrate Sankofa or Akofena symbols gain stronger brand

awareness and richer brand image (Takyi et al., 2025). These culturally embedded identities serve both commercial goals and cultural affirmation, resulting in heightened consumer affinity.

Branding is closely linked to brand equity which is the added value a brand contributes to its product. This value stems from consumers' perceptions of quality, emotional resonance and cultural relevance (Hawkins et al., 2020). According to Takyi et al. (2025), in Ghana, communal decision-making and collective cultural norms significantly influence perceptions of brand authenticity and trust. Digital content and social media engagement further boost this effect by enabling real-time interaction and feedback between brands and consumers (Odoom et al., 2023). Some studies mention that digitally engaging campaigns aligned with cultural values generate higher levels of consumer involvement (Odoom et al., 2023). Thus, effective branding in Ghana now combines cultural symbols with interactive digital strategies to build brand equity.

Brand personality is another essential component of branding. It refers to the human traits that consumers attribute to brands such as sincerity, competence or excitement (Attor et al., 2022). A clear and consistent personality enhances brand preference and purchase decisions, especially when it reflects valued cultural attributes. Ghanaian telecoms brands that convey sincerity and competence often perform better in consumer choice studies (Attor et al., 2022). Similarly, Adinkra symbol-based branding in Ghanaian goods enhances perceptions of brand authenticity and identity (Odoom et al., 2023). Therefore, brand personality and cultural symbolism reinforce each other to shape compelling consumer perceptions.

Visual identity is very important to branding as it communicates meaning at a glance. Herein, logos, packaging design, colour palettes and symbols all convey cultural values and narratives without words (Shagyrov & Shamoï, 2024). In Ghana the use of visual motifs such as Sankofa or Atumpan drums evoke heritage, unity and reflection (Takyi et al., 2025). Colour psychology also

contributes strongly as warm tones like yellow reinforce feelings of happiness and national warmth (Shagyrov & Shamoi, 2024). A well-designed visual identity not only attracts attention but also triggers emotional responses that anchor consumers to the brand. This multisensory approach strengthens brand recall and fosters positive attitudes.

Finally, it is worth noting that branding fosters consumer engagement and loyalty when it resonates culturally and emotionally. When brands reflect shared values consumers are more likely to interact, advocate and remain loyal (Odoom et al., 2023; Mensah & Amoah, 2019). e-Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) also plays a vital role in spreading brand image and attracting new consumers (Pourkabirian et al., 2021). In Ghana, brands that successfully combine cultural authenticity, visual storytelling and digital interaction see higher brand engagement and sustained loyalty (Mensah & Amoah, 2019). Such brands enjoy both economic success and social capital. Thus, branding in this context is not merely commercial; it becomes a form of cultural expression and community building.

### **2.3.2 The Role of Cultural Identity in Branding**

Cultural identity is understood as the shared sense of belonging that arises from common customs, beliefs, language and symbols among a social group (Joseph, 2012). It forms through participation in rituals, traditions and everyday practices that link individuals to their community history and heritage. In branding this collective identity allows consumers to feel represented and emotionally connected when products reflect their heritage (Amer, 2023). Ghanaian manufacturing brands incorporate local languages and Sankofa symbols to signify reflection and communal values (Takyi et al., 2025). Such culturally anchored branding fosters pride and personal identification with the brand. Thus, cultural identity serves as a deep resource for brands to build resonance and loyalty.

Also, cultural identity influences consumer behaviour by shaping preferences, perceptions and loyalty (Cunha et al., 2015). In Ghana collective decision making and strong cultural norms guide purchases more than in individualist societies. Takyi et al. (2025) found that branding strategies grounded in local symbols, languages and communal narratives enhance trust engagement and loyalty among consumers. Internationally cultural identity guides preferences between global and local brands depending on cultural alignment (Yeboah-Banin & Quaye, 2021). That study found that Ghanaian consumers exhibit a complex balance between local pride and openness to global brands. This suggests that cultural identity introduces strategic depth into branding, especially in emerging markets.

Visual elements such as logos, colour palettes and symbols are fundamental expressions of cultural identity in branding (Amaniampong & Tait, 2024). Amaniampong and Tait (2024) showed that use of Sankofa imagery, yellow tones and local slogans strongly predicted brand identity perception in Ghana. This indicates that visual identity is central, not superficial, to cultural resonance. Beyond Ghana, similar strategies are used in heritage tourism and city branding to preserve communal memory (Cunha et al., 2015). By embedding narratives and visual motifs, marketers help communities reclaim culture for socio-economic growth. Cultural identity in branding, therefore, holds cross-disciplinary meaning and societal impact.

Integrating cultural identity into branding helps command premium pricing and brand equity through heritage association (Lin et al., 2023). Lin et al. (2023) identified that culturally involved brands yield more enriching experiences and willingness to pay among consumers. These brands provide emotional fulfilment and self-expressive value when they echo consumers' cultural background. In Ghana, brand authenticity rooted in cultural expression has been linked to stronger advocacy and loyalty (Takyi et al., 2025). Therefore, cultural identity becomes a dual asset and

subsequently cultural and economic. For brands, it is both a means of connection and value creation.

However cultural identity in branding also carries risks of cultural tokenism or appropriation. Critics caution that brands may exploit cultural elements superficially without authentic engagement (Amer, 2023). Emerging modernisation and rural ethnic diversity challenge simplistic cultural branding strategies (Yeboah-Banin & Quaye, 2021). Ethical cultural branding must respect communal ownership and encourage participatory design. When done with care, however, cultural identity grounded branding can empower communities and strengthen collective esteem. Hence cultural identity must be managed collaboratively and contextually for genuine authenticity.

### **2.3.3 Understanding Public Relations**

Public relations is a strategic communication function that aims to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics (Wu & Baah-Boakye, 2014). Practitioners employ planned messaging, stakeholder engagement, reputation management and media outreach to shape public perception. In the Ghanaian context, PR strategies often adapt international two-way communication models to local cultural values such as interpersonal networks and community orientation (Wu and Baah-Boakye, 2014; Anani-Bossman & Mudzanani, 2023). For instant, they use local languages and rely on trusted personal influencers to reach rural and urban audiences. PR also plays a key role in promoting corporate credibility and ethical image by demonstrating transparency and accountability (Adjin-Tettey et al., 2020). Thus, public relations acts as both a managerial tool and a cultural bridge between organisations and diverse audiences.

The Excellence Theory of public relations developed by Grunig and Hunt (1984) remains a foundational model in PR scholarship and practice. Its central proposition is the two-way symmetrical communication approach in which organisations and publics negotiate and influence each other (Grunig et al., 2002). Research in Ghanaian institutions notes that while this model is regarded as ideal, actual practice may lean towards more asymmetrical and personal-influence methods (Anani-Bossman and Tandoh, 2023; Adjin-Tettey et al., 2020). Nevertheless, practitioners who embed two-way communication at a strategic management level report improved stakeholder trust and engagement. By positioning PR as part of the dominant coalition organisations signal their commitment to listening and dialogue. As the study will explore, the Excellence Theory helps assess how GTP and Kasapreko use structured communication to engage culturally diverse publics.

In practice, Ghanaian PR is culturally responsive and stakeholder-centered. The Ghana Health Service's COVID-19 vaccine campaign used informative motivational persuasive and even coercive messaging tailored to communities through traditional and digital media (McCarthy et al., 2023). These efforts reflect a cultural interpreter approach that prioritises local customs gathering places and trusted networks to enhance message effectiveness (Wu & Baah-Boakyee, 2014; McCarthy et al., 2023). This community-centric model aligns with local cultural norms such as collectivism, relational influence and respect for communal authority. It demonstrates how PR practitioners adapt international theories to work in a Ghanaian context. In turn, this emphasises how brands can leverage public relations to resonate culturally through authentic interactions.

Global PR practice continues to evolve with the integration of measurement frameworks and digital channels. The Barcelona Principles emphasise outcome-based evaluation, transparency and integration of PR analytics (AMEC, 2015; 2020; McCarthy et al., 2023). In Ghana some

organisations have begun adopting these standards, although evaluation remains inconsistent (McCarthy et al., 2023; Adjin-Tettey et al., 2020). Digital and social platforms also facilitate real-time dialogue enabling richer two-way engagement in line with Excellence Theory (Wu & Baah-Boakye, 2014). Yet constraints such as limited resources and training continue to hinder full adoption of best practices. These trends highlight both opportunities and challenges for professionalising the PR sector in Ghana.

Critics of PR theory raise concerns about its limitations in practice. Some question whether true two-way symmetrical communication is realistic given organisational power imbalances and strategic priorities (Pieczka, 1996; Wu & Baah-Boakye, 2014). Others warn of tokenistic cultural adaptation when brands mimic local customs without deep engagement (Anani-Bossman & Mudzanani, 2023). In Ghana a reliance on asymmetrical or personal-influence models may undermine efforts to formalise strategic PR (Adjin-Tettey et al., 2020). Further there is limited evidence on whether evaluation frameworks like the Barcelona Principles yield measurable impact in developing markets (McCarthy et al., 2023). These critiques suggest that PR must be adapted contextually and professionally to be truly effective.

In the context of this study, public relations are central to understanding how GTP and Kasapreko communicate cultural identity. The research will examine how these brands use two-way messaging, local languages and community platforms to engage consumers. It will evaluate their use of stakeholder feedback, dialogue and reputation management in reinforcing cultural authenticity. The Excellence Theory and cultural interpreter approach will serve as evaluative lenses for assessing their PR strategies. Ultimately this concept review sets the foundation for analysing branded cultural narratives in the remit of marketing in Ghana.

### **2.3.4 The Concept of Cultural Branding in Branding**

Cultural branding is defined as the strategic use of cultural values symbols myths and narratives to build emotional connection and meaning around brands (Briciu, 2020; Holt & Cameron, 2010). It draws from Holt's work on iconic branding where brands reflect and resolve cultural tensions through narrative storytelling (Briciu, 2020). Successful cultural branding taps into collective anxieties aspirations and myths to become part of consumer identity (Holt & Cameron, 2010). This approach elevates brands beyond functional products to cultural icons by aligning them with shared ideologies. It requires deep cultural insight and authenticity to craft meaningful brand narratives. When done, well it fosters strong symbolic associations and cultural resonance.

Applications of cultural branding are seen globally and locally. Holt and Cameron (2010) illustrate how global brands like Apple and Nike have become cultural icons by weaving narratives of innovation or empowerment into cultural discourse. In emerging markets cultural branding is used to reinforce national identity and heritage. For instance, Ghanaian brands leverage Adinkra symbols and indigenous language to affirm local identity (Amaniampong & Tait, 2024; Takyi et al., 2025). These strategies position brands as cultural custodians, not just commercial entities. Such utilisation of cultural narratives drives consumer engagement and brand loyalty through symbolic connection.

Nonetheless, cultural branding faces criticisms and limitations. It is demanding to execute as it requires ongoing cultural monitoring and creative adaptation (Briciu, 2020). Critics warn it may become superficial or exploitative if cultural symbols are used without proper engagement or representation (Allan, 2022). In diverse or fragmented cultural contexts cultural branding can backfire if narratives are received as inauthentic or misrepresentative (Allan, 2022). Moreover, global brands using cultural elements risk causing cultural misinterpretation or resistance when

crossing boundaries. These challenges suggest that cultural branding demands both cultural expertise and ethical sensitivity.

