

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**NATION BRANDING: CONCEPTUALISING THE IMAGE
PERCEPTION OF GHANA AS A BRAND**

BY

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(10441783)

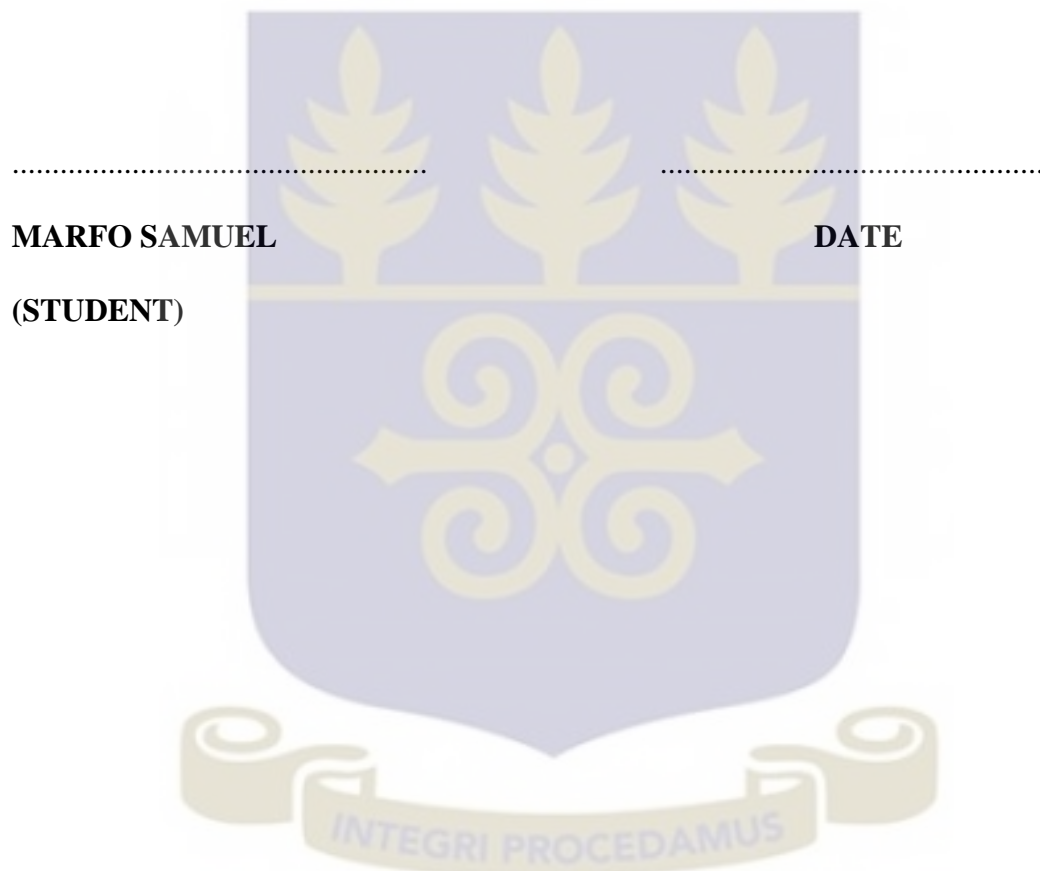
**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research and has not been presented by anyone for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in the work have been fully acknowledged.

I bear sole responsibility for any shortcomings.



CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this thesis was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the University of Ghana.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis first to God Almighty for His endless love for me. To the womb that gave birth to me, my sweet mother. Not forgetting my dearest wife Mrs. Mercy Sikayena Marfo.



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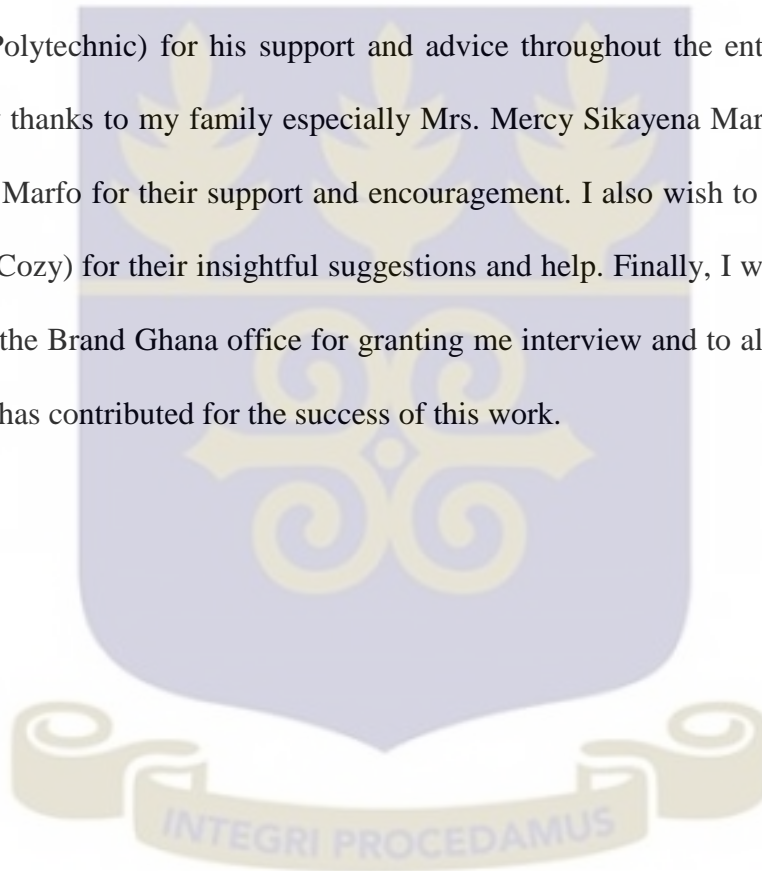


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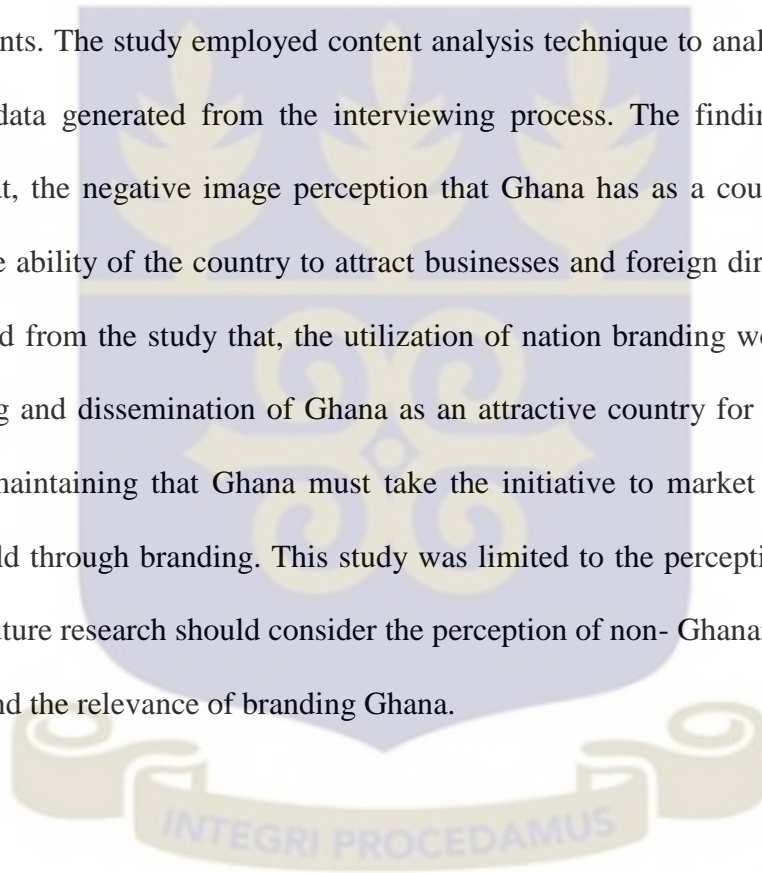
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the current image perception of Ghana as a brand in order to generate recommendations for the country in developing a strong nation branding strategy. This study employed qualitative approach. Primary data was collected through focus group discussions and in-depth interview. Non-probability sampling technique specifically purposive sampling was used to establish the final sample size of 26 respondents. The study employed content analysis technique to analyze the empirical qualitative data generated from the interviewing process. The findings of this study revealed that, the negative image perception that Ghana has as a country has a causal effect on the ability of the country to attract businesses and foreign direct investment. It also emerged from the study that, the utilization of nation branding would facilitate the re-packaging and dissemination of Ghana as an attractive country for both citizens and foreigners maintaining that Ghana must take the initiative to market and reach out to outside world through branding. This study was limited to the perception of Ghanaians. However, future research should consider the perception of non- Ghanaians in examining the image and the relevance of branding Ghana.



CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Background of the study

Marketing academics and practitioners over the years have diverted their focus away from product brands to corporate brands (Ward & Lee, 2000; Aaker, 1996), and more recently towards nation brands (Rojas-Me´ndez, Murphy, & Papadopoulos, 2013; Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011; Dinnie, 2008). As the concept of nation branding gain popularity, some scholars have suggested that nation brand may be seen and treated as a product or corporate brand (Olins, 1999; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). This view stem from the fact that corporations have logos, jargons, culture, and employees, while countries have flags, languages, culture, and citizens, respectively (Anholt, 2002). This is reinforced by the fact that a nation brand has a multidimensional nature and diverse stakeholder interactions (Hankinson, 2004; Trueman, Klemm & Giroud, 2004) and nations are also faced with intense competition due to globalization just as corporations (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2010; Hanna & Rowley, 2008 ; Anholt, 2007). As a result, the world is being perceived today as one market and in order to succeed, nations must be distinctive and enhance their image in global arena (Caldwell &Freire, 2004).