For the current study cultural branding provides a framework to analyse how GTP and Kasapreko construct and communicate Ghanaian identity through branding. It will examine how they use local symbols language and narratives to resolve cultural tensions or affirm ideals. The lens will help understand how brand storytelling aligns with collective memory and national pride. It offers insight into how cultural narratives enhance emotional connection and brand differentiation. Moreover, it enables evaluation of authenticity and ethical representation in their branding strategy. Ultimately cultural branding theory is central to understanding how cultural identity is actively performed and commercialised through branding in Ghana.

### **2.3.5 Consumer Engagement as a Core Factor in Branding**

Consumer engagement is defined as the emotional cognitive and behavioural connection between the consumer and the brand (Schivinski et al., 2016). It covers activities such as consuming brand content participating in discussions sharing user-generated material and interacting with online communities (Muntinga et al., 2011). In the Ghanaian context engagement is often driven by trustworthiness and cultural resonance, particularly in sectors such as banking and telecommunications (Kosiba et al., 2018; Okpattah & Arthur, 2018). For example, Facebook campaigns that incorporate local language visuals and interactive postings create deeper emotional resonance and higher trust levels (Okpattah & Arthur, 2018). Brands that involve consumers in content creation such as polls live videos or challenges benefit from increased word-of-mouth and sustained attention (Nkosi, 2024; Muntinga et al., 2011). This demonstrates that engagement now includes co-creation, dialogue and collective meaning making and is vital for brand equity.

Research in Ghana shows that consumer engagement mediates between brand identity and market performance, often enhancing loyalty and association through experiential trust (Gundona et al., 2023). In particular brands of alcoholic bitters that actively involve consumers in tastings events and feedback sessions reported stronger emotional bonds and repeat purchases (Gundona et al., 2023). Moreover, interactive experiential marketing campaigns that allow consumers to co-design or vote on new product ideas strengthen symbolic brand association (Schivinski et al., 2016). Digital and real-world community integration strengthens the sense that consumers are part of the brand narrative and identity. Such consumer engagement is a layered process involving attention, interaction and personal involvement all contributing to long-term brand capital. Thus, engagement is not a one-way message but a multi-faceted relationship built around cultural and emotional ties.

### **2.3.6 Brand Loyalty in Public Relations**

Brand loyalty refers to consumers' emotional attachment and continuous preference for a brand over time even in the face of competitive offerings (Dick & Basu, 1994; Gundona et al., 2023). It typically results from a blend of satisfaction trust cultural resonance and emotional investment that the brand cultivates (Nkosi, 2024; Amankona et al., 2024). The presence of culturally rooted symbols or CSR efforts in campaigns has been shown to significantly enhance loyalty (Salifu et al., 2023; Amankona et al., 2024). For instance, telecom consumers who perceive brands as ethically engaged and culturally authentic exhibit higher repeat purchase and advocacy levels (Salifu et al., 2023). Internationally social media interactions such as prompt complaint resolution user-generated content and influencer partnerships also drive loyalty among millennials (Nkosi, 2024; Yang & Chen, 2021). Overall brand loyalty thus arises from repeated positive experiences trustworthiness and a strong sense of shared identity.

Studies show that loyalty not only involves behavioural repetition, but also emotional and attitudinal dimension this the emotional bond with brands and a psychological sense of belonging (Dick & Basu, 1994; Salifu et al., 2023). When brands integrate cultural identity visual narratives and community investments, they become part of the consumer's self-concept (Amankona et al., 2024). Ghanaian textile firms using 'Made in Ghana' branding have built loyal consumer bases by emphasising quality assurance cultural heritage and trust (Okpattah et al., 2023). Similarly, telecom providers with visible CSR projects and responsive service appeal to both utilitarian and emotional loyalty dimensions (Salifu et al., 2023). In a digital age loyalty is reinforced when brands communicate consistently across platforms and show cultural competence (Nkosi, 2024; Okpattah & Arthur, 2018). Therefore, brand loyalty in this context becomes both a cultural and psychological bond anchored in trust identity and repeated interactions.

## **2.4 Empirical Review**

This part reviews past studies related to the present research, highlights major findings and identifies gaps that this study aims to address.

### **2.4.1 Understanding how Ghanaian Brands Integrate Cultural Identity into their Strategies**

Takyi, Owusu, Korsah, Issaka, Boateng, and Owusu-Yeboah (2025) investigated how cultural influences shape consumer behaviour in Ghana's manufacturing sector. They reported that brands using local languages, communal narratives, and indigenous symbols achieved stronger perceptions of authenticity and loyalty. Amaniampong and Tait (2024) reached similar conclusions in the footwear sector, finding that Adinkra motifs and colour palettes such as Sankofa imagery and yellow tones significantly increased consumer perceptions of authenticity and value. Further, Kwarteng-Amaniampong (2025) confirmed that incorporating cultural symbols in logos improves brand identity and awareness, while Essuman (2024) demonstrated that cultural symbols carry

layered meanings which require deliberate and respectful use. At the industry level, Whitfield, Staritz, Plank, and Morris (2023) described how the Ghanaian garment and textile industry has been revitalised through cultural meaning and everyday technologies, showing that identity has become a driver of value creation.

These studies affirm that cultural symbolism enhances brand recognition and consumer attachment in Ghana. However, most research focuses only on the aesthetic use of symbols and does not examine how they interact with public relations practices to sustain engagement. This leaves a gap in understanding the communicative processes that transform cultural imagery into long-term consumer relationships. The present study addresses this gap by analysing how GTP and Kasapreko combine cultural symbols with public relations strategies, thereby advancing Objective One and Objective Two.

#### **2.4.2 Cultural Identity at the Core of Consumer Preference**

Available research shows that consumer preference for local versus global brands depends strongly on cultural identity and the sense of belonging it creates. Yeboah-Banin and Quaye (2021) surveyed more than 400 Ghanaians and found that individuals with stronger cultural identity consistently favoured local brands, while those who were more open to global norms moderated this preference. Bosso (2025) further connected Ghana Textile Printing to consumer identity projection and equity, arguing that clothing choices function as visible expressions of heritage, belonging, and cultural pride. At the corporate level, Kasapreko has reported steady growth through 2024 and 2025, attributing part of its performance to brand strategies that highlight Ghanaian heritage in both domestic and export markets (Kasapreko Company Limited, 2025). Together these findings underline the ongoing tension between globalisation and local pride,

particularly in industries such as consumer goods and textiles where identity and heritage remain key competitive assets.

While these studies demonstrate that cultural identity shapes consumer preference and strengthens loyalty to local brands, they do not fully explore the motivations behind why firms choose to embed cultural narratives into their branding and public relations strategies. Nor do they examine how consumers interpret such culturally grounded approaches at the psychological and emotional levels. This leaves a gap in understanding the deeper reasoning behind brand choices and the consumer perceptions that follow. The present study addresses this by investigating the motivations that drive GTP and Kasapreko to integrate cultural identity and by analysing consumer perceptions of these practices, thereby advancing Objective Two and Objective Three.

### **2.4.3 Public Relations in Shaping Cultural Meaning**

The role of public relations in shaping cultural meaning has received growing attention in Ghana. Anani-Bossman (2024a) developed a framework for public relations in policy advocacy, showing that effectiveness depended on stakeholder mapping, dialogue, and cultural awareness. Another study from Anani-Bossman (2024b) revealed that public relations in Ghana is inconsistently integrated into strategic decision making, limiting its capacity to build trust. Adjin-Tettey, Allotey, Ogoe, and Anyomi (2020) similarly found that when public relations is positioned within the dominant coalition of an organisation, it contributes to credibility and stronger stakeholder relations. For this research, such findings suggest that cultural branding cannot succeed if public relations is superficial, since communication is the channel that makes cultural identity meaningful to audiences.

While prior studies demonstrate the importance of strategic public relations in Ghana, they have largely centred on public institutions and advocacy rather than the commercial sector. This narrow focus leaves limited understanding of how private firms use communication to connect with consumers and sustain brand relationships. What is missing is an exploration of how cultural identity can be embedded within corporate public relations strategies to create trust and long-term loyalty. The present study addresses this by examining how GTP and Kasapreko employ culturally grounded public relations to enhance engagement and loyalty, thereby advancing Objective One and Objective Three.

#### **2.4.4 The Impact of Consumer Participation on Brand Equity and Loyalty**

Engagement research in Africa has shown how consumer participation creates equity and loyalty. Gundona, Yamoah, and Haq (2023) established that engagement mediates between brand equity and firm performance across African markets. Kosiba, Boateng, Amartey, Boakye, and Hinson (2018) found that trustworthiness in Ghana's retail banking sector strongly predicted engagement, which then fueled loyalty. Digital research further extends this logic. Odoom (2023) reported that campaigns using Ghanaian languages and culturally relevant content on social media generated higher engagement than standardised approaches. Nkosi (2024) found that value aligned engagement on social media-built loyalty among millennials in South Africa. Chikweche (2025) highlighted that Africa's middle class is heterogeneous and that brand meaning varies across digital subgroups, suggesting the importance of segmentation when analysing engagement outcomes.

These studies demonstrate that engagement is a vital pathway linking culture to loyalty, yet they often treat engagement as an isolated construct rather than as part of a broader framework. By separating engagement from other variables, prior work overlooks how it interacts with cultural branding and public relations strategies to produce long-term consumer attachment. This gap

makes it difficult to fully explain why some culturally grounded campaigns succeed in building loyalty while others fail to create sustained impact. The present study fills this gap by analysing how consumer engagement operates as a mediator between cultural branding, public relations strategies, and brand loyalty, thereby addressing Objective Three and Objective Four.

#### **2.4.5 Risks and Challenges of Cultural Branding**

Recent scholarship increasingly reminds us that cultural branding carries considerable risks alongside opportunities. Briciu (2020) cautioned that brands may exploit culture if they adopt myths without genuine authenticity, which often results in superficial narratives that weaken consumer trust. Allan (2022) also argued that in diverse societies, cultural narratives can become politicised, creating division and undermining the very loyalty that firms seek to build. Mosley (2024) further emphasised that cultural appropriation, when symbols are borrowed without respect for their origins, risks alienating communities and provoking backlash rather than fostering empowerment. These concerns highlight that cultural branding is not only a creative exercise but also an ethical and strategic responsibility. In the Ghanaian context, where cultural symbols carry deep historical and emotional significance, misrepresentation or careless use can damage brand reputation and erode consumer attachment. For firms such as GTP and Kasapreko, the challenge is therefore to engage with culture in a respectful, authentic, and strategic manner that avoids tokenism while creating long-term loyalty and brand strength.

Evidently, existing critiques of cultural branding remain largely theoretical and are often framed within global contexts which limits their applicability to Ghana. Few empirical studies have examined how Ghanaian brands specifically navigate questions of authenticity, cultural sensitivity, and community trust in their branding strategies. This leaves an important gap in understanding how consumers in Ghana interpret the cultural narratives of local firms and whether these

narratives are viewed as empowering or superficial. The present study addresses this by investigating how GTP and Kasapreko's cultural branding strategies are interpreted by consumers and by assessing whether these strategies strengthen brand image and loyalty, thereby responding directly to Objective Four.

## **2.5 Gap in Literature**

The conceptual review of the literature shows that cultural identity is recognised as a powerful driver of branding in Ghana, yet most studies have emphasised visual and aesthetic elements rather than integrated strategies. Research on Adinkra symbolism, colour palettes and logo design confirms that cultural symbols enhance authenticity and consumer trust (Amaniampong & Tait, 2024; Kwarteng-Amaniampong, 2025; Essuman, 2024). At the sectoral level, cultural meaning is increasingly viewed as a driver of value creation in industries such as textiles (Whitfield et al., 2023). However, these studies rarely investigate how cultural identity is integrated into both branding and public relations strategies. This creates a gap in understanding how firms combine cultural symbolism with communication practices to engage consumers. The present study addresses this gap by examining how GTP and Kasapreko integrate Ghanaian cultural identity into branding and public relations which responds directly to Objective One.

Another limitation in the literature is the lack of attention to the motivations behind the use of cultural identity in branding. Studies such as Yeboah-Banin and Quaye (2021) highlight consumer preference for local brands when cultural identity is strong while Bosso (2025) shows how clothing choices reflect identity projection and heritage. Company reports from Kasapreko also illustrate the commercial value of cultural positioning (Kasapreko Company Limited, 2025). Yet these studies stop short of exploring why firms choose to embed cultural identity and how these decisions are shaped by strategic, cultural, or competitive pressures. There remains little empirical

work that interrogates managerial motivations and strategic reasoning behind cultural branding. This research fills that gap by exploring the underlying motivations that guide GTP and Kasapreko's use of cultural identity, which advances Objective Two.

Research also falls short in explaining how consumers perceive and interpret culturally embedded branding strategies. Evidence confirms that cultural identity influences consumer preference and trust (Takyi et al., 2025; Odoom, 2023) and that engagement mediates brand equity and loyalty (Gundona et al., 2023; Nkosi, 2024). However, few studies have investigated how consumers in Ghana make sense of cultural narratives in branding and whether they view such practices as authentic or tokenistic. The emotional and psychological dimensions of consumer perception remain underexplored, particularly in contexts where cultural symbols are contested or diverse. This study addresses this gap by analysing consumer perceptions of culturally embedded branding strategies, thereby fulfilling Objective Three.

Finally, while literature on brand loyalty and engagement confirms that cultural branding and trust influence repeated purchase and advocacy (Kosiba et al., 2018; Amankona et al., 2024), it often examines these variables in isolation. Studies seldom integrate cultural branding, public relations, consumer engagement, and brand loyalty into a single explanatory model. Moreover, critiques of cultural branding highlight risks such as exploitation, politicisation, and cultural appropriation (Briciu, 2020; Allan, 2022; Mosley, 2024), but these critiques remain largely theoretical and rarely tested within Ghanaian firms. This study addresses this shortcoming by empirically testing how cultural branding and public relations strategies influence brand image and loyalty through consumer engagement which responds directly to Objective Four.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the study. It presented the cultural branding theory and social identity theory as guiding frameworks. Relevant literature on branding, cultural identity, public relations, consumer engagement and brand loyalty was reviewed to provide context and identify gaps. Key concepts were also defined to clarify their meanings within the scope of the study and expand the scope of knowledge on the research topic.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted for the study titled *From Chale Wote to Corporate: Exploring How Ghanaian Brands Integrate Cultural Identity into Branding and Public Relations*. It presents the research paradigm, philosophical assumptions, approach, design, sampling strategy, data collection techniques and processes, ethical considerations, authenticity and trustworthiness, and data analysis methods. These methodological choices are justified with respect to the research objectives and questions.

#### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

The research falls within the interpretivist paradigm, which argues that reality is a social construction and best understood through the meaning that individuals give to that reality (Schwandt, 1994). Since the study focuses on analyzing how it is possible that brands integrate cultural identity, and how consumers feel about such practices, it requires in-depth understanding of subjective experiences, as opposed to the quantification of variables. Therefore, the most appropriate paradigm used to explain the practice of branding and public relations in the cultural setting of Ghana is interpretivism.

#### **3.3 Philosophical Assumptions**

The study is informed by various philosophical assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ontology, which means reality is conceptualised as various and socially constructed. Branding may have different perceptions for consumers, brand managers, and other stakeholders in relation to cultural identity. Epistemology which explains that knowledge is produced jointly in the

interactions between the researcher and the participants. Axiology: The researcher recognizes his/her own values and biases and considers how these influence the interpretations.

Methodology: The research follows an inductive approach, in which themes and insights are derived from participants' stories.

### **3.4 Research Approach**

A qualitative methodology is employed, as the study aims to examine meanings and stories about cultural identity as a part of branding. In comparison to quantitative methods, which are based on statistical generalization, qualitative research reflects rich and descriptive information (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Other methods were taken into consideration. A Quantitative survey was not possible because it would not address symbolic and contextual dimensions of cultural identity (Silverman, 2015). Limited scope and resources also led to the rejection of mixed-methods approach. The qualitative approach is therefore considered the most appropriate in answering the research questions.

### **3.5 Research Design**

The study uses a multiple case study methodology, which supports an in-depth study of phenomena embedded in real-world settings (Yin, 2018). GTP and Kasapreko, the two exemplary Ghanaian businesses, were selected based on the fact that they actively embrace cultural identity in their branding and exist in different industry sectors, thus allowing both within-case and cross-case analytical possibilities. Other possible methodological designs were considered; however, they were later discarded. The approach ethnographic inquiry, which involves prolonged association with a cultural group, is beyond the scope of the present study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). The less appropriate is phenomenology which insists on the investigation of personal lived experience (Moustakas, 1994) because the current study is focused on organisational strategies

and shared perceptions. As a result, the case study design becomes the most appropriate methodological framework.

### **3.6 Sampling Strategy**

The identification of participants with the necessary expertise will be conducted with the help of purposive sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015). Interviews with brand managers and PR office representatives of GTP and Kasapreko will be conducted, and customers who are conversant with the brands will be involved in a focus group discussion. Sampling will be maintained until we achieve data saturation (Mason, 2010).

### **3.7 Data Collection Technique**

Three main techniques will be used:

- **Semi-structured interviews** with brand managers and PR professionals (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).
- **Focus group discussions (FGDs)** with consumers to capture collective perceptions (Morgan, 1997).
- **Document analysis** of brand communications and promotional materials to triangulate data (Bowen, 2009).

Surveys and experiments were not chosen because they are less effective in capturing symbolic meanings and cultural narratives.

### **3.8 Data Collection Process**

Data collection will occur in three stages. First, interviews with brand managers will be conducted at company offices. Second, FGDs with consumers will be organised in neutral venues to encourage open discussion. Third, brand documents (adverts, press releases, social media

campaigns) will be collected and analysed. All sessions will be recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The study adheres to fundamental ethical principles to protect participants (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001; Creswell & Poth, 2018):

- **Informed Consent:** Participants will receive full details about the study and provide consent before participating.
- **Autonomy:** Participation will be voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any stage.
- **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Identifiable details will be removed from transcripts, replaced with pseudonyms (e.g., Participant 1, FGD Member A).
- **Privacy:** Discussions will be conducted in private spaces, and only relevant questions will be asked.
- **Risk of Harm:** Any risk of reputational harm will be minimised through secure data storage and anonymisation (Feinberg, 1984).

### **3.10 Authenticity and Trustworthiness**

Authenticity and trustworthiness will be established using strategies aligned with Lincoln and Guba (1985) These strategies ensure the study achieves credibility and can be confirmed:

- **Triangulation:** Combining interviews, FGDs, and documents to corroborate findings.
- **Thick Description:** Providing detailed contextual accounts of Ghanaian branding and cultural identity.
- **Member Checking:** Sharing summaries of themes with participants to confirm accuracy.

- **Clarifying Biases:** Reflecting on the researcher's background to ensure transparency.
- **Transcript Checking:** Verifying transcripts against recordings to preserve accuracy.

### **3.11 Data Analysis Techniques**

Data will be analysed using **thematic analysis** (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The six-step process includes familiarisation with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining/naming themes, and producing the report. NVivo software may be used to manage coding. Document analysis will supplement the themes generated, enhancing triangulation.

### **3.12 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented the research methodology, justifying the use of a qualitative, multiple case study design underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm. It outlined sampling, data collection, ethical considerations, authenticity, and data analysis techniques. The next chapter presents the findings and analysis of data collected.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter presents the empirical evidence obtained from three data sources: in-depth interviews with brand managers from GTP and Kasapreko, a focus group of Ghanaian consumers and distributors, and a content analysis of brand materials (campaigns, advertisements, and social media posts). After a brief description of these data sources, the chapter organizes the results according to the four research questions of the study. Each subsection synthesizes insights from the interviews, focus group, and content review, including verbatim quotations from participants to illustrate key points.

The findings are then analyzed through the lenses of Cultural Branding Theory and Social Identity Theory. This approach clarifies the extent to which the empirical evidence supports, extends, or nuances these theoretical frameworks.

#### **4.2 Preliminary Descriptions**

**Participants and Data Sources:** A conducted two semi-structured interviews with brand managers, one with the Brands Manager of GTP (Tex Style Ghana Ltd.) and one with the Marketing Manager of Kasapreko Company Ltd. The GTP manager who has been with the company for three years and oversees strategy for GTP's fabric lines, while the Kasapreko manager has seven years with the firm and leads marketing for Kasapreko's beverage portfolio. Their insights reflect company-level branding and PR strategies. The focus group included fifteen participants (including both males and female) ranging in age from early 20s to late 50s. They represented a mix of consumers and distributors of GTP fabrics and Kasapreko drinks.

Some were longtime retail sellers (e.g. market traders stocking fabrics or bitters), others were regular consumers. The discussion probed their perceptions of Ghanaian brands, with emphasis on cultural symbolism and identity in GTP and Kasapreko. This consumer/distributor perspective provides a grounded view of how cultural branding is received and interpreted.

For content analysis, we systematically reviewed official brand materials from 2015 to 2025. This included marketing campaigns (e.g. GTP’s “Ghana Month” collections, Day-Born prints, Wear Ghana initiatives; Kasapreko’s “Made in Ghana” and “Alomo Sankwan” campaigns), advertisements in print and billboards, and social media posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), and YouTube while paying attention to visual symbols, language, slogans, and stories that these brands used to convey a Ghanaian identity. This triangulation of company viewpoints, consumer feedback, and documented brand content allows a holistic understanding of how cultural identity is integrated into corporate branding.