Developing countries have seen the need to allocate significant budgets to build and maintain an attractive nation brand in order to be competitive in the global arena (Herstein, 2012). However, the problem facing developing nations is not whether to brand but rather how to brand (Hanna & Rowley, 2011). Several reasons have contributed for the increased interest in the nation branding concept. Some of the key reasons for nation branding include, the fierce competition among countries to attract limited international foreign resources to increase a country’s product exports (Loo & Davies, 2006; Papadopoulos, 2004), to attract foreign tourists (Beverland & Lindgreen,

2002), to enhance foreign direct investments (Papadopoulos, 2004), and to increase enrollment of foreign students (Martens & Starke, 2008). Countries are now seen as brands competing in a huge market (Anholt, 2002) with governments working assiduously to create, promote, protect, and supervise their nation's brand (Rawson, 2007). However, in a very competitive market this task is not an easy one, especially when a country wants to attract the right kinds of investment, tourism, trade, and talent (Aronczyk, 2008).

This competition has made governments resort to branding techniques in order to establish the distinctive positioning of their countries on the global arena. However, it is vital to note that before a country can become a place that receives foreign direct investment, tourist and export, it must be strategically positioned in terms of its appeal and attractiveness and this is exactly what nation branding seeks to accomplish (Anholt, 2007). According to Pappu and Quester (2010) nation branding is define as the strategy for using the name, logo and other branding elements to create a distinct identity for a country. Therefore, for a nation to be successfully branded, nation branding must be seen as a component of nation policy, never as a campaign that is separated from planning, governance or economic development (Anholt, 2008).

In recent times, both practitioners and academic researchers acknowledge the fact that the idea of nation brand is complex than corporate brands (Dinnie, 2008), because of this notion of complexity, the task of managing a country brand turns out to be a very challenging one. Recent record shows several cases where significant resources have been wasted on ineffective nation branding campaigns because of the use of an inappropriate communication strategy with the target audiences (Rojas-Meńdez et al,

2013). Other nations have equally failed in their quest to brand the nation because the concepts employed did not highlight unique features that identify and differentiate the country (Ibid). This highlights the need for nation brand managers to have a more comprehensive picture of all the aspects that can be used to develop an integral marketing strategy in order to achieve an effective position of the nation for its different target audiences.

In order to mimic the branding approach adopted by successful countries such as South Africa, the late President Mills established Brand Ghana initiative in September 2009. Its mandate is to co-ordinate the development of a compelling national image for the country by creating, coordinating and harmonizing a persuasive Brand Ghana positioning (Brand Ghana.). However, the negative perception of 'brand Africa' even makes it imperative for Ghana to vigorously pursue the agenda of nation branding in order to strategically positioning the country both in the domestic and in international arena. Even though, in some cases, the perception held about some nations may not be accurate, especially as such nations go through various changes with time. Hence, the need for proactive nation branding cannot be trivialized in order to be able to maintain the needed relevance in the global stage. In light of the above, the purpose of this study is to explore the current image perception of Ghana as a brand in order to generate recommendations for the country in developing a strong nation branding strategy.

1.1 Problem Statement

Research on nation branding has been the focus of a number of literature reviews from marketing (Kavaratzis, 2005; Papadopoulos, 2004) or public relations perspectives (Wang, 2006). Some scholars have also conducted partial cross-disciplinary reviews with

the goal of clarifying the relationship between nation branding and public diplomacy (Gilboa, 2008; Szondi, 2008). Herstein (2012) in his study focused on intangible assets in branding a city by means of a slogan “ I Love NY” to present New York as a city that people visit not only for practical reasons such as sightseeing, shopping or business, but in order to connect to its spirit.

In Europe, Vanolo (2008) also examines the various efforts and policies to brand the Italian city of Turin to attract investment. However, in Asia Zhang and Zhao (2009) use the Olympic Games to brand Beijing as a preferred destination for tourism and investment. A recent research conducted in Pakistan by Salman and Li (2014) focuses on religion as a branding tool to promote Pakistan as a peaceful state.

In extant literature, Africa has been debated as a weak brand and Ghana is no exception (Osei & Gbadamosi, 20011; Wanjiru, 2006). In the developed world, researchers have studied how assets and marketing programmes could be applied to improve nation branding (Fan, 2010; Keller, 2009; Vanolo, 2008). Lately, there have been several calls from developed world to developing countries to turn their attention to branding, to enhance their competitiveness to reverse the economic gap between them and the rich countries (Akotia, 2010; Anholt, 2003).

In Africa, one country that is at the forefront of making conscious efforts to manage and promote its nation’s brand is South Africa. This is evident in the work of Younde (2009) as he reiterates the role branding has played in helping South Africa achieve some foreign policy objectives, such as being given the responsibility of mediating during conflicts involving countries within and outside Africa. Mitiza and Oni (2013) employed

nation branding as a strategic marketing approach to foreign direct investment promotion in Zimbabwe. Opoku and Hinson (2006) also examined how African countries communicate their brand personality through on line.

In Ghana, studies including (Akotia, 2010; Akotia, Spio & Frempong, 2010) have focused on a nation branding by studying its management and the role of citizens. Notwithstanding these immense contributions to the development of the Ghana's brand to the status-quo, it appears a fundamental issue yet to be addressed is the image perception people have about Ghana as a brand and how they resonate to the brand. This has necessitated a call to examine the current image perception about Ghana and what benefits are actually derived. As (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011; Pappu & Quester, 2010; Herstein & Jaffe, 2008) have argued, answering these fundamental issues are a requisite for every nation brand. Herstein and Jaffe (2008) argued that before a nation start developing a strategy for nation branding, there should be a diagnosis period to find out how it is perceived among its target market. This study attempts to conceptualize the image perception of Ghana as a brand.

1.2 Research Objectives

The main aim of this study is to explore the unique benefits that will be reaped from a concerted initiative and implementation of a unique branding strategy for the country. It will also take into cognizance the intentions of the Brand Ghana office to lead the drive to develop a unique identity for the country. The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To explore the current image perception of Ghana as a brand
2. To examine the current status of Ghana's brand equity

3. To explore the benefits Ghana could derive from nation branding

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the research objectives above, the following questions were asked:

1. What is the current image perception of Ghana as a brand?
2. What is the status of Ghana's brand equity?
3. What benefit could Ghana derive from branding herself?

1.4 Significance of the study

The significance of the study can be viewed along three strands: research, practice and policy. As managers are confronted with ways of branding a nation in an attempt of promoting it as the preferred destination for leisure and business, it is significant to assess the available options of solving this problem. This study may be of interest to the Ghana government (Brand Ghana Office) to identify the area of improvements on the existing campaign; to discover and accentuate the campaign strengths, and diminish the campaign weaknesses to create a strong brand identity; and expectantly sustain competitive advantages over the neighboring countries. Concerning the research significance, it will serve as a source of reference for further work in this area and contribute to extant literature on nation branding.

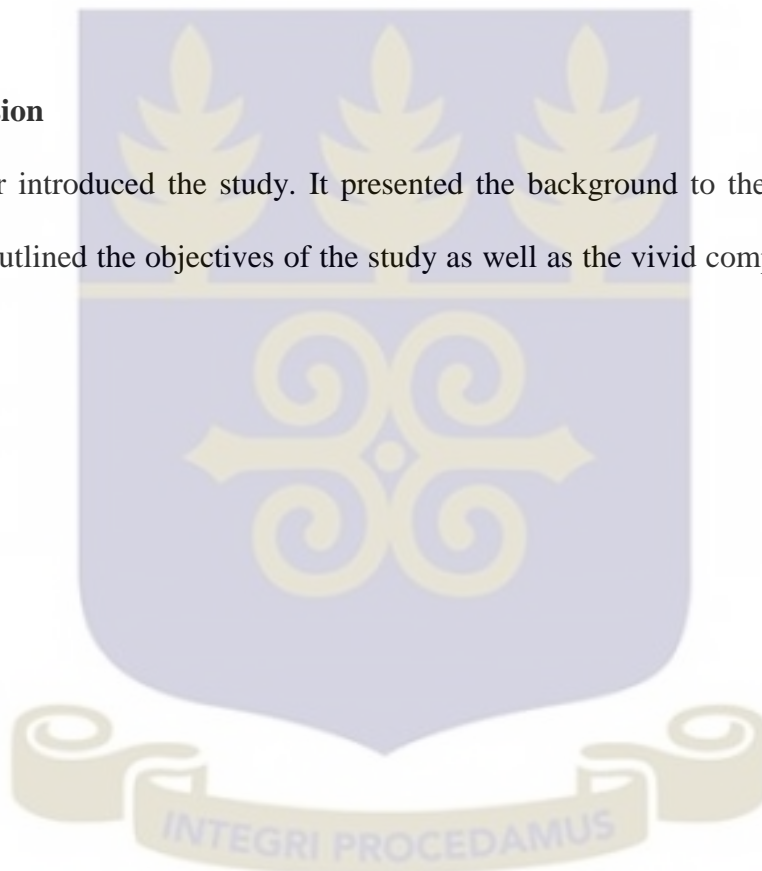
Furthermore, it will generate information required to build a powerful national brand identity and promote the identity in order to evoke a desirable image that will enhance national competitiveness.

1.5 Chapter disposition

This thesis will be partitioned into six (6) chapters. Chapter one will be introduction whilst chapter two will focus on the literature review and conceptual Framework. The chapter three will focus on the context of the study, and chapter four examines the methodology adopted for the study; whilst the fifth chapter present and discuss the findings of the thesis whilst chapter six highlights the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study findings.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study. It presented the background to the study, problems statement, outlined the objectives of the study as well as the vivid comprehensive layout of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed various researches conducted by other researchers in areas related to this study. This covers areas such as concept of brand and branding, nation as brand, place branding, nationbranding, brand images and identity, concept of nation brand equity, country brand perception, benefits of nation branding and conceptual framework.