### **4.3 Findings for Research Questions**

#### **4.3.1 Incorporation of Ghanaian Cultural Identity into Branding and PR**

**GTP’s Approach:** GTP has deliberately embedded Ghanaian cultural symbols and narratives into its textile branding. According to the GTP brand manager, each new fabric collection is “*put together using Ghanaian elements: the Black Star, the cowries, the Ghana cedis and other unique elements... to tell the Ghanaian story.*” For example, GTP’s 2024 NuStyle Ghana Month collection (branded “**Mefri Ghana**”) featured eleven new prints emblazoned with national motifs. As described in media coverage, these designs blend “colours and local symbols,” including the Black Star from the national flag, indigenous cowrie shell motifs, and cedi currency iconography, to “*express the Ghanaian heritage.*” The brand manager explained that wearing these prints becomes a cultural statement: if he meets someone wearing a fabric printed with Independence Square or

an Adomi Bridge motif, it instantly signals a shared Ghanaian identity. He noted, “*we incorporate symbols... that mean something to Ghanaians,*” so that a print depicting a Ghanaian landmark can spark the question, “*Are you Ghanaian?*”

GTP also infuses Ghanaian language and proverbs into its textile branding. Longstanding fabric designs often have local names carrying meaning in Twi or other Ghanaian languages. In the focus group, one participant observed, “*GTP cloth has names in local languages... like designs named after proverbs or even day names,*” which immediately makes the brand feel authentically Ghanaian. This aligns with GTP’s practice of naming prints after Akan sayings (e.g., **Abusua Ye Dom** meaning “the family is united,” or **Sika Wo Ntaban** meaning “money has wings”) and using those narratives in marketing. The GTP manager recounted how market women traditionally gave evocative names and stories to classic prints, illustrating that even the oldest fabric motifs convey social messages. GTP now consciously continues that tradition. For instance, a recent “*Day Born*” collection featured designs named for each day-of-the-week (e.g. Kojo, Adwoa, Kofi), with patterns inspired by the perceived character of people born on those days (calmness, creativity, etc.). As one young participant enthused, “*GTP did a ‘Day Born Collection’... It definitely increased my affection... because it felt like they see our traditions and want to celebrate all of them.*”

In its public relations and advertising, GTP emphasizes cultural continuity and pride. Campaign slogans and hashtags like **#WearGhana** or “**Me Fri Ghana**” (Twi for “I’m from Ghana”) encourage consumers to showcase local prints on national occasions. For example, GTP’s social media routinely highlights the Wear Ghana agenda: during Ghana’s Independence Month, the brand posts images of citizens clad in GTP fabrics proudly declaring their Ghanaian roots. Campaign visuals often show models wearing GTP at festivals or historical sites, and PR posts

explain the symbolism and inspiration behind the prints (for example, describing the meaning of an Adinkra motif featured on a new design). By blending traditional motifs with modern fashion narratives, GTP positions itself as a custodian of Ghanaian heritage in the apparel market.

**Kasapreko's Approach:** Kasapreko equally foregrounds Ghanaian identity, but its strategy is more experiential and narrative-driven. The Kasapreko marketing manager emphasized that the entire brand is positioned as a home-grown heritage brand: *"Kasapreko is a Ghanaian brand... so we try to position us as a heritage brand... that is the home of total beverage solutions."* This means that from naming, to design, to messaging, the company highlights its local roots. For example, the flagship product Alomo Bitters bears a Ga-language name meaning "my lover," and the company's dry gin logo incorporates an Adinkra symbol (the **Akofena**, symbol of valor). As the manager explained, *"even in the naming... the way we design the brand... all points to a Ghanaian heritage."* Similarly, Kasapreko's sub-brands are given Ghanaian-inspired names (e.g., the Awake bottled water brand, or Kalahari Bitters invoking African geography). Color palettes and packaging often use local art motifs or national colors. In sum, Kasapreko deliberately infuses its brand identity with Ghanaian culture, ensuring that consumers immediately recognize the company's origin and heritage.

Kasapreko's PR campaigns and advertisements reinforce this cultural branding. The company's most iconic slogan, **"Made in Ghana, loved by Ghanaians,"** has been a centerpiece of its messaging for years. The brand manager noted that this simple tagline features across TV commercials, billboards, and social media, explicitly celebrating local production and national pride. In practice, Kasapreko ads depict culturally familiar scenes: families sharing fufu with a bottle of Alomo on the table, elders at naming ceremonies using Kasapreko drinks for libation, herbal ingredients being gathered from the wild, etc. The ads often mix English with Twi phrases,

for instance, a catchy jingle “*Alomo Sankwan, Mmoko Mmoko!*” invites audiences to “enjoy soup and Alomo together.” These elements combine to portray Kasapreko not just as a beverage brand, but as one woven into the fabric of everyday Ghanaian life.

Consumers in the focus group readily recognized many of these tactics by Kasapreko. They pointed out that Kasapreko’s campaigns frequently invoke local proverbs and traditions. One distributor gave an example: Kasapreko sponsored a council of chiefs meeting where a paramount chief promoted Kasapreko gin for traditional libations as a way of “*preserving our culture.*” This PR move was covered by local media and resonated with the public. Participants also recalled ads where actors spoke in local dialects or wore traditional attire. Many remarked that simply seeing the Ghanaian-sounding brand names (Kasapreko, Alomo) or hearing local slang in ads immediately signals that the brands are “*ours.*” As one consumer explained, hearing an advertisement in Twi or encountering a Ghanaian proverb in a commercial makes the brand feel “*truly Ghanaian*” and thus credible.

**Common Themes:** Both GTP and Kasapreko consciously weave Ghanaian symbols into their brand identity. GTP embeds culture in its products on the fabric designs themselves and through fashion events, whereas Kasapreko embeds culture in its stories and usage contexts (songs, festival sponsorships, communal gatherings). Both companies employ heritage-based storytelling, sponsor cultural events, and mix local languages into communications. For example, GTP’s *Ghana Month* collections and Kasapreko’s *Made in Ghana* campaign both leverage patriotic occasions to launch products and celebrate national pride. Both use social media hashtags (e.g. #WearGhana, #DayBornCollection, #LoveYourOwn) and traditional media (fashion magazines, TV spots) to amplify these themes. In short, GTP and Kasapreko each make Ghanaian cultural identity central to their brand strategy, GTP through the visual and tactile medium of cloth design, and Kasapreko

through audio-visual narratives and product experiences, thus integrating cultural identity throughout both their branding and PR efforts.

#### **4.3.2 Consumer Perceptions of Cultural Identity Elements**

Consumers overwhelmingly responded positively to the cultural elements in both GTP and Kasapreko's branding. In the focus group, participants consistently said that Ghanaian symbols and themes in branding made them feel pride, a sense of personal connection, and greater trust toward the brand. For example, a participant said of GTP, *"when I wear GTP cloth with these symbols or Ghana-inspired designs, I feel a sense of pride like I'm showcasing my heritage. It's more than just clothing; it's identity. That connection makes me loyal."* Another participant agreed that seeing Ghanaian heritage reflected in GTP's designs makes the clothing special: *"I choose GTP over other fabrics because I trust it to represent my culture well... my mother wore GTP; now I do too, so it's almost a generational pride passed down."* These comments suggest that GTP's culturally-inspired designs not only signal national identity but also foster emotional attachment and multi-generational loyalty.

Similarly, Kasapreko's use of culture in branding evoked pride and nostalgia. One participant described Kasapreko's well-known Alomo Bitters jingle and adverts: hearing it repeatedly, and even having friends sing along about eating soup and drinking Alomo, *"made me feel that it's so locally relatable... a very local, relatable setting."* Seeing scenes of everyday life in Ghana; *"when I see Alomo Bitters being enjoyed... it makes me proud that our local recipe is renowned"* reinforced this pride. The nostalgic tone of Kasapreko's campaigns (e.g. depicting family gatherings or traditional highlife music) brought back positive memories and cultural values for many. A middle-aged man commented that Kasapreko drinks are part of social rituals in Ghana. He noted many elders have even switched from foreign spirits to Kasapreko gin for libations

because “*it’s local and aligns with preserving our culture.*” In effect, consumers reported that these brands feel like “*part of daily Ghanaian life.*”

Participants explicitly linked the brands’ cultural branding to feelings of trust and loyalty. As one focus group member put it, “*For Kasapreko, I’d say yes (it makes me proud). It’s satisfying to see a Ghanaian beverage brand like Kasapreko compete with foreign ones. When I see Alomo Bitters enjoyed not just here but abroad, it gives me a sense of joy that our own recipe is renowned.*” He added that hearing Ghanaian folk tales or seeing local scenes in Kasapreko ads made the brand feel authentic and “*down-to-earth.*” Likewise, many associated GTP’s culturally themed prints with high quality and authenticity. One male consumer observed, “*GTP’s cultural designs draw me in, but I stay loyal because the fabric itself is durable and vibrant... cultural elements make me more proud and more likely to trust and be loyal, as long as product quality aligns.*” In short, participants said cultural cues drew their initial attention and pride, and that the brands’ consistent delivery of quality then solidified their trust.

Importantly, not all responses were uncritical. A few younger focus group members noted that cultural branding must be carefully managed to avoid stereotypes or an old-fashioned image. One younger participant appreciated that GTP has developed more casual product lines (e.g. incorporating wax prints into streetwear and accessories) so that “*GTP fabric isn’t only for ceremonies but part of everyday cool outfits.*” This illustrates that when culture is presented in a contemporary, youthful context, younger consumers feel more included. Another participant mentioned that if cultural messaging ever felt tokenistic or inconsistent, young audiences might dismiss it as mere marketing. Overall, however, the consensus was that both “*GTP and Kasapreko have done a credible job with their cultural references, they feel real rather than superficial.*”

These qualitative impressions align with engagement metrics observed on social media. GTP posts

celebrating national heritage (such as Independence Day-themed collections) received high likes and shares, with followers often commenting personal anecdotes like “this pattern reminds me of my grandma’s cloth!” Kasapreko’s “Made in Ghana” videos similarly elicited comments about pride and nostalgia. In both cases, consumers interpreted the cultural signals as genuine endorsements of Ghanaian identity. As one industry analyst summarized, Kasapreko’s campaign has “*tapped into a sense of national pride,*” effectively making the brand a symbol of Ghanaian heritage. Thus, consumers in Ghana (and even abroad) generally view these cultural branding elements in a positive light, feeling “seen” and proud of brands that reflect their heritage. This sense of authenticity and cultural affinity translates into emotional connection, which participants explicitly linked to ongoing loyalty and patronage of GTP and Kasapreko products.

#### **4.3.3 Opportunities and Challenges of Integrating Cultural Identity In Branding**

**Opportunities:** Both GTP and Kasapreko identified strategic advantages from emphasizing Ghanaian culture in their branding. A key opportunity is differentiation: participants noted that cultural branding clearly sets these companies apart from foreign competitors. For example, one distributor commented that customers prefer Kasapreko because “*it’s ‘made in Ghana,’*” perceiving it as more trustworthy. By foregrounding heritage, these brands tap into national pride, which in turn helps build a loyal customer base.

The focus group and interviews also pointed out that Ghana’s **diasporic market** represents a growth opportunity. Several participants observed that GTP and Kasapreko already enjoy recognition outside Ghana (for instance, among West African expatriate communities in Europe and neighboring countries). One focus group member remarked that he has friends in Nigeria who knows Alomo Bitters. He suggested the brands could leverage this by offering cultural “souvenir” products to tourists (e.g., GTP fabrics with Ghanaian symbols marketed as keepsakes) or by

targeting marketing to African diaspora communities abroad, thereby extending the Ghanaian cultural narrative internationally.

Another opportunity lies in building an **emotional ecosystem** around culture. Focus group consumers proposed interactive, participatory campaigns (for example, Kasapreko inviting users to share family stories involving their drinks, or GTP posting the meanings behind fabric names on social media) as ways to deepen engagement. Such user-generated content can reinforce cultural identity and create a sense of community around the brand. In fact, our content analysis shows both brands doing this to some extent: GTP's online "Day Born" campaign invited people to find and share their day-of-the-week fabric design, while Kasapreko's Independence Day social media contest (#LoveYourOwn) asked followers to post what they love about Ghana. These strategies turn branding into a two-way cultural conversation, strengthening group identity and consumer involvement.

Both companies also benefit from structural opportunities tied to local culture. For instance, Kasapreko sources many ingredients locally (it even operates its own herbal farms) and has earned international quality certifications (ISO standards), allowing it to claim both cultural authenticity and high quality. Consumers noted that being a genuinely Ghanaian brand gives Kasapreko credibility to tell certain health or quality stories that foreign brands cannot. Similarly, GTP's 60-year history anchors it as a national institution, lending credibility to claims like "we defined Ghanaian fashion since 1966." These factors reinforce that cultural identity, done sincerely, can be a sustainable competitive edge and not just a one-off marketing gimmick.

**Challenges:** Participants also identified several pitfalls and challenges in cultural branding. A recurring concern was **generational relevance**. Some youth may initially perceive traditional motifs as "for old people," so the brands must keep evolving their presentation. GTP's manager

acknowledged this challenge, his design team continually needs fresh ideas to make traditional prints appeal to young consumers, otherwise the brand risks seeming outdated. Focus group members recommended that GTP partner with youthful designers or launch more streetwear lines to show that wax prints can be fashionable in today's trends. Likewise, the Kasapreko manager described introducing lighter, sweeter beverage variants and non-alcoholic drinks to cater to younger tastes and health-conscious trends, thereby balancing tradition with modern preferences.

Another challenge is the risk of **misinterpretation or offense**. Because cultural symbols carry multiple meanings, a design or message might unintentionally offend if its symbolism is misunderstood. The GTP manager gave an example of a court case where a couple's chosen fabrics communicated conflicting messages to a judge. He acknowledged that design interpretation is "*art*" and not everyone will read a pattern the same way: "*we wish we could do a design that will cut across and everybody will like it, but... you can't please everybody.*" GTP thus has to navigate carefully when using certain potent Adinkra symbols or motifs. In fact, he explained that some national symbols (like the Black Star from the flag) are legally and culturally restricted in usage: no GTP print contains the Black Star combined with the flag's colors, because of folklore regulations governing national emblems. These legal and cultural requirements limit how overtly the brand can display some national icons, posing a challenge to the most straightforward expressions of national identity.

Kasapreko faces related issues. **Language and cultural specificity** in marketing can limit global understanding of the brand. The Kasapreko manager noted that international audiences often have no context for names like "Alomo," requiring the brand to invest extra effort in explaining meanings. This balancing act, preserving local flavor while being accessible abroad is challenging. The focus group echoed this, suggesting that brands must find "*ways to market Ghanaian culture*

*to the world without diluting it.*” One participant suggested including brief cultural stories on product packaging to educate foreign consumers about the product’s heritage without losing authenticity.

**Counterfeiting and competition** also pose challenges. The GTP manager lamented that imitators sometimes copy their designs and sell cheaper knock-offs, undercutting GTP’s cultural efforts and quality reputation. Indeed, our content analysis and interviews revealed that many competing textile sellers print look-alike patterns without the cultural storytelling or quality control behind GTP’s products. GTP combats this with anti-counterfeit campaigns and special authentication tags on its fabrics, but the presence of knock-offs remains a threat. Similarly, Kasapreko has faced a wave of local competitors in herbal bitters following Alomo’s success. Kasapreko’s response has been to continuously remind the market of its heritage and originality – for example, through posts asking *“Did you know Alomo was one of the first herbal bitters in Ghana?”* – thereby fending off imitators by emphasizing its pioneer status.

Finally, there is the risk of **over-leveraging culture** to the point of cliché. Consumers cautioned that if cultural branding becomes too static, touristy, or performative, it can backfire. One focus group participant warned that cultural branding must be kept genuine and updated: *“it’s tempting to chase trends, but the reason we love these brands is their authenticity... They shouldn’t lose the core.”* Both brands seem aware of this, taking steps to keep their cultural approach fresh. They innovate with new collections and multimedia campaigns, and they mix modern media use (social media contests, influencer partnerships) into their strategies. The key challenge is maintaining a delicate balance: staying true to Ghanaian roots while evolving with market demands, and preserving authenticity while still appealing broadly. This challenge is ongoing, but both GTP and Kasapreko indicated they are actively managing these issues (through measures like quality-

control messaging and responsible drinking campaigns). Nonetheless, the tension persists as consumer tastes and global contexts change.

#### 4.3.4 Similarities and Differences in the Use of Cultural Identity

**Similarities:** Both GTP and Kasapreko clearly leverage Ghanaian culture as a unique selling proposition (USP). Each brand consistently emphasizes authenticity and national pride in its messaging. Both engage in storytelling rooted in local tradition (just as cultural branding theory would predict), and they integrate cultural values into virtually all aspects of their brand. For example, both run campaigns tied to national holidays and use hashtags that encourage the public display of Ghanaian symbols (e.g., #WearGhana, #MadeInGhana). Both participate in real-world cultural events: GTP sponsors fashion shows and beauty pageants such as *Miss Malaika* and **Ghana's Most Beautiful**, as well as Wear Ghana Day activities; Kasapreko sponsors traditional durbars and festivals (e.g., Homowo, Hogbetsotso) and makes courtesy visits to chiefs (notably, the Akwamu paramount chief publicly endorsed using a local Kasapreko gin for traditional ceremonies). On social media, both brands intermix English with local languages and reference Ghanaian traditions in their content. These parallel strategies reflect a common philosophy: embracing Ghana's heritage is core to their brand identity.

**Differences:** The form of cultural expression differs between the two brands. GTP's cultural identity is **visual and tactile**, woven directly into its products. Every GTP print can carry multiple Adinkra symbols, kente-inspired patterns, and Ghanaian names – customers literally “wear” culture when they wear GTP fabrics. In contrast, Kasapreko's cultural identity is **experiential and narrative**, conveyed more through usage and storytelling than through the product's physical design. The beverages themselves are based on traditional herbal recipes, but the Ghanaian element is communicated via slogans (e.g. “Made in Ghana”), music (the Alomo jingle), and situational

contexts in their ads (communal gatherings, pouring libation, etc.). One could say GTP offers “culture you can wear,” whereas Kasapreko offers “culture you can taste and hear.” The Kasapreko manager put it plainly: *“if you are outside Ghana and see these products... you automatically connect to it. We use... local ingredients, naming, design – it resonates because it is a Ghanaian brand.”*

Their communication styles also diverge. GTP’s branding often highlights craftsmanship, heritage, and the detailed meaning behind designs. A GTP press release or social media post will frequently **explain the symbolism** behind a new print, appealing to consumers’ cultural knowledge. For example, a GTP Instagram post might zoom in on a fabric pattern and explain that it features the Adinkrahene symbol (signifying leadership) to honor a particular traditional chief, or that a color scheme was chosen to evoke national celebration. This approach tends to be informative and art-centric, showcasing how much research and storytelling is embedded in each fabric design. By contrast, Kasapreko’s communications are more emotive and communal. Its videos and ads show ordinary people enjoying drinks together, often using cultural humor or nostalgia. For instance, an Alomo TV commercial might depict grandparents and grandchildren dancing to highlife music with glasses of Alomo in hand, emphasizing unity and shared joy across generations. A trade publication noted that one Kasapreko campaign *“evokes a sense of nostalgia and pride”* and celebrates the brand’s place in people’s hearts. Hence, one might say GTP’s messaging often implies “we honor your culture with our designs,” whereas Kasapreko says “we celebrate your culture with our community’s story.”

**Consumer Interpretations:** These strategic differences also shape how consumers perceive each brand’s cultural messages. Focus group participants reported that they feel *seen* and proud when GTP visually represents Ghanaian art and symbols. They mentioned feeling “patriotic” when

wearing GTP prints that literally say “*Me Fri Ghana*” or that incorporate national icons, and feeling “intrigued” by designs named after local proverbs or festivals (because the names spark curiosity about the meaning). On the other hand, Kasapreko’s cultural cues were interpreted as the brand “*knowing the heartbeat of Ghana.*” Consumers said Kasapreko ads made them feel included in a larger cultural narrative, whether through hearing a folk saying or seeing a familiar communal dining scene – and that this made the brand feel like “*one of us.*” The net result is that loyalty to GTP often stems from pride in cultural artistry **plus** confidence in the product’s quality, while loyalty to Kasapreko stems from tradition and a sense of patriotic habit (for example, always choosing the local drink at celebrations as a point of pride). One participant noted that choosing Kasapreko over a foreign drink is seen as a patriotic choice, a small act of supporting Ghana. In both cases, the brands have fostered a kind of quasi-community or “in-group” of consumers who identify with them, reflecting the social identity processes discussed later.

**Comparative Challenges and Opportunities:** Both brands face the shared challenge of keeping their cultural branding fresh. The focus group discussion concluded that if either brand allowed its cultural image to become static or gimmicky, it would lose relevance, especially with younger audiences. Participants suggested that GTP could learn from Kasapreko’s strong emotional storytelling (for example, by featuring more personal customer stories behind its designs or prints), while Kasapreko could borrow from GTP’s visually rich tradition (for instance, by creating special edition bottle labels with local art or patterns). Indeed, the analysis suggests each brand could reinforce the other’s strategy in complementary ways: GTP might introduce more narrative content about the people and stories behind its textile designs, and Kasapreko might incorporate more visual cultural motifs into its packaging or branding collateral.

In essence, GTP and Kasapreko exhibit a common cultural branding ethos but execute it through product-specific means. They share strategic commitments (authenticity, continuity, use of local language) and derive similar benefits (brand differentiation and strong customer loyalty), yet the **medium** of culture differs. GTP's cultural expressions are literally embedded in the fabric product, making each item a visible symbol of Ghanaian artistry; Kasapreko's cultural expressions are embedded in the consumption experience, making the act of drinking itself a vehicle for cultural belonging.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Findings**

The findings above can be interpreted through the twin theoretical lenses of Cultural Branding Theory and Social Identity Theory. Both frameworks help illuminate *why* and *how* integrating Ghanaian culture into branding influences consumer attitudes and loyalty.

##### **4.4.1 Cultural Branding Theory**

Holt's Cultural Branding Theory posits that brands become iconic by serving as "cultural texts" that embody the myths, symbols, and narratives valued by a community. In this study, both GTP and Kasapreko clearly harness culturally resonant symbols and stories in their branding. Each Ghanaian motif, proverb, or local tradition that they incorporate acts as a symbolic "myth," linking the brand to a collective cultural identity. GTP's use of Adinkra symbols on fabric is an application of cultural coding, consumers understand these symbols' meanings (as evidenced by participants recognizing prints named after proverbs), and thus they see the brand as an authentic interpreter of Ghanaian heritage. Kasapreko's use of local language in slogans and jingles similarly taps into shared cultural knowledge and nostalgia. According to Cultural Branding Theory, this practice should create an emotional charge around the brand, one grounded in identity and meaning. Our findings support this: participants indeed reported feeling pride and emotional connection when

engaging with the cultural elements of the brands, indicating that GTP and Kasapreko have, for many Ghanaians, become more than products they are cultural icons.

Alignment with cultural branding theory is also evident in the emphasis on **authenticity**. Holt argues that successful iconic brands must engage with culture in an authentic, resonant way rather than a superficial one. Both companies appear to treat culture with respect and depth, which helps avoid the pitfall of mere appropriation. GTP works within folklore rules on symbol usage and honors naming traditions, while Kasapreko involves traditional authorities (like chiefs) in promotions and uses genuinely local ingredients. The focus group noted that inconsistent cultural messages would “ring false,” echoing cautions from the literature that brands must engage genuinely with culture. In practice, GTP’s long history and collaborative design process (e.g. working with cultural experts on prints) and Kasapreko’s emphasis on traditional recipes and storytelling both enhance their cultural authenticity. These factors mitigate risks identified by cultural branding critics (such as exploitation or stereotyping) and instead build brand credibility. When consumers say “*I feel this is part of our culture,*” it suggests the brands’ cultural narratives are perceived as sincere and deeply rooted fulfilling Holt’s condition that iconic brands must feel “of” the culture, not outside it.