2.1 Overview of Brand and Branding

There have been various definitions of a brand by different researchers. A brand is traditionally conceptualized as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (AMA, 2010; Bennett, 1988). Aaker (1996) on the other hand perceives brand to be more than just a name but rather a complex bundle of images, meanings, associations and experiences in the minds of people. Similarly, Armstrong and Kotler (2009) points to the usefulness of brands as a valuable asset to marketers and an enhancer to their offerings. In addition, brands to some extent control the psyche of individuals as they incite beliefs, evoke emotions, and prompt behaviors (Kotler, 2002). Kapferer (2004) formalizes this holistic view of the brand when he defined a brand as a name with power to influence buyers. Its source of influence is derived from the mental associations and relationships a brand builds over time among customers and other stakeholders.

It is prominent in the brand definitions that what is known as the brand is a collective of many variables, both tangible and intangible (Webster & Keller, 2004). They further

opine that these variables could be categorized into primary and secondary layers. The primary layer variables are those that make up the "brand's persona" and the second layer variables are those attributed to the brand to facilitate its recall to memory, which is referred to as "unique recall proposition" (URP) or brand association (Webster & Keller, 2004). They reiterated that brand association, or URP is any stimulus that consumers are able to link to the brand in their minds when prompted with the same stimulus. These associations, which form the brand image, facilitate consumers' abilities to identify and differentiate attributes and values of competing brands, and subsequently offer them reasons to purchase, to recommend, or in some cases to reject (Webster & Keller, 2004). In brief, a brand is indicative of value. It represents a cluster of values that promise a unique and welcome experience between buyer and seller (Lynch & De Chernatony, 2004).

Basically, a brand is said to be not just a name, symbol or any other feature that distinguishes one product or service from another, but rather both tangible and intangible benefits that are perceived to be of value by the customer, which help in establishing an emotional connection between the customer and the product or services (De Chernatony, 1996; King, 1991; Murphy, 1990). According to Louro and Cunha (2001), brands retain a significant potential to enable the achievement and sustenance of superior performance. In contemporary managerial thought, the value of a brand is thought to reside in its 'brand equity', and brand equity stands for a brand's capacity to generate a future value stream (Arvidsson, 2006). Based on these notions, the brand itself is the total and ultimate concept based on both a value and a potential. Branding is about managing a brand to achieve brand equity and to sustain superior performance outputs (Loo & Davies, 2006). They further argue that, every nation is a brand and most nations have

had their brands made for them (i.e. national brands). However, the process of branding is the consistent effort to make many more people identify with the brand that has been created for the particular service, product or a nation and thus help create distinct images which are formed in the minds of the recipients by the messages that the images resonate (Kavartis, 2004). He opines that branding is an effective marketing instrument that helps to identify and project the unique attributes of a place or a product.

Branding Ghana would require a close observation of the outstanding cultural values and practices, social norms and economic strides that the country has secured. A combination of all these very different features would have to be specially combined to create the most suitable brand for the country. Looking at the various definitions, this study seeks to adopt the definition provided by Aaker (1996), thus, a brand is more than just a name but rather a complex bundle of images, meanings, associations and experiences in the minds of people. To be successful in nation branding, Chernatony and MacDonald (2003) argue that nations must be augmented in a way that permits target audience to see sustainable benefit that closely matches their needs.

2.3 Place Branding

There is no distinct definition of branding a place. However, its concept has been recognized and practiced consciously or unconsciously through the place development context of marketing (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Researchers have investigated some similarities or differences between place marketing and branding, and these reflect how the concept of nation branding has evolved. For instance, Kotler and Gertner (2002) have reiterated that, the need to attract tourists, investment and talented people and to find markets for their exports requires the country to adopt

strategic marketing management tools and conscious branding. That is, strategic place branding mostly concerns the improvement of a country's position in the global marketplace and, therefore, it requires management of the different tasks of country brand, thus managing the image and attracting tourists, factories and companies (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

When a place manages to create favourable brand associations in the minds of the targeted customers, a place brand has been born and there is a chance that the customer will select the place to be "consumed" (Rainisto, 2007). The process of creating a benefit for "place customers" requires a good development system for the place product so that a place-oriented value-added can be made "visible" (Rainisto, 2007).

According to Kotler and Gertner (2002), place branding is about enhancing a country's position in the global market place. They reiterate that, place branding requires an understanding of its current strengths and weaknesses and of the future opportunities and threats it faces. It also involves setting objectives, forming target groups and drawing up an implementation plan. The process entails managing the factors that may affect tourists' and other interest groups 'decisions, such as the country's image, attractions, infrastructure and people, and should involve government, citizens and business (De Chernatony, 2007).

Place branding needs encompassing not only as a designed visual identity such as name, logo, slogan, corporate livery and so on, but also in a wide area of corporate strategy, consumer and stakeholder motivation and behaviour, internal and external communications, ethics, and purpose (Anholt, 2005). Place branding should be practiced

through a coordinated and strategically informed approach to the promotion of place's 'products' and 'sub-brands' and establish its overall reputations built by a place's actions or behaviors that are guided by strategy (Anholt, 2005). Place branding, along with the place marketing discipline, has been referred to as 'the practice of applying brand strategy and other marketing techniques and disciplines to the economic, social, political and cultural development of cities, regions and countries' (Anholt, 2005).

However, Pryor and Grossbart (2007) have insisted that this definition has only described the marketing of places and it is insufficient for the development of theory related to place branding. They have referred to place branding as 'the process of inscribing to a place symbols and images that represent that set of central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics that actors have ascribed to that place, thereby creating a focus of identity'. What branding can do for places is that it offers an excellent opportunity for diagnosing what dimensions of place brands are good, bad or irrelevant from the visitor's point of view (Dooley & Bowie, 2005). Branding applied to places is a result of changes in society and an intelligent answer for local sustainable development. Hence, Place should develop a brand management system (Kerr & Johnson 2005; Pant 2005) well resourced, particularly in terms of leadership, funding, and commitment on the part of key stakeholders. Creating such a place brand strategy calls for interdisciplinary research and planning to design an imaginative economic policy having a strong political will to implement the brand strategy (Pant, 2005). To manage a place brand is to both develop and manage a place's intellectual architecture, which gives rise to the brand (Gold, 2006).

One means of engaging actors in place branding is through co-creation, in other words inviting people to participate in the branding process (Payne et al., 2009). In this case, co-creation applies to citizens, as they are the ones with a say in their own country. Intelligence coming from the market is recognized as a major resource in marketing planning (McDonald, 2007). Place Branding essentially makes people aware of location of places and possible to discover for each place a combination of unique attraction factors to make it different from the competing ones (Rainisto, 2007). Place branding is a function of the extent to which the representation of a place reflects the experience of users (Aitken & Campelo, 2011). Hence the argument is that place must for example illustrates the importance and effectiveness of the way that differentiate its reputation by association of the actual experiences with the values of the place such as respect, friendship, equality and excellence.

The impetus behind place branding may be attributed to various factors. Horner and Swarbrooke (1996) discuss the reasons for place branding including enhancing place image to attract industry investment, improving local community infrastructure, offering funding for the conservation of the environment, instilling pride within local residents, and making a destination politically acceptable to outsiders (Baker & Cameron, 2007). Other factors mentioned in the literature include the motivation to improve living standards of residents, to increase the number of tourists, to stimulate the development of local businesses (Buhalis, 2000), and to create a credible emotional association between the destination brand and its stakeholders (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004). Baker and Cameron (2007) also explore 33 success factors of place branding from the literature and classify them into four stages. The first stage is to establish a strategic orientation of tourism branding, followed, in the second stage, by identity development, image

development, and vision communication. The third stage is to involve all stakeholders such as local people, local businesses, and local and national government agencies. Finally, continual monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment are seen as necessary for successful place branding.

2.4 Nation Branding

Nation branding encompasses activities from country naming through to all the collected activities of the country. Anholt (2008) refers to nation branding as the systematic process of aligning the actions, behaviours, investments, innovations and communications of a country around a clear strategy for achieving a strengthened competitive identity. He further opines that nation branding is the attempt to define the image of a country through the use of suitable marketing principles. It does not only consist of the application of marketing principles but also of the determined outlook of governments to facilitate the branding process through the establishment of institutions and bodies responsible for enhancing the image of the country (Kaneva, 2011). The branding process has been approached differently in several countries. While, some countries have focused mainly on taglines that have made their names resound across the globe, others have internalized their brand operations and attempted to build their nations trademark based on what they actually do, for example improving security, reducing corruption, building infrastructure and ensuring political stability as in the case of Singapore (Jaworski & Fosher, 2003).

Nation branding involves a number of activities ranging from cosmetic operations, such as the creation of national logos and slogans, to attempt to institutionalize branding within state structures by creating governmental bodies that oversee long-term nation

branding efforts (Kaneva, 2011). Anholt (2008) posits that nation branding goes beyond creation of national logos and slogan and must be seen as a national policy, never as a campaign that is separate from planning, governance or economic development. Likewise, Gnoth (2002) notices that, it is easier to brand individual products than nations, simply because a nation brand is limited by uncontrollable, situational and boundary-spanning attributes, whereas a product brand is largely dependent on the company's activities for survival. Nation branding is considered broader and more complex than product branding because it involves multiple levels and components, and various disciplines such as international relations and public diplomacy (Fetscherin, 2010; Anholt, 2010). People tend to rearrange the attributes of a country in response to uncontrolled events such as terrorist attacks, accidents or other tragic incidents (Caldwell &Freire, 2004), as well as frequent changes in political leadership (Fetscherin, 2010).