Furthermore, Cultural Branding Theory notes that embedding cultural meaning can create **sustainable differentiation** and consumer loyalty over time. Our data show that integrating local identity has indeed become a competitive advantage for these brands. GTP’s clear stake in Ghanaian fashion identity, and Kasapreko’s positioning as the original Ghanaian herbal bitters, have given them a kind of reputational moat against generic foreign imports. This is consistent with the theory: by embedding their products in nationally treasured symbols and values, both brands transcend being seen as mere commodities, instead, they evoke national pride and personal

meaning. The words of one focus group member capture this well: *“We don’t have to abandon who we are to excel; we can bring our identity along.”* This sentiment reflects how cultural branding can simultaneously serve business goals and cultural affirmation. In other words, by aligning their brand mythos with Ghanaian cultural myths, GTP and Kasapreko have made themselves meaningful to consumers in ways that go beyond product functionality, which is exactly what Cultural Branding Theory highlights as the hallmark of iconic brands.

#### **4.4.2 Social Identity Theory (SIT)**

Tajfel and Turner’s Social Identity Theory explains consumer behavior in terms of group membership and in-group pride. People derive part of their self-concept and esteem from belonging to social groups. In our context, Ghanaian consumers often view themselves as members of a national in-group (“Ghanaians”). Brands that visibly celebrate that national group can become incorporated into consumers’ social identity. The findings aligned with this idea: participants expressed enhanced self-esteem when using these brands. Wearing a GTP *“Me Fri Ghana”* cloth or drinking a *“Made in Ghana”* beverage felt, to them, like asserting their Ghanaian identity. According to SIT, such behaviors reinforce favorable bias toward the in-group; in this case, favoring “our brands.” Indeed, many participants said they deliberately support these local brands as a way to affirm national identity (e.g., *“choosing a local drink over an imported one is seen as supporting Ghana”*).

Social Identity Theory also predicts that group-based branding can create strong loyalty and even a sense of community among consumers. We saw evidence of this in the data: fans of GTP or Kasapreko often form a kind of identity subgroup. For instance, consumers share photos in group forums (like posting their GTP outfits) or bond over serving Kasapreko at gatherings. Participants described a sense of trust and belonging tied to *“our own”* local products precisely the in-group

versus out-group dynamic SIT describes. The emotional loyalty evident in quotes like *“I feel loyal because I trust it will represent my culture”* and the cross-generational transmission of brand preference (children and grandchildren adopting the brands of their parents) underscore SIT’s assertion that once a brand is absorbed into one’s social identity, consumers will tend to stay loyal to it. Even marketing tactics like Kasapreko’s calls to *“tag your family”* in social media challenges, or GTP’s involvement in communal festivals, reinforce group identity through shared practice and rituals, which strengthens that bond.

Importantly, SIT also helps explain some **challenges** noted in our findings. Focus group participants anticipated that those who do not strongly feel part of the Ghanaian “in-group” for example, more globally oriented youth, or foreigners might initially dismiss culturally-saturated branding as *“uncool”* or *“what is that?”* This matches SIT’s implication that strong in-group branding may not automatically resonate with out-group individuals or those with a more cosmopolitan identity. Kasapreko’s practice of adding subtitles or little explanatory notes in ads for international markets is a practical response to this issue essentially an attempt to extend the in-group narrative to new audiences who aren’t yet in the know. Additionally, SIT suggests that in-group pride often involves *favorable distinctiveness* seeing “our” group (and by extension, its products) as better or safer than others. We saw evidence of this in a participant’s humorous remark that they trust GTP and Kasapreko over foreign brands partly because *“our own won’t poison us.”* This literal expression of trust in local brands illustrates how positively distinct the in-group brand is perceived to be (implicitly casting foreign alternatives as less trustworthy).

#### **4.4.3 Integration of Theories**

In combination, Cultural Branding Theory and Social Identity Theory provide a coherent explanation of the results. Cultural Branding Theory helps us understand the *how*, the mechanisms

of symbol, story, and ritual that the brands employ to embed culture, while Social Identity Theory explains the *why*; why consumers respond to those cultural cues with pride, loyalty, and group-based preference.

The data showed that when a brand authentically embodies cultural symbols and narratives (per Holt's model of an iconic brand), it offers a rallying point for the community's identity. SIT predicts that such a rallying point will be embraced by in-group members who derive pride from it. We observed this synergy clearly in the parallel strategies of GTP and Kasapreko. Both brands act as **cultural champions**, giving consumers tangible ways to enact their Ghanaian identity, either by wearing a meaningful print or choosing a homegrown drink. Consumers, in turn, incorporated these brands into their own social identities and expressed loyalty that goes beyond rational product evaluation. In essence, cultural affinity was converted into brand loyalty. By integrating the two theoretical perspectives, we can see GTP and Kasapreko as case studies in how aligning brand strategy with cultural identity not only creates iconic brand status (per Cultural Branding Theory) but also fosters a loyal community of consumers (per Social Identity Theory).

#### **4.5 Chapter Summary**

In summary, the triangulated data reveal that GTP and Kasapreko actively integrate Ghanaian cultural identity into their branding and PR in complementary ways. GTP embeds culture in its products; through fabric designs named and patterned after Ghanaian symbols, proverbs, and landmarks, and communicates this via heritage-focused campaigns. Kasapreko embeds culture in its narratives; through local names, jingles, and communal contexts, and communicates this via emotional, story-driven advertising. Consumers perceive these elements positively, feeling pride, connection, and trust when they see their culture represented. The major opportunities are clear: cultural branding strengthens brand differentiation and community goodwill, and opens doors to

diaspora and pride-driven markets. However, challenges exist in keeping the branding fresh, inclusive, and authentic as tastes evolve and the brands expand globally.

Conceptually, the findings corroborate Cultural Branding Theory by showing how Ghanaian symbols and narratives serve as brand myths, and they align with Social Identity Theory by demonstrating that consumers incorporate these brands into their group identity. GTP and Kasapreko have succeeded as cultural icons by treating local culture respectfully and consistently, allowing Ghanaian consumers to express their national identity through consumption. The next chapter will discuss these implications for practice.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1 Chapter Introduction

In this concluding chapter, bringing together the qualitative insights gathered on how GTP (and Kasapreko weave Ghanaian cultural identity into their branding and public relations. The analysis reflects on a key observation from the field: for many consumers, these brands are not just products but expressions of heritage. As one focus group participant vividly put it, wearing a GTP cloth “with Adinkra symbol, symbols that tell a story or Ghana-inspired designs” provoked “a sense of pride, like I’m showcasing my heritage”. Such sentiments signal a broader cultural renaissance in Ghana, a movement that spans from street art festivals like Chale Wote to corporate branding strategies. In fact, prior literature has noted how events blending art, music, and tradition (e.g. the Chale Wote Street Art Festival) are influencing how brands situate themselves in Ghana’s urban cultural landscape. In this light, the study of GTP and Kasapreko can be seen as tracing the journey *from Chale Wote to corporate*: understanding how grassroots cultural pride is channeled into national brands. This chapter first summarizes the study’s findings, highlighting how each brand incorporates cultural elements and how consumers respond to them. The narrative then interprets these insights through the twin lenses of Douglas Holt’s *Cultural Branding Theory* and Tajfel & Turner’s *Social Identity Theory*. It shows that GTP and Kasapreko operate not merely as businesses but as cultural texts that consumers use to express identity (a hallmark of Holt’s framework), and that consumers embrace these narratives because they affirm their social identity as Ghanaians, it discussed limitations of the study’s design and methodology, offer practical recommendations for brands, policymakers, and scholars, and conclude with a chapter summary.

## 5.2 Summary of Findings

The qualitative data, including interviews with brand managers, focus-group discussions, and content review of ads, reveal consistent patterns in how GTP and Kasapreko integrate Ghanaian cultural identity into their branding, and how audiences perceive these efforts. Both brands deploy a rich array of local symbols, languages, and stories to evoke heritage. The GTP brand manager explained that new fabric collections explicitly reference Ghanaian landmarks and concepts: one recent line is literally called “**Iconic Places**”, featuring prints inspired by monumental places such as Paga, Independence Square, the Adomi Bridge, the National Theatre and other national symbols. These designs are intended to embody “our heritage and culture” in the cloth. Likewise, the Kasapreko marketing manager stressed that even product names and logos anchor in local culture: the name *Alomo* comes from Ga language (“my lover”), their dry gin uses the *Akofena* Adinkra symbol in its logo, and color schemes are chosen to resonate with Ghanaian sensibilities. As she noted, “the symbols we use, the colors, the naming” all serve to ensure Kasapreko’s brands “have a Ghanaian identity”. The content analysis framework confirms that official adverts, PR releases, and billboards for both brands frequently include Ghanaian motifs from Adinkra graphics to Twi proverbs demonstrating an intentional strategy rather than incidental use of culture.

- Consumers in the focus groups corroborated these observations with concrete examples. One participant vividly described what comes to mind when thinking of GTP: “*vibrant symbols and rich colors like kente-inspired patterns... Ghanaian Black Star, cowrie shells, or even the cedi currency symbol woven into the print*”. Another recalled a nostalgic Kasapreko advertisement with a catchy Twi jingle about enjoying Alomo bitters with light soup (Sankwan), evoking a local chop-bar scene with friends singing in Twi.

These recollections show that consumers do notice and remember the specific cultural elements in each brand's marketing, these imagery in GTP's fabrics and Ghanaian language and music in Kasapreko's campaigns. These cultural cues had strong emotional and behavioural effects on participants. Many spokes of *pride* and *connection* when interacting with the brands. One participant said that wearing GTP made her feel "patriotic" and gave a sense of generational pride passed down from her mother. Another described feeling "satisfied" and connected when seeing Kasapreko's Alomo Bitters enjoyed outside Ghana, saying it makes her "proud that our local recipe is renowned". These statements align with a theme of **collective pride**: participants consistently used inclusive language ("our culture", "our local heritages") and reported that consuming these brands reinforces their identity as Ghanaians. In turn, this emotional attachment translated into loyalty. Several focus group members mentioned that cultural affinity makes them choose the local brand as the default. An example, one distributor said her family "has only ever bought GTP cloth for important occasions... because GTP is seen as the authentic Ghanaian textile". Another young man noted that if he is in a situation "about heritage or identity," he will "*pick GTP or another local print over imported fabric*". Thus, cultural branding helped entrench long-term consumer commitment and even generational purchase habits, with participants describing brand choices as part of family tradition. Beyond emotion and loyalty, participants observed practical benefits in market positioning. Many remarked that emphasizing Ghanaian identity sets these brands apart in a crowded market. One member explained that playing up local culture helps with **marketing differentiation**: Ghanaian brands can stand out against foreign imports by competing on the basis of heritage and quality. In practical terms, several participants

mentioned that both companies enjoy *prestige* despite competition. An instance, one said GTP maintains “a premium, respected status” because its cultural branding lets it compete against cheaper fabrics. Similarly, Kasapreko’s proudly local image “captured a huge market” that wanted a Ghanaian product. In some conversations, participants even called Kasapreko a “champion of Ghanaian beverages” noting that it won awards and broad recognition precisely for promoting local identity. Focus group members also pointed out that this cultural positioning builds **trust**: as one put it, if a brand “values our culture, they likely won’t offer us bad products”. In other words, consistent respect for cultural symbols implicitly signals product authenticity and quality. This mirrors what corporate leaders reported: GTP’s brand manager noted that by emphasizing an “African statement” through GTP, the company has become like a household name, “if any African print they call it GTP” which keeps the brand top-of-mind. These corporate and consumer perspectives align: cultural branding gives the brands enduring visibility, tribal trust, and even a status akin to national symbols (as several respondents said, “everyone knows Alomo Bitters as ‘Ghana’s drink’ or GTP as ‘Ghana’s cloth’”).

However, the findings also reveal **nuances and challenges**. Notably, the data show some generational differences in how people perceive cultural branding. Older participants often expressed a sense of *nostalgic pride*: one older participant remarked that seeing GTP and Kasapreko celebrate local culture “hits an emotional chord of preserving heritage” that resonates strongly with his generation. Younger participants generally still appreciated cultural elements, but emphasized that these symbols must be presented in a modern and relatable way, a 21-year-old noted that “*we do enjoy cultural touches... but we also want brands to be cool and globally relevant,*” explaining that GTP and Kasapreko have adapted with influencers and trendy

campaigns to stay appealing to youth. Brand managers confirmed these insights: the GTP manager discussed how the company is on a transformation journey from being “just a fabric” to becoming an emotional fashion brand that partners with designers and influencers. Similarly, Kasapreko actively markets youth-friendly products (such as sweeter drink variants and mocktail recipes for younger, non-drinking audiences) to avoid alienating the emerging generation.

Consumers also raised concerns about the potential downsides of intense cultural branding. Some cautioned that an overemphasis on tradition risks being seen as old-fashioned. A participant warned that if GTP “only stuck to old patterns and never innovated, young people might indeed think it’s a grandma’s cloth”. Another commented that Kasapreko’s flagship herbal bitters *could* be perceived as a drink for “old men” unless updated with modern flavours and marketing (which, in fact, the brand has done by introducing sweeter variants). Beyond youth appeal, there are concerns about global reception: some participants wondered if an identity very tightly tied to Ghanaian motifs might limit international markets unless the brand educates foreign consumers about its heritage. Practical issues also emerged. Multiple sources (both interviews and focus groups) mentioned the threat of **counterfeiting** and unauthorized copying: as the GTP manager lamented, other brands can simply copy GTP’s designs and undercut prices. Local distributors noted that some knock-offs even falsely claim the GTP name, confusing consumers. This problem was echoed by Kasapreko’s manager who spoke of counterfeit Kasapreko bottles in and outside Ghana. Another challenge discussed was **cost and accessibility**: genuinely produced GTP fabrics, reflecting the brand’s design investment, tend to be more expensive than cheap imports. Some participants pointed out that high prices risk making the authentic product seem elitist, driving price-sensitive consumers to imitate alternatives.

In summary, the findings confirm that both GTP and Kasapreko systematically integrate Ghanaian culture into every level of their branding and PR, from product design and naming; to advertising messages and corporate storytelling. This integration effectively taps into consumer emotions and identity, as evidenced by repeated mentions of *pride, loyalty, trust* and *cultural resonance* in the data. At the same time, respondents highlighted real-world challenges, including generational expectations, intellectual property issues, and market competition. These insights address the study's research questions: Ghanaian cultural symbols and narratives are indeed key inputs in the brands' strategies, consumers interpret them as markers of authenticity and in-group identity, and this dynamic yield both opportunities (differentiation, engagement) and challenges (potential stereotyping, accessibility). The two brands show both convergence and divergence in their approach, GTP's entire product is steeped in visible cultural symbolism, while Kasapreko uses culture more in storytelling and naming, but both have become emblematic of Ghanaian identity in their domains.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The core insight from this study is that GTP and Kasapreko's use of cultural identity in branding exemplifies the processes described by Cultural Branding Theory and Social Identity Theory. As Holt (2004) posited, "*iconic*" brands attain meaning when they function as **cultural texts** that articulate and resolve collective myths or tensions. GTP and Kasapreko operate precisely as cultural texts for Ghanaian consumers. They actively deploy symbols, stories, and rituals so that the brands themselves embody elements of Ghanaian heritage. GTP's fabrics are designed with cultural motifs and historical landmarks; each print carries a name that evokes a local proverb or identity (e.g. fabrics named "Sika Wo Ntaban" or themed around independence). Kasapreko similarly embeds cultural narratives in its products and promotions: the flagship Alomo Bitters is

literally pitched as a “Ghana’s drink” made from traditional herbal roots, and campaigns like “*Alomo Sa Nkwan*” (meaning “Drink Soup”) tie the product to Ghanaian food culture. In Holt’s terms, these brands are not just selling a commodity, but are performing the role of cultural custodian, telling stories of national pride and heritage. They thus fill an ideological niche by giving consumers a way to express collective identity through consumption. This dynamic was evident in the data: participants felt that by buying GTP or Kasapreko, they were “supporting Ghanaian culture, not just buying a product”. This resonates with Holt & Cameron’s (2010) idea that successful cultural branding weaves a brand into broader cultural debates or aspirations, here, the aspiration to preserve and celebrate Ghanaian traditions in a modern world.

Meanwhile, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; 1986) explains *why* consumers embraced these brands so enthusiastically once they communicated cultural identity. According to this theory, individuals derive self-esteem and a sense of belonging from their identification with social groups. In this study’s context, Ghanaian consumers perceive GTP and Kasapreko as part of their in-group (the group being “Ghanaians” or “our culture”). When brands mirror the ingroup’s heritage, consumers feel seen and validated, which translates into loyalty and advocacy. The focus group data provided clear evidence of this pattern: respondents repeatedly described feeling “proud” and “connected” when consuming these Ghanaian brands. One consumer even recounted that seeing GTP cloth abroad prompts fellow Africans to immediately ask “are you African or Ghanaian?”, highlighting how the brand’s imagery signals group membership. Similarly, Kasapreko’s marketing manager noted that Ghanaian expatriates in distant countries often react with pride upon finding familiar local products on foreign shelves. These anecdotes illustrate Tajfel’s insight that positive comparisons with an ingroup (here, Ghanaian culture vs foreign alternatives) bolster self-image and brand preference. In other

words, by reflecting shared cultural identity, the brands become vehicles for social belonging. This dynamic likely underpins the high brand loyalty observed: when one focus group member says her family “only ever bought GTP” because it is the *authentic Ghanaian* choice, this reflects ingroup favouritism driven by social identity.

By linking our findings to theory, we see a coherent cycle: **supply side** (brand actions) meets **demand side** (consumer psychology). GTP and Kasapreko deliberately embed cultural meaning into their products and messaging a cultural branding strategy consistent with Holt’s model. Consumers then internalise those cues as part of their own identities (a social identity process) and reward the brands with engagement, trust, and loyalty. The data bear this out: participants not only recognised cultural symbols, but also allowed them to inform how they felt and behaved (choosing local products, feeling patriotic, etc.). For example, Holt’s concept of a *mythic narrative* is echoed in Kasapreko’s story of being a homegrown hero: the brand manager’s remark that “we tell the Ghana story because Ghana is doing well” frames Kasapreko as an embodiment of national success. Consumers then say this makes them “proud,” showing how the narrative becomes personally meaningful. Likewise, GTP’s “Day Born” fabric series (each cloth celebrating the day-of-week naming tradition) created a personal myth for buyers: young participants described how finding their own day’s cloth design made them feel seen and celebrated. In theoretical terms, these are instances of brand mythmaking enabling individuals to integrate the brand into their self-concept.

Importantly, the study’s findings also expand on these theories in context. Both frameworks assume a positive link between culture and branding, but our data nuance this: authenticity matters. Consumers quickly discern superficial use of culture versus genuine engagement. Several focus group respondents commented that GTP and Kasapreko *genuinely* engage with

culture rather than slapping on symbols. For instance, one said it's not just "slapping an Adinkra symbol on a label," but that the companies show knowledge of proverbs and customs. Holt's theory acknowledges this need for authenticity: brands that exploit culture superficially risk backfire. The participants' awareness of copycats and inauthentic attempts as when one noted some designers carelessly use symbols and offend cultural norms, serves as a practical illustration of Holt's caution against commodification of culture without respect. On the identity side, not all consumers identified equally. Our findings on generational differences suggest cultural branding; if brands do not innovate, they may lose the youth's ingroup affection. This echoes recent extensions of Social Identity theory which note that group norms evolve and that brands representing a culture must also adapt to shifting group values.

In sum, the synergy of Cultural Branding and Social Identity theory offers a powerful explanation for our findings. Holt's framework describes *what* the brands are doing (making culture visible and meaningful), while Tajfel & Turner explain *why* consumers respond as they do (using the brands to reinforce their Ghanaian ingroup identity). Together, they account for the observed cycle: culturally infused branding sparks pride and belonging, fostering loyalty and word of mouth, thereby cementing the brands' iconic status in Ghana. Our data thus validate the thesis that when brands serve as **cultural anchors**, they become more than market players, they become symbols of collective identity and pride.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

While the study provides substantial insights, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, as an in-depth qualitative case study of only two companies, the findings are context-specific and not statistically generalizable. The focus groups involved just 15 participants (a purposive mix of consumers and distributors), and the interviews covered only one manager from each firm. These

stakeholders offered detailed perspectives, but they may not represent all market voices. The focus group sample did not include many younger consumers or rural consumers, and the interviews captured corporate viewpoints that could be positively biased. Furthermore, the study did not measure terms. We collected perceptions of trust and loyalty, but did not have actual sales figures or consumer behavior metrics to correlate with cultural branding. This means we can identify perceived effects, but cannot conclusively determine the magnitude of cultural branding's impact on market performance. Future research could complement this by surveying larger samples or using experiments to test the influence of cultural cues on consumer choice.

Another limitation lies in potential respondent bias. Given that Ghanaian cultural pride is socially valued, participants may have overemphasised positive feelings toward local brands. Similarly, brand managers naturally spoke of their strategies in optimistic terms. It attempted to triangulate by collecting multiple data types, but some positive framing may still reflect self-report bias.

Finally, the theoretical application has boundaries. Holt's and Tajfel's frameworks are broad, and while they fit our findings well, they do not capture every nuance. For instance, neither theory fully addresses situations where cultural branding might conflict toward in-group symbols; the focus group did note that missteps or over-reliance on clichés could backfire, suggesting areas where the theory may need elaboration. Therefore, these conclusions should be seen as guided by the frameworks but open to further refinement as new data emerge.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered for Ghanaian brands, policymakers, and future researchers.

**For Brands:** Ghanaian companies seeking to integrate cultural identity should do so authentically and adaptively. Authenticity emerged as crucial: participants could tell when cultural elements were genuine versus tokenistic. Brands should therefore ground their use of symbols and stories in real cultural knowledge. For example, collaborating with local historians, artists, or communities when designing products can ensure the symbolism is accurate and respectful. This also helps mitigate the risk of cultural misstep, a misused Adinkra or proverb can offend, whereas a well-researched symbol can resonate deeply. GTP's practice of registering designs and sometimes consulting with a folklore board is one approach; other firms should similarly ensure proper use of national symbols, as one GTP manager noted that using the Ghana flag or prominent Adinkra designs requires official approval. Governments might streamline such processes, but brands can pre-empt issues by engaging relevant authorities early.