Nation branding has introduced several arguments and viewpoints, and many have concluded that nation branding must start at home before it can be done abroad (Simonin, 2008), while others also believe that efforts in country branding should focus more on creating a good external image for the country. In spite of the differences of opinions and controversies on the subject, the relevant question today is not whether to pursue nation branding but rather how to do it right (Simonin, 2008). Olins and Hildreth (2012) suggest that to be more successful in nation branding, the focus seems to be more internal than external, that is, more attention is directed to how the nation perceives itself than to how outsiders perceive the nation. They further argued that Successful nation branding creates and sustains a clear sense of belonging within the nation and projects a handful of core ideas to the outside world as these come together to create perceptions. These perceptions, both internal and external, must be broadly in line with reality.

Nation branding in particular, aims to set the strategic approach that applies to innovating the economic, social, political and cultural realities and to align that approach to a strategy for improving national reputation and image (Anholt, 2008). Based on the concepts of nation branding, nation branding is mostly conceptualized as a way to achieve nation brand equity and competitiveness. It needs a strategic management approach to innovating a nation's realities and aligning them with improving a nation's identity and image (Anholt, 2008). This situation automatically places Ghana in a position that will require a consistent effort to brand itself effectively in order to draw major attention from the rest of the world. Given that countries do not want to be left behind, many have joined the cause of nation branding with a sense of urgency, despite the fact that they lack great marketing expertise or success (Simonin, 2008).

Nation branding needs to provide nations with the principle of how nations can sustain their values against change to achieve competitiveness both internally and externally (Simonin, 2008). It is essential to consider how a nation brand can be effectively managed to achieve nation brand equity. As Dinnie (2008) states, national identity thereby plays a key role in nation branding, and key issues in national identity include viewing the nation as an 'imagined community' and the notion of 'invented tradition.' To achieve effective internal and external interactions in nation building, moreover, cultural and historical identities should be supported and shaped by political institutions (Fukuyama, 2004). Governments are assumed to represent the people of a nation, and therefore, there is no getting away from the fact that nation branding is a highly politicized activity (Dinnie, 2008). That is, a brand identity appears to be closely linked to the national identity including a political and a cultural entity (Skinner & Kubacki, 2007). The concept of branding a nation, therefore, relates to branding a nation-as-

people, a nation-as state, and a nation-as-country (Skinner & Kubacki, 2007).As a result, branding a nation implies a comprehensive and holistic branding approach encompassing the notion of a human-centered state and country building (Skinner & Kubacki, 2007).

The concept of the nation-as-brand relates to categorize the type of nations building, a nation's identity and image (Skinner & Kubacki, 2007). Nation branding should be seen as a strategic management process that requires long-term involvement and commitment (Warnaby & Medway, 2013). In order to be successful in managing brand Ghana, it is essential that managers incorporate into their strategy a mix of the brand elements that can support brand awareness and the image of the brand while at the same time increasing the visibility of the brand (Krake, 2005). Simmons (2007) explains that brand awareness is strengthened when the brand is made of either product or service features associated with the brand name and identity.

2.4.1 Brand Awareness and Association

Fill (2009) and Percy (2008) posit that raising awareness is the first and initial step in nation branding, as in any branding, awareness of a country's existence is necessary if people are to develop a positive attitude towards it, and before they can be expected to visit it. According to Pappu and Quester (2010), consumers' thoughts about countries are on two levels: macro, i.e. associations and beliefs about the country, and "micro", i.e. associations and beliefs about its products. Strong micro-macro links, in other words strong "product category vs. country associations", are likely to indicate strong country awareness. Consumers' thoughts about countries when they have certain amount of awareness on the country (Pappu & Quester, 2010). Nation brand awareness is an important component in nation branding. Vrontis and Papasolomou (2007) argue that, a

powerful brand benefits from a high level of consumer brand awareness. Some researchers indicate that brand awareness is the ability of a potential buyer to identify and recall a brand that belongs to a particular product category (Aaker, 1991; Atilgan et al., 2005). In particular, brand name awareness relates to the likelihood that a brand name will come to mind and the ease with which it does so (Keller, 1993).

Brand awareness consists of brand recognition and brand recall performance (Keller, 1993). Brand recognition relates to consumers' ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue (Atilgan et al., 2005). In other words, brand recognition requires that consumers correctly discriminate the brand as having been seen or heard previously. Brand awareness offers consumers three main advantages. First, it is important that consumers think of the brand when they think about the product category. Raising brand awareness increases the likelihood that the brand will be a member of the consideration set (Keller, 2003; Nedungadi, 1990), the handful of brands that receive serious consideration for purchase. Second, brand awareness can affect decisions about brands in the consideration set, even if there are no other brand associations. For example, consumers or travelers have been shown to adopt a decision rule to buy or visit only familiar, well-established brands or destinations (Keller, 2003).

In low involvement decision settings, a minimum level of brand awareness may be sufficient for product or destination choice, even in the absence of a well-formed attitude (Hoyer & Brown, 1990). A necessary condition for the creation of a brand image is that a brand node has been established in memory, and the nature of that brand node should affect how easily different kinds of information can become attached to the brand in memory (Keller, 2003).

Tourists and investors are exposed and attracted to many countries competing on the global market for the share of mind, share of income, share of voice and share of attention, hence the brands that customers are familiar with are usually taken into consideration in the pecking order. The most favoured brands are those that are easily recognizable or identifiable, categorized and eventually purchased just as only places of which tourists and investors are aware will be included in the evoked opportunity set. (Baldauf, Cravens & Binder, 2003).

Although, brand awareness is the first and necessary step in nation branding, but not a sufficient step leading to brand equity, brand association is also vital. According to Lassar et al., (1995), brand association refers to the relative strength of a consumer's positive feelings towards the brand. The interaction between customers and other relevant stakeholders has an influence on the brand equity of a nation. It has been argued by some researchers that when the customers' experience of a product or brand is positive, the brand becomes stronger and there is a positive reputation of the brand (Abimbola & Vallaster, 2007).

It is more critical to understand what associations of a brand are advantageous over competitors. Points of difference associations help consumers to positively evaluate the brand and attach to the brand as well (Keller, 2009). Some researchers (Simmons, 2007) explain that a brand evokes in the mind of customers a certain presence, personality and product or service performance. The associations can be either a functional consequence or a symbolic meaning (O'Loughlin & Szmigin, 2005). According to Balmer and Gray (2003), buyers are usually persuaded to believe in some perceived cordiality associated

with a particular brand. Hence, consumers tend to consume the brand and associate themselves with the brand to identify whom they are, who they wish to be and/or how they wish to be seen. Brands become competitive in the marketplace because of the associations and behaviour of consumers towards them (O'Loughlin & Szmigin, 2005).

It is important that as a country the branding process take a form that resonates not only with what the country seeks to attract but also with what actually exists on the ground. The main objectives of nation branding are to attract tourism and other business, stimulate investments, and create positive perceptions and attitudes in the target markets (Fetscherin, 2010). This process however, has not been done for Ghana and needs to be handled well if the nation is going to reap any benefits from its brand.

2.4.2 The Image and Identity of Nations

Every nation has an image with or without branding (Fan, 2010; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). What the branding involves is promoting the image that it enjoys (i.e. the real image), and making it more attractive if possible (i.e. the ideal image) (Fan, 2006; Rainisto, 2003). Anholt (2007) and Stock (2009), among others, also refer to the idea of assessing the nation's image as well as managing it. It has also been suggested by Hakala, Lemmetyinen, and Kantola (2013) that images of places can and do evolve and that they can be influenced. People have an image of countries that can be brought forth by simply saying their names. Image is an important aspect in the marketing and branding of nations.

A nation's brand image is on the receiver's side. It is the way that the domestic or international actual or potential consumer perceives the nation brand. The international

consumer may be a tourist, investor, and buyer of export brands, student, or anyone who can have a positive impact on the quality of life of that particular nation. A nation's image is the perception of the nation that exists in the mind of the consumer of that nation's products, tangible and intangible. According to Um and Crompton (1990), a holistic construct derives from attitudes towards the perceived attributes. Potential visitors generally have limited knowledge about the attributes of a place they have not previously visited. For this reason, the image and attitude dimensions of a place as a travel destination are critical elements in the process of choosing it, irrespective of whether or not they are true representations of what it has to offer.

A country's image can be formed from many sources (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002) among other things it results from a country's geography, history, proclamations, art and music and famous citizens. The entertainment industry and the media play a large part when it comes to shaping people's perceptions of countries, especially those viewed negatively (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). People routinely use these perceptions to make sense of the world around them by associating them with, for example, objects, events, experiences, products and persons (Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002).

The image of a country is likely to influence people's decisions related to purchasing products, investing in, changing residence and travelling to that country (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Kotler and Gertner thus define country image as:

"the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places" as "images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place..." (Kotler & Gertner 2002, p 250).

These country images become the short-cuts for information processing for consumers, using them as decision heuristics as they would prefer to adjust what they see to fit what they know, in other words may distort the reality to fit their mental representations and are more likely to pay attention to information that confirms their expectations.

The formation of an image relies on perception (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002) and most country image is intertwined with stereotyping (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) explain that stereotyping is the process of generalizing to an entire class of objects from a limited number of observations. Stereotypes develop over time as one classifies repeated observations into schemata, which are then correlated to form one's view of the world (Ibid, 2002). Therefore, a stereotype image is extreme, not necessarily accurate, simplifications of the reality. It might be outdated, based on things that are expectations rather than a part of a pattern and can be based on peoples' impressions rather than on facts (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

A country's image has many dimensions and may carry large amounts of information built on both fact and feelings. Country images are important extrinsic cues in product evaluations. They elicit associations and they can influence purchase decisions. A positive country image can foster a positive reputation for a whole product category, also entice, and attract other countries and such attraction often leads to acquiescence or imitation (Nye Jr, 2004). A nation's success in developing a beneficial image for a certain line of products or services, for example, can be used for branding (Stock, 2009). Countries in themselves could be perceived as products, or preferably brands.