Quality must accompany cultural branding. Several participants warned that cultural appeal raises expectations for product excellence. As one focus group member said, cultural cues “get me interested or emotionally attached, but the product has to deliver”. In practice, this means that beyond the story, the fabric should be durable and vibrant, the drink should taste good and be safe. Brands should thus invest in product development to ensure that the functional attributes match the pride they evoke.

To reach diverse audiences, companies should segment and diversify their cultural narratives. The study found generational differences: younger consumers appreciated culture when it was presented in a modern style, while older consumers valued tradition and nostalgia. GTP's “Day Born” collection is a strong example of tailoring culture to youth (by personalizing prints with astrological days). Kasapreko's use of pop stars like Shatta Wale for youth-oriented beverages (Storm Energy Drink) shows how to carry heritage into popular culture. Other brands should

similarly find creative ways to refresh traditions – through fashion collaborations, interactive campaigns (e.g. social media contests about cultural heritage), or youth ambassadors who can make local customs “cool.”

Finally, brands should view cultural branding as an ongoing process, not a one-time campaign. Several participants remarked that GTP and Kasapreko continuously launch new collections and ads to keep culture alive. This is wise: Cultural Branding Theory emphasizes that brands must renew their myths to stay relevant. Companies should therefore continually solicit consumer feedback on cultural themes and stay attentive to changing cultural dialogues. In practice, running periodic cultural audits of branding materials – checking for relevance and potential oversaturation – can help. As one manager advised, “stick to your true self... realness sells, authenticity sells”. This means being genuine in representation and refreshing the story in ways that remain true to the brand’s identity.

**For Policy Makers:** The findings suggest that Ghana’s identity can be a national asset.

Policymakers can bolster this by supporting the creative industries and protecting cultural assets. For instance, more straightforward guidelines and assistance for the use of traditional symbols could encourage more brands to incorporate them without fear of legal pitfalls. The difficulty the GTP manager described in registering designs highlights a need for a streamlined folklore or cultural authority process. Training or certification programs in cultural design could also be developed for entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, intellectual property laws should be enforced to protect indigenous designs from counterfeiting. As seen, rampant copying erodes the benefit brands derive from cultural branding. Government agencies might work with industry groups to crack down on fake goods and raise consumer awareness about purchasing authentic products. Supporting local production

(e.g. subsidizing local textile or beverage industries) can also help keep prices competitive so that culturally branded goods remain accessible rather than elitist.

Cultural education can be integrated into marketing and tourism strategies as well. Since Ghana is proud of its heritage, national campaigns could feature local brands as ambassadors. For example, tourism promotions might highlight Kasapreko or GTP products as quintessential Ghanaian gifts. Doing so would benefit the brands (broader recognition) and the country (economic growth and cultural prestige). Finally, dialogue between cultural custodians (traditional leaders, artists) and business leaders can be fostered. Regular forums or workshops on cultural branding best practices could ensure that brand strategies align with cultural values.

**For Researchers:** This study opens many avenues for further investigation. First, it would be valuable to broaden the empirical scope. Similar qualitative studies could be conducted with other Ghanaian brands (in sectors like food, fashion, technology) to see if these patterns hold. Comparative research across different African countries would also test whether the interplay of cultural branding and identity is universal or context-specific. Second, quantitative research could measure the impact of cultural branding on consumer behavior. For example, surveys or experiments could test how exposure to culturally-infused ads affects brand preference, or how much more consumers are willing to pay for products with local heritage themes. Panel data or time-series analysis might even link branding campaigns to sales or export figures for evidence of economic impact.

On the theoretical side, researchers should explore conditional factors. Our study touched on generational and diasporic differences; future work could systematically examine how factors like age, education, or ethnic background moderate responses to cultural branding. There is also room to investigate the *limits* of this strategy. for instance, how brands navigate cultural plurality

within Ghana (multiple ethnic groups) or international sensibilities. The role of social media as a magnifier of cultural narratives (either reinforcing pride or spreading skepticism) is another promising area, especially since respondents noted how brands use digital channels and hashtags (#WearGhana) to engage audiences.

Finally, long-term or longitudinal studies could observe how cultural branding evolves over time. It would be insightful to track how GTP's and Kasapreko's strategies change year by year and how consumers' attitudes shift accordingly. Overall, the interplay between culture and brand strategy is rich territory for interdisciplinary research, blending marketing, anthropology, and sociology.

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, we have woven together the empirical evidence and theoretical insights of the study. We found that GTP and Kasapreko deeply integrate Ghanaian cultural identity into their branding, through symbols, language, and narratives by that consumers respond by feeling greater pride, connection, and loyalty to these brands. These phenomena align with Holt's Cultural Branding Theory (brands as cultural texts embodying shared myths) and with Social Identity Theory (consumers embracing brands that reflect their ingroup identity). We also recognised the challenges and limitations inherent in such strategies and in our research design. Based on these findings, we offered recommendations for how brands can authentically leverage culture (while maintaining quality and innovation), how policymakers can support such branding as part of national development, and how scholars can build on this work with broader and deeper studies. In sum, the journey *from Chale Wote to corporate* shows that Ghanaian heritage is not confined to festivals or history books but lives on in the fabrics we wear and the drinks we

share and that when corporations respect and reflect that heritage, they tap into something profoundly meaningful for consumers.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide (Brand/PR Managers)**

#### **Sampling Size and Justification**

For this study, a total of seventeen participants were sampled. These included two brand/PR managers (one from Kasapreko and one from GTP) and fifteen consumers who took part in a focus group discussion. The choice of this sample size was informed by the principle of data saturation, the point at which no new themes emerged from the data (Mason, 2010). This approach ensured depth in the findings rather than breadth, which is consistent with the goals of qualitative case study research (Yin, 2018). The combination of industry insiders and consumers provided complementary perspectives, allowing for triangulation of data and a fuller understanding of how cultural identity is integrated into branding and public relations.

#### **Introduction**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I am Susan Obiri, a master student with the University of Media, Arts and Communication-Institute of Journalism. This interview is part of my Master's research entitled:

**“From Chale Wote to Corporate: Exploring How Ghanaian Brands Integrate Cultural Identity into Branding and Public Relations — A Case Study of GTP and Kasapreko.”**

The purpose of this study is to explore how Ghanaian brands incorporate cultural identity into their branding and public relations strategies, examine consumer perceptions of these efforts, and identify the opportunities and challenges associated with cultural branding. GTP and Kasapreko have been selected as case studies because they are leading Ghanaian brands that have successfully integrated local culture into their products and communications.

Your responses will provide valuable insights into the strategies, experiences, and challenges of embedding cultural identity in branding and PR. The interview will take approximately 45–60 minutes. Participation is voluntary, and you may decline to answer any question or withdraw at any point. With your permission, I will record the interview to ensure accuracy, but the recording and all information will be treated confidentially, and findings will be used for academic purposes only. Do you have any question before we proceed?

**Objective 1: To examine how Ghanaian brands incorporate cultural identity into their branding and PR strategies**

1. Could you tell me about your role in the company and how long you have been working here?
2. How would you describe the overall branding and PR strategy of your company?
3. How does your brand integrate Ghanaian cultural identity into its branding and PR strategies?
4. Which specific cultural elements (e.g., festivals, proverbs, local languages, symbols, colors, or attire) are used, and why?
5. Can you share an example of a campaign or product that best demonstrates this cultural integration?
6. How important is cultural identity in shaping your brand's story or image compared to other branding elements such as modernity or global appeal?

**Objective 2: To assess the role of cultural identity in shaping consumer perceptions, trust, and loyalty**

7. How do consumers generally react to the use of cultural identity in your branding?
8. Have you noticed differences in reactions between local and international audiences?
9. In your experience, does cultural branding influence consumer loyalty, trust, or purchase decisions?

**Objective 3: To explore the opportunities and challenges brands face when using cultural identity in branding and PR**

10. What benefits has your brand gained from using cultural identity in branding and PR?
11. What challenges have you faced in incorporating cultural identity (e.g., stereotypes, generational differences, competition, or misrepresentation)?
12. How has your brand addressed these challenges?
13. In your opinion, how does your brand's approach to cultural identity compare to other Ghanaian brands (e.g., Kasapreko if GTP / GTP if Kasapreko)?
14. What makes your brand's approach unique?

**Objective 4: To identify recommendations for strengthening cultural branding in Ghanaian brands**

15. What recommendations would you give for Ghanaian brands seeking to strengthen cultural identity in branding and PR?
16. Is there anything I haven't asked that you think is important for this study?

**Closing**

Thank you very much for your time and valuable insights. Your contributions will significantly enrich this research and help in understanding how cultural identity shapes branding and public relations in Ghanaian companies like yours.

## **Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Guide (Consumers)**

### **Introduction**

Thank you for joining this focus group discussion. I am Susan Obiri, a Master's student at the University of Media, Arts and Communication – Institute of Journalism. This discussion forms part of my research titled:

***“From Chale Wote to Corporate: Exploring How Ghanaian Brands Integrate Cultural Identity into Branding and Public Relations — A Case Study of GTP and Kasapreko.”***

The aim of this study is to understand how Ghanaian brands incorporate cultural identity into their branding and public relations, and how consumers perceive and respond to these efforts.

Your contributions are vital, and there are no right or wrong answers. The session will last about 45–60 minutes, and all responses will remain confidential and used for academic purposes only.

### **Objective 1: To examine how Ghanaian brands incorporate cultural identity into their branding and PR strategies**

1. When you think of Ghanaian brands, which ones stand out to you and why?
2. What makes you feel a brand is truly “Ghanaian”?
3. How familiar are you with GTP and Kasapreko products?
4. When you think of GTP or Kasapreko, what images, colors, or cultural elements come to mind?

**Objective 2: To assess consumer perceptions of the use of cultural identity in branding and its influence on loyalty and trust**

5. Do these cultural elements (symbols, names, colors, or packaging) make you feel proud, connected, or loyal to the brand? Why or why not?
6. Do cultural elements in branding influence whether you buy from these brands?
7. Do you think these brands represent Ghanaian culture well, or do you feel it is mostly marketing?
8. Do younger and older consumers view cultural branding differently? If yes, how?

**Objective 3: To explore the opportunities and challenges brands face when integrating cultural identity into their branding**

9. What benefits do you think brands gain when they use cultural identity in branding (e.g., pride, recognition, loyalty)?
10. Are there any disadvantages, such as being outdated, too traditional, or not appealing globally?
11. Between GTP and Kasapreko, which do you think uses Ghanaian cultural identity more effectively? Why?
12. How are the two brands similar, and how are they different in this regard?

**Objective 4: To identify recommendations for strengthening cultural branding among Ghanaian brands**

13. What advice would you give to GTP and Kasapreko on how to improve their cultural branding?

14. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you would like to add?

### **Closing**

Thank you all for participating in this discussion. Your views and experiences have provided important insights into how Ghanaian consumers perceive the cultural branding of GTP and Kasapreko. Everything you shared will be kept confidential, and no names will be attached to the findings. The results will be used only for academic purposes. I truly appreciate your openness and time.