According to Fan (2006), there is a correlation between countries that produce strong brands and those that are strong brands. Country images are likely to influence people's decisions related to purchasing, investing, and changing residence and travelling, therefore must reflect the reality on the ground so that individuals who make important decisions based on the image are not deceived or misguided. National brands could be virtuous for developing economies such as Ghana, and branding facilitates and develops market access for offerings from nations in such economies (Abimbola, 2006). All nations have respective images and, through branding, attempts are made to mould, modify, or influence the shaping of these images (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2006). Moreover, it is cardinal to considering how countries, industries and firms manage nation image along with products (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2006).

However, marketing theory suggests that it is problematic to develop a brand on a promise that cannot be fulfilled (Anholt, 2008). When expectations are shaped based on a clearly articulated brand promise, anything short of that expectation will lead to dissatisfaction (Simonin, 2008). According to O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2000), people often think of a nation in terms of its people and their culture, and personal interaction is essential in building successful place relationships. Freire (2009) also emphasizes the role of local people in the image-building process: they may be an even more persuasive promotional tool than a beautiful landscape, and consequently should be purposefully used in the marketing. With reference to the concept of customer experience management (CEM) (Keller & Lehmann, 2006), places create five types of experiences:

1. Sensual (involving sensory perception);
2. Feeling (involving affect and emotions);

3. Thinking (creativity and cognition);
4. Acting (behavior, i.e. tourism, business, studying); and
5. Relating (resulting from connections with the people and/or the culture).

National images are often created through stereotyping, in other words by placing nations and their people in categories frequently with negative undertones. Although superficial, stereotypes provide mental short cuts to attitudes and intentional orientations. The stereotyping may be planned or unplanned, and the fact that it is a dynamic, fluid process indicates that it is possible to manage the images (Freire, 2009). Indeed, having a bad reputation or none at all is a serious handicap for a state seeking to remain competitive in the international arena.

Nonetheless, like commercial brands, for a nation to be competitive and resilient that nation must have identity that is compelling to both domestic and foreign consumers. The nation identity is what a country believes it is or wants to be (Simonin, 2008). This identity is attractively coined in a manner that will attract the attention of the target group that the country seeks. This identity is projected onto the rest of the world through marketing and communication efforts such as advertisements in order to attract tourism and foreign direct investment, boost exports, and carry out effective public diplomacy (Simonin, 2008). Simonin, (2008) asserts that a nation's identity should stress a reality that resonates with people, both within and outside the country.

Jaworski and Fosher(2003) have claimed that a nation's essence and core values give rise to a nation's brand identity and that its outcome affects corporate brands, drawing a cycle of nation-brand building. That is, brand identity of country-of-origin is developed

through nation branding, which affects everything from positioning and differentiation to purchasing decisions (Jaworski & Fosher, 2003). Anholt (2003) has showed how branded exports and companies combine with nation branding and how they can accomplish economic development for emerging markets, using country-of-origin more creatively

However, a nation's identity, or essence, is critical to the creation of its brand. According to Kapferer (2004), answers to the following questions define the identity of a place:

1. What is its vision and meaning?
2. What makes it different?
3. What are its core values?

How people perceive a nation's brand identity reflects their aspirations and self-identity.

Pappu and Quester (2010) observe that maintaining the core essence of the brand in all branding decisions is very essential. It may not be easy to agree on its essence, given the numerous alternatives and emphases, when it is eventually realised, it should help in establishing a relationship between the target and the stakeholders in this case Ghana and the potential visitors. Ideally, the people will exemplify, live and breathe the identity in everything they do, thus affecting the image they project to others.

Perceived similarity between the people's and the nation's identities is important in the relationship formation (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). A place brands are driven by the identity of the people, and listening to them will help in the creation of a nation brand (Campelo, Aitken, Thyne & Gnoth, 2013). This reflects the concept of co-creation, in other words engaging and empowering the people and having them decide what should be portrayed about their nation, herein Ghana. Identity is apparent on different levels: the functional, the experiential, and the symbolic. According to Gnoth (2002), the success of

a nation brand is conditional on how the three levels reflect people's conceptions. The functional level relates to the core characteristics (2002, 2002) and the infrastructural elements of a country, in other words the social, economic and political conditions, which give some idea of how the inhabitants perceive the fundamental aspects of the nation brand. People like to live in places with accessible health care, schools, affordable housing, roads and public transportation, and cultural offerings (Florida, 2008).

Furthermore, a nation brand is bound up with the social and sensory concept of the nation, in other words how people experience their place (the experiential level). The ability to meet people and make friends is one of the most important factors in determining how happy people are with their dwelling place, and cultural offerings in terms of creating cultural dynamism and general openness in terms of a communal sense of tolerance and acceptance of diversity are also ranked highly on the experiential level (Florida, 2008). A strong place identity is an asset in this respect (Blackston, 2000). Lastly, on the symbolic level, brand intangibles elements that have no physical, tangible attributes play a considerable role in how places are perceived (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997) and what they mean to the people (Gnoth, 2002). Covering a wide range of associations including imagery and history (Keller & Lehmann, 2006), they symbolize the abstract attributes of the national identity and affinity, and are manifest in symbols such as the country's name, the national anthem, the flag, logo, sign, or slogan, or a combination of these. In the view of De Chernatony (2007) however, the symbolic component is about bringing the brand's values to life through associations.

A nation brand must therefore have a competitive identity, to evoke the desirable image and to enhance nation competitiveness. That is, for a nation to have a compelling image

its identity must be competitive in the first place. A nation's brand identity is a nation's true self, essence and character, driven by a vision, which is both different from others and resistant to change. Governments are realizing that a new view on identity, strategy, and development is needed in order to be able to compete in a world that is coming more and more together (Anholt, 2007).

In particular, this research advocates nation branding to be a systematic and planned process. This process is to be managed by a strategic approach to creating and improving a nation's realities, identity and image. Branding actors are considered in the branding process.

2.5 Nation as a Brand

The concept of a nation as a brand is of interest to both academics and practitioners. The extent to which nations can be branded and the differences between branding products and branding nations are subjects of intense debate (Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011). A nation brand is a unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that constitute culturally grounded differentiation (Dinnie, 2009). All country has a distinctive name and images in the minds of people both inside and outside the country; hence a nation does have brands. A nation brand according to Fan (2010) is the total sum of all perceptions of a nation in the minds of international stakeholders, which may contain some of the following elements: people, place, culture or language, history, food, fashion, famous faces, global brands and so on. Therefore, to sum up nation as a brand Fan (2010) argues that, nation brand has various facets; first, nation brand is a symbolic-oriented perspective such as a name or visual system, which is based on the Bennett's definition. Second, it denotes the interaction between people's perceptions and national competence. Third, the notion of a nation brand is a complex of brand identity and image

encompassing a nation's reality and stakeholders' perceptions. Finally, a nation brand is a dynamic entity differentiating national reality from other nations and at the same time providing relevance for the stakeholders. A clearly strong nation brand can help the 'management' of a country to create a major, long-term aim of increasing the wealth of a nation (Florek, 2005).

Building of an effective nation brand may well start from the stereotype, countering what is potentially damaging and reinforcing the positive aspects (Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011). De Mooij (2010) and Dinnie (2009) reiterate that cultural artifacts such as music, films, and even products may greatly influence perceptions of national stereotypes, and thus can be used for promotional purposes. Building a nation brand involves giving expressive and affective meanings to a geographic entity in that its power eventually lies in the emotional relationships it fosters (Gnoth, 2002).

Therefore, Gnoth (2002) argues that brand of a place stirs emotions, the feelings people have when hearing or thinking about it. It represents the relationship they have formed with the geographic space. What associations do people have with the name Ghana? As observed by Aaker and Joachimsthaler, (2000) creating a nation brand requires identifying the nation's values and translating them into emotional benefits and an appealing identity. As in any branding, the "product", in this case the country Ghana, should be seen through the eyes of the "end users", that is, visitors, businesses, investors, and the media because eventually, they are the ones who build the brand (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). From this point of view, a powerful country brand translates into a better perception of the country, increases exports, inward tourism and foreign investment (Fetscherin, 2010).

2.6 Concept of Nation Brand Equity

The concept of the brand as a valuable asset to the owner has led to the development of the concept of brand equity (Hankinson, 2004). Brand equity therefore in branding is output rather than input (Hankinson, 2004; Keller, 1998) thus, the benefit endowed on products and services of the country. There are diverse meanings and definitions of brand equity depending on the approach. The definition of brand equity can be approached from the perspective of investors, manufacturers, retailers or consumers. Retailers and manufacturers are usually concerned with the cash flow and strategic implications of brand equity, while investors concern themselves with value in terms of finances to treat it as an asset and include it in the firm's balance sheet (Myers, 2003; Keller, 1993).

However, just as if product, service or corporations have brand equity, nations also can boast of brand equity. Nation brand equity (NBE) refers to the tangible and intangible, internal and external assets (or liabilities) of the nation (Dinnie, 2008). Nation brand value (NBV) is the total sum of nation brand equity that is created by people, firms, government and products within a country (Cho, 2004). Dinnie, (2008) further describes nation brand equity as a multidimensional, broad and specific blend of qualities and elements, which enhances the value of a State.

Keller (2003) on the other hand explained that brand equity is the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. Therefore, it is essential for the brand to provide some value to customers in order for it to have a high equity level. This is because what customers recognized of it over time determine the power of a brand. It also includes what they have felt, seen, or heard about the brand (Ibid).

National image and reputation are essential parts of the competitiveness and brand equity of a nation (Loo & Davies, 2006; Jaffe & Nebenzahl; 2006). Based on stakeholders' attitudes and behaviours in the market, reputation ultimately represents the output of nation branding by embracing those stakeholders' perceptions that are relevant to the nation image (Martensen & Grønholdt, 2005). Due to the reputation of the countries as top world manufacturers and exporters, products bearing 'made in Germany', 'made in Switzerland' or 'made in Japan' labels are commonly regarded as high quality (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). The question is, how do products bearing 'made in Ghana' labels regarded? The objective of the process and method of measuring nation degree of success is the increase in brand equity which is the extra benefit enjoyed by the consumer (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). When considering a multidimensional view of nation as brand, the central organizing concept is 'country equity' or the value that may be embedded in perceptions by various target markets about the country (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). These views even make it more imperative for Ghana to consciously undertake proactive branding programmes to attract foreign investors and to promote export efforts with the aim of creating nation brand equity.

In order to create viable brand equity, it is essential to identify the various associations customers have with the brand as well as perceived quality, customer awareness and the level of loyalty in a way that is different from competitors (Atilgan, Aksoy & Akinci, 2005). Just like other intangible assets, the equity level of a brand is being able to offer the qualities that are essential for the creation of a sustainable advantage compared to competitors in the market. Delgado-Ballaster and Munuera-Aleman (2005) indicate that brand equity adds value for the nations' citizens while at the same time offering a strong

competitive advantage. Myers (2003) posits that the conceptualization of how consumers view brand equity should be seen from two main perspectives:

(1) Consumer perceptions (brand description such as associations, awareness and perceived quality); and (2) Consumer behaviours (brand strength such as brand loyalty and willingness to pay premium prices). Na and Marshall (2005) indicate that, brand strength is actions by customers, while brand values are the benefits that are achieved when the firm is able to leverage its brand strength (brand loyalty) to achieve higher profits, both at present and in the future (Lassar, Mittal & Sharma, 1995). Although brand strength, brand description, brand value and brand image have been used interchangeably to indicate brand equity, Wood (2000) explains that these terminologies, although perhaps related, are significantly different from each other. He justifies this by explaining that brand value, which is quantitative, is a function of brand strength, which in turn is a function of brand description. Hence, based on the existing literature, it is found that brand equity is made up of the dimensions of perceived quality, brand associations, brand loyalty and brand awareness and other proprietary assets (Keller, 2003; Atilgan et al., 2005).

However, it is imperative to look at the description of Africa in the extant literature that has been affecting her brand equity and inhibiting the continent's marketing potentials in the world. The main complication is the fact that Ghana cannot be alienated from the adverse image of 'brand' Africa. These descriptions of African continent in extant literature (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011; Letiche, 2010; Maiello, 2009; Kuyvenhoven, 2008) include;

Poverty

The state of poverty in Ghana and Africa in general has been described as distracted (Maiello, 2009). Ghana has been on International Monetary Fund (IMF) report on countries that are considered poor and qualify for poverty reduction assistance, despite the fact that Ghana is endowed with natural resources. This supports the claim that sub-Saharan Africa(SSA) is the poorest and worst performing region, even amongst the developing world(Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011; Letiche,2010). Likewise, it is out in the open that more than 48 per cent of people in SSA live on less than \$1 a day (Luiz, 2006). In other words, SSA has the highest rate of poverty in the world (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011), and according to Collier (2007), it is the only region in the world where poverty has actually increased over the past three decades. Therefore, Ghana and Africa as a whole are perceived as not capable of liberating themselves from this scourge.

Food insecurity (hunger)

Kuyvenhoven (2008) posits that about 40 per cent of all Africans go hungry, and African countries, which were self-sufficient at the time of their independence, now have to rely on imports to supplement food supply. Given the value of branding, the impact of this line of argument about Africa is expected to be very weighty in relation to foreign direct investment or other forms of international dealings in the country.

Corruption

The level of crime and corruption in Africa has also featured prominently in nation branding literature (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011; Adora, 2010; Fofack, 2009). Transparency International, which was founded in 1993, is currently one of the best sources of information on the level of corruption in a country or region. Ghana is ranked 63rd

perceived corrupt country out of 177 countries worldwide and the 6th corrupt in Africa with a score of 46 points out of possible 100 for the title of the cleanest country according to Transparency International (2013). It has consistently labeled Africa as the most corrupt region in the world year after year (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011; Fofack, 2009). Fofack reiterates that corruption permeates the entire spectrum of societies in Africa, as about 40 per cent of the wealth of Africa, which is considered as the poorest region is held outside the continent. Consequently, it is perceived that holding a public office such as ministerial appointment, chief executive of public institution, board member or being the president is a road to accumulation of private wealth. Richards and Nwankwo (2005) highlight that the level of corruption has been described as pervasive and blamed for the failure of most of the initiatives and institutions to achieve market reform, economic development, poverty alleviation and inflow of foreign direct investment. Corruption and capital flight is believed to be the norm rather than the exception in most countries in SSA (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011; Adora, 2010; Emerson, 2009), and this has eroded the public trust and responsibility in Ghana and Africa as a whole. Such perception could be detrimental for foreign direct investment prospect in country, as investors would be concerned about how their resources would be managed to achieve efficiency. Consequently, the negative impact of this on brand equity of Ghana can be far reaching.

Underdevelopment

Most countries in Africa are presently perceived as underdeveloped and lagging behind in most of the development indicators. This perception according to (Njor, 2009) is believed to emanate from the colonial period, when Africans were perceived, as “not only racially inferior but were sub-human and dispensable”. Emerson, (2009) also

reiterate the claim that Africa was considered as the dark continent and this view has worsened the economic woes of Africa since investors would not invest in such perceived dark continent. It is believed that Africa is the only area where the percentage of GDP from industry has not been increasing (UNCTAD, 2009). Sub-Saharan Africa has been noted to be the only region where food production, per capita income and industrialized production have either stagnated or even declined, in spite of efforts by governments, NGOs and other donors (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011; Ahmed & Cleeve, 2004). Kuyvenhoven (2008) summarizes brand Africa, as it is generally perceived by stating that the continent in many circles has an image of doom and failure. This indeed appears striking and as a result, the need for Ghana to brand herself cannot be trivialized.

Africa has, over the years been linked with themes such as a place to avoid (Osei & Gbadamosi, 2011; Sonmez & Graefe, 1998), a risky continent (Lepp, 2008) and a wild jungle (Brown, 2000). The continent also has the negative brand equity of political and social instability, war, terrorism, currency instability, poor governance and primitiveness (Lepp, Gibson, & Lane, 2010). Invariably, if considered closely; these appellations could potentially have effects in how the continent is perceived in terms of investment destinations. In fact, it is further argued that no single country in Africa is differentiated from the negative associations here (Lepp et al. 2010) and this has created a competitive disadvantage for the entire continent.

2.7 Country Brand Perception

There should be a diagnosis period before countries start developing a strategy aimed at nation branding, where the country identifies the target market to find out how it is perceived (Herstein & Jaffe, 2008). Pappu and Quester (2010) refer to this as measurement of country brand equity. They believe that a country's brand equity may be

transferrable to products and brands from that country. This view is echoed in some research that focuses on the effects of country of origin on purchasing and consumption behaviour (Josiassen & Assaf, 2010; Pappu & Quester, 2010; Fetscherin, 2010). This might explain why inward FDI in Africa has not been as much as it could have been (Bezuidenhout, 2009), as some companies might decide not to invest in a country if they anticipate acquiring negative brand equity. It will be neither expensive nor difficult to do this because there are various publications in newspapers, journals, books and on the internet about how Africa is perceived. A practical guide that could enable each African country including Ghana to measure their customers' perception about the country's governance, investment and immigration, culture and heritage and the human capital will be Anholt's (2007) Nation Brand Hexagon. However, if such perception is inaccurate, the onus is on the country to correct the perceptual bias. An example in the literature is the case of Thailand accepting its negative association with sex tourism and taking measures to correct such image (Nuttavuthisit, 2007). The nature of the image created in the consumers' mind helps brand owners in their strategy development. In the case of Thailand, emphasis was laid on both penal and preventive measures enforced by both governmental and non-governmental organizations to correct the negative image.

2.8 The Conceptual Framework

This study adapts Anholt's (2007) Nation Brand Hexagon (NBH) model, Dinnie (2008) asset based brand equity model and Lassar et al (1995) customer based brand equity as a pre-study conceptual framework for its analysis. Anholt's Nation Brand Hexagon Model is fundamental for developing strategic nation branding campaign. The NBH model measures the power and appeal of a nation's brand image, and tells how people around the world perceive the character of that brand. This information could be useful because

it helps to find out where the nation's image is in people's mind, and serves to evaluate if its image is consistent to the projected image and if there is a gap between the projected image and the actual experience. The dimensions that make up the Nation Brand Hexagon (NBH) are tourism, culture, exports, immigration and investment, people, and governance (policy).

Exports: This is what marketers call the country of origin effect knowing it, and whether a country has particular strengths in science and technology, and has creative energy.

Governance: This aspect incorporates perceived competency and honesty of government, respects of citizens, rights and fair treatment as well as global behaviour in the areas of international peace and security and environmental protection.

Culture: Cultural aspects measure its contemporary cultural products from music, films, art and literature as well as showing the past culture, the root of today culture, while promoting the nation.

People: attitudinal properties are measured by whether respondents would feel welcome when visiting the country. There would be a dissonance when tourist and foreign investors find out that there is a gap between reality and the projected image. Thus, every party in a nation, both public and private sectors, has to participate and support internal buy-in, because each population is a delegate of nation-brand.

Tourism: The countries tourism appeal is rated in three major areas natural beauty, historic buildings, monuments, and vibrant city of life and urban attractions. Tourism is principal part in describe the core of a nation and it is key component of nation-brand equity. Country with poor economic stride, tourism can bring the uniqueness of the country and give the value to the nation.

Immigration and investment: country's power to attract talent and capital is measured not only by whether people would consider studying, working and living in that country

by equal opportunity and ultimately the perception that it is a place with a high quality of life..

Brand strength consists of the associations held by consumers. On the other hand, brand values are the gains that accrue when brand strength is leverage to obtain superior current and future value.

Brand Equity

Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as the set of assets and liabilities connected to a brand that add to or detract from its value to the customer and to the business. In other words, equity is the power of the brand because the added value, either functional or emotional, has positive influence on raising the purchase power from the customer, which directly leads to the higher sales volume to the firm (Per Åsberg, 2011). Creating a brand equity profile involves the identification of the various customer associations with a brand, and levels of customer awareness and loyalty that set it apart from competitors.

Countries should understand that the strong brand equity comprises of high level of brand awareness and positive brand image and reputation, which are determined in the minds of consumers (Dinnie, 2008). For example, in order to visit a tourist attraction site, people must have heard of the brand (brand awareness) to gain the perceived reliability, and they also have to like the corporate image (brand image). On the other hand, customer based brand equity by Lassar et al (1995) is categorized into two components. These are the brand strength, and the brand values.

Na and Marshall (2005) indicate that, brand strength is actions by customers, while brand values are the benefits that are achieved when countries are able to leverage its brand strength (brand loyalty) to achieve higher profits, both at present and in the future (Lassar, Mittal & Sharma, 1995). Although brand strength, brand description, brand

value and brand image have been used interchangeably to indicate brand equity, Wood (2000) explains that these terminologies, although perhaps related, are significantly different from each other. He justifies this by explaining that brand value, which is quantitative, is a function of brand strength, which in turn is a function of brand description. Hence, based on the existing literature, it is found that brand equity is made up of the dimensions of perceived quality, brand associations, brand loyalty and brand awareness and other proprietary assets (Keller, 2003; Atilgan et al., 2005).

Based on stakeholders' attitudes and behaviours, reputation ultimately represents the output of nation branding by embracing those stakeholders' perceptions that are relevant to the nation image (Martensen & Grønholdt, 2005).

These views make it more imperative for Ghana to consciously undertake proactive branding programmes to be able to realize the full benefits associated with nation branding.

The Benefits of Nation Branding

During the last century or so, much of the wealth of the rich countries has been generated through marketing (Anholt, 2002). This is evidenced by the ability to add attraction to exported brands through country of origin or brand effects, the increasing sophisticated techniques of marketing the country itself as a tourist brand, and the marketing skills, which attract the best talent and largest foreign investment (Anholt, 2002). Further evidence is provided by the acts of marketing coordination, which ensures that consistent and attractive messages about the country in general are communicated to the rest of the world through acts of diplomacy, sports and cultural activities. These skills should now be transferred to poorer countries, thus helping them to graduate from being mere suppliers of low-margin unbranded commodities to brand owners and branded destinations in their own right. Therefore, there is now a convincing case for nation

branding strategy to direct, or at least embrace the full range of political, economic, cultural and social development.

The aim of nation branding is to achieve sustainability of the competitiveness of nations. To achieve the sustenance of competitiveness, nation branding needs a substantial and holistic approach to creating competitive advantage and to sustaining a nation's development growth. However, as Pant (2005) argued, it is important to transform the 'quality of context' into competitive advantage in international business. Moreover, to sustain the competitiveness of nations, the notion of competitiveness needs to emphasize the notion of nation brand equity. By nation branding, countries are able to create national systems and positions as the reliable and eligible members of the international community (Szondi, 2007).

Countries compete daily with neighbours, economic blocks for tourism, investment and export products. Consequently, countries that start with unknown or poor reputation will be limited or marginalized and they cannot feature in the minds of global audience to boost their commercial successes (Brymer, 2003). Functioning states in West Africa have even more compelling reason to adopt branding, for West Africa has well documented negative image such as for failing states, political instability, civil or factional wars, poverty and disease-stricken and "serious" frauds (419) (Wanjiru, 2006). West Africa also continuously boasts of the most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International, 2013). It therefore prudent for government to do everything possible to ensure consistency of behaviour in every area of branding nation.

Olin (2002) notes that, countries that have thought most about branding must have been those with some kind of traditional position, influence and reputation, which they seek to

change or improve. Ghana must be one such country. For due to Ghana's past history of instability and revolutions, current negative image of the sub region as well as the now relative successes at democracy in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Benin, the truth must begin to be told through country branding and a coherent communication strategy. Porter's (2011), *Competitive Advantage of Nations* stresses that there is no other way for a country to prosper than by considering itself as a competitor in a single market place. It makes sense therefore, to articulate that anything that does not fall under the remit of the brand is a weak link in the strategic chain and can undermine the efforts and investments made in other sectors (Anholt, 2003).

Country branding calls for consistent behaviour. Country branding can actually encourage more moderate and benign foreign policy, because it focuses the minds of political leaders on the real importance of their international reputation. Similarly, making ordinary citizens feel important in shaping and realizing the international aspirations of the country may help to create a strong sense of national identity and promote social inclusion (Anholt, 2003). The entire country can be united in an objective examination of its strengths and weaknesses through an open and public process of focus and improvement inherent in internal country branding programmes. In principle, the country's citizens stand to gain from successful nation branding.

Frost (2004) argues that just as successful corporate branding can raise the morale, team spirit and sense of purpose of a company's employees so can successful nation branding programmes provide a country with common sense of purpose and national pride, not to mention improvements in quality of life. Indeed, successful country branding must begin from inside, getting country brand supporting behaviour from the citizens before communicating to the outside world. Frost (2004) reiterate that because of the

complexity and multiple dimensions of country brands, country brands serve as an umbrella brand for the branded services or products from that country. Once an umbrella concept that is unitary and coherent is established, individual brands can go cheery within it, without the peril of inconsistent messaging (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). This means that the national brand has to develop consistent and relevant values and symbols so that it can support spin-offs.

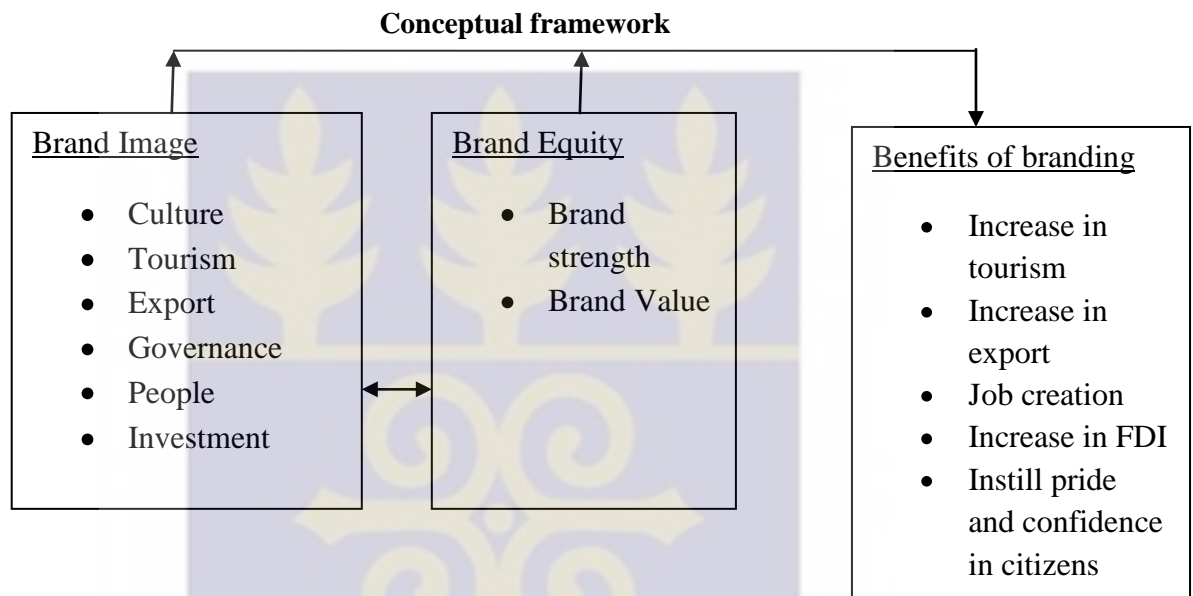


Figure 2.1 Source: [Adapted: (Dinnie, 2008; Anholt, 2007 & Lassar et al. 1995)]



CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide contextual background information of the study. The chapter provides information on the background of Ghana, the political and economic history of Ghana, branding Ghana, re-branding Ghana, and the overview of the Brand Ghana Initiative

3.1 Background of Ghana

The word Ghana was derived from the ancient Ghana Empire, which literally means "Warrior King" (Jackson, 2001). It has often been referred to as an "island of peace" in one of the most chaotic regions on earth (Ghana web, n.d.). The country's economy is dominated by agriculture, which employs about 60 % of the working population. Ghana is one of the leading exporters of cocoa in the world. It is also a significant exporter of commodities such as gold and lumber. The topography of the country is divided into the Savanna belt, the forest zone and the Coastal areas. A country covering an area of 238,500 square kilometers that is roughly 92,000 square miles. Ghana has an estimated population of 24,658,823 22 million, drawn from more than one hundred ethnic groups, each with its own unique language. English, however, is the official language, a legacy of British colonial rule (Ghana web, n.d.). Ghana is usually known as "Gold Coast" due to large gold deposits in the southern parts of the country. The Portuguese were the first to arrive in the Gold Coast and they built a castle at Elmina. After that, the British took control of the gold coast. Ghana practices the constitutional democracy type of government, and the legal system is based on the English common law and customary law. Administratively, the country is divided into ten (10) regions namely; Ashanti,

Brong-Ahafo, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Volta and Western. Finally, Ghana became a full independent republic in 1960 (Profile of Ghana).

3.1.1 Location

Ghana is located on the southern coast of the West African bulge and is bordered to the east by Togo, to the west by the Ivory Coast, to the south by the Atlantic Ocean and to the north and northwest by Burkina Faso (Hawthorne, 1990).

3.1.2 Land

Ghana has a total land area of 238,537 km² (92,000 sq. miles) stretching 672 km north to south and 357 km east to west. Its physical size makes it about the same size as Great Britain. Out of a total land area of 23 million hectares, 13 million hectares (57%) is suitable for agricultural production, and 5.3 million hectares (39%) of this is under cultivation (Profile of Ghana).

3.1.3 Climate

Ghana has a tropical climate. The temperature is generally between 21-32°C (70-90°F). There are two rainy seasons, from March to July and from September to October, separated by a short cool dry season in August and a relatively long dry season in the south from mid-October to March. The north, also with tropical climate, is dry and falls partly within the Sahelian zone. Annual rainfall in the south averages 2,030 mm, but varies greatly throughout the country, with the heaviest rainfall in the southwestern part (Profile of Ghana).

3.1.4 Topography

Ghana is not a mountainous country, but has some highlands and some steep escarpments in the middle portions and isolated places in the northern parts. The land is relatively flat and the altitude is generally below 500m, with more than half of the country below 200m. The Volta River basin dominates the country's river system and includes the 8,480km Lake Volta (the largest artificial lake in the world), formed behind the Akosombo hydroelectric dam. The coastal area consists of plains and numerous lagoons near the estuaries of rivers (Profile of Ghana).

3.1.5 Vegetation

In terms of vegetation, the north is predominantly savannah and the middle section (extending to the southwestern part) is typical rainforest, while the coastal section has thicket interspersed with savannah (Ghana, 2012).

3.1.6 Resources

Rich mineral resources such as gold, diamonds, manganese, limestone, bauxite, iron ore as well as various clays and granite deposits. In 2008, Ghana produced 2,994,610 ounces of gold and 599,007 carats of diamond. Ghana is the second largest producer of gold in Africa (Ghana, 2012). Extensive forests, which are arguably the best managed in West Africa (with 252 permanent forest reserves in the rain forest zone alone. In total about 11% of Ghana is defined as forest.). Ghana is the second largest producer of cocoa in the world. It is also the third largest producer of timber and the second largest exporter of wood and wood products in Africa; Rich marine fishing resources (tuna and game fishing); Beautiful landscape, inviting sunshine, pristine beaches, exotic wildlife and exciting national parks and game reserves.

3.2 Economic Performance

According to IFAD (2010), Ghana has a track record as one of the strong performers in the area of economic growth in the Sub-Saharan Africa and Africa as a whole. In the mid-1980s, Ghana has embarked on economic reforms, which have resulted in a shift from economic recovery to growth. In 1990s the real GDP grew at an average of 4.8% and accelerated to 6% from 2003 to 2008 (CEPA, 2009; Mhango, 2010; IFAD, 2010). In both periods, GDP grew at a faster rate than population leading to a GDP growth of 3.7% between 2003 and 2008 compared to 2.2% in the 1990s (IFAD, 2010). While public policies have fostered growths, they have not put under strict control other macroeconomic aggregates, such as inflation that has remained in the two digits, 15.4% on average from 2003 to 2008, down from an annual average of 23.2% in the 1990s. In 2007, trade deficit stood at a record of 3.9 billion. In 2008 a highly expansionary fiscal policy connected with the presidential elections generated a deficit of 14.5% of the GDP which destabilized the economy, raising the inflation and causing a major depreciation (-50%) of the national currency, the cedi, against the US\$ (Ibid, 2010).

Ghana's economic growth was estimated to have slowed to 4.7% in 2009, which is slightly higher than our 4.5% projection, from 7.3% in 2008. It was argued that the decline in economic activity in 2009 was because of subdued growth in the non-agricultural sectors, which is contrary to their performance in recent years. However, positive growth in economic activity resumed in the third quarter when the central bank's composite index of economic activity (CIEA) increased by 2.3% and strengthened in the last quarter when the index rose by 9.9%. The recovery was led by a pickup in construction activity and port harbour activity, an improvement in the industrial consumption of electricity, an increase in demand for imports and a rise in tourist arrivals

(Mhango, 2010). ISSER (2012) reports that Ghana recorded a high GDP growth of 14.4% in 2011. However, in 2013 GDP growth actually declined to 4.4% from 7.9% in 2012 (Ibid, 2012).

3.3 Branding Ghana

This section attempts to dimension the path travelled so far by Ghana in its branding prospect. Branding Ghana has long existed since the 1957's, although implicitly when the country's first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah talked about the birth of the 'New African' the night the country gained independence from Britain (Mensah, 2011). The then Brand Ghana concept was manifested in projects such as the giant Akosombo dam unparalleled in Africa, the proposition of a nuclear energy project and many other ambitious infrastructural projects enshrined in the seven year development plan to ensure Ghana's economic take off were part of the New African brand Nkrumah passionately advanced (Ibid, 2011). It could therefore be argued that brand Ghana and its image thereof at the time of Nkrumah, was associated with the dimensions such as those noted by Kotler and Gertner (2002): ambition, value, performance, and identity.

Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), (2009) has branded Ghana with 'culture, warmth and much more'. This is perhaps to promote the country's rich and diverse culture, how friendly the people are and the "abundance of sun", to follow the proposition sequentially. The 'much more' included in the proposition is however lost in translation one cannot determine what it means.

Much as culture, warmth and the 'much more' could be important attributes for tourism promotion, they are however, the very stereotypes the world has for the entire African continent (Mensah, 2011). These associations are therefore less competitive, and too

generic to be used as bases for branding Ghana, going by Kotler and Gertner's (2002) caution.

In September 2009, the Brand Ghana office was established by the late President Mills with the objectives of stimulating economic, social, and psychological wellbeing for all Ghanaians. Brand Ghana Office is working to make sure that the people of Ghana have a good, clear, believable and positive idea of what their country really is, what it stands for and where it is going, and manage to coordinate actions, investments, policies and communications of all major channels of national expressions so that they demonstrate and reinforce what the nation stands for. However, if they manage to do this effectively then Ghana will stand a better possibility of building and managing a competitive national identity, to the lasting benefit of exporters, importers, government, tourism, international relations and ordinary people of the nation (Akotia, 2010; Shahid, Shafique & Shokat, 2012). Ghana however lacks a clear definition of the image it seeks to create for itself. Whiles many call the country the "*Black Star of Africa*" others refer to her as the "*Gateway to West Africa*" and to others Ghana is for the "*culture, warmth and much more*" (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2009). Which is which?

3.4 Ghana branding – a peep through the window

The Ghana branding project was modeled after the South Africa "*It's Possible*" in the 1990s coming after the collapse of the country's apartheid regime. This section attempts to take glance at how countries like South Africa, Singapore and U.S.A branded their respective countries.

South Africa

The account of the 'rainbow' country cannot be detached from its apartheid history. Once a pariah state, Republic of South Africa has been able to shake off the dust and assume a place as one of the global big emerging markets alongside China, Brazil and India (Ntamu, 2011). Its branding strategy is inward looking containing internal issues around security, internal buy-in, infrastructure provision, enforcement of contracts, maintaining rule of law, creating conducive space for private sector development whilst continuously assessing its Gini coefficient even as it manages seemingly discriminatory policies such as the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and emphasizes market driven systems (Ntamu, 2011). During 2010, it successfully hosted the FIFA World Soccer tournament to the amazement of most cynics. Some key South African brands such as Shoprite, Sasol, Game and Nandos are fast penetrating regional markets across Africa and Latin America. Its notable icons include Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Lucas Radebe, have gained global recognition, some Noble Laureate. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange's rules of engagement are quite clear and continually builds investors confidence by checking insider trading and related abuses (Ibid, 2011). Its emphasis on research, knowledge and institutional learning significantly accounted for status of some of its universities such as Wits (within the top 80 global universities) in global rankings.

Singapore

Singapore is a textbook case of a country getting it right in spite of its seeming disadvantaged limitations of location (in the midst of much bigger countries). Singapore's magic ingredient was in its uncommon advantage of having a focused and experienced leadership represented by Senior Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. The tiny

former British colonial trading post of a relatively tiny population was able to walk away from the league of third world markets priding itself today in the words of Lee (2001) as one with the “best world’s airlines, best airports and also the world’s fourth highest per capita real income”. This feat was achieved through concerted efforts, sacrifice, dogged determination, policy consistency and commitment on the part of its founding fathers through a space of only thirty years during 1965 to 2000.

The leadership first understood the need for re-orienting its people at independence in 1965 on personal hygiene, premium for western education, common respect and dignity of labour. This was followed with its careful commitment to infrastructure development, free market and enforcing suitable laws to support the development of trade and continuous premium for human capital development (Ntamu, 2011). Today, Singapore have less to say, little or no budgetary provisions on branding efforts but enjoys so much positive perception as not only an orderly society, but one of the identified popular destinations for tourism and investment in the world.

United States of America (U.S.A)

The “*God’s own country*” as widely described has been able to build and sustain strong reputation for itself during the last six decades. The United States of America is a classic example in nation building, knitting together its fabrics of many colors into a fanciful country with unarguably the strongest global economy from the point of size and Gross Domestic

Product Purchasing Power (Ntamu, 2011). Although the country has been viewed differently by different people, the fact that it is able to effectively manage its diversities, contain internal challenges while at the same time engaging and shaping the balance of

power globally cannot be contested. It could be argued that the country's branding strategy dwells more on internally promoting free market system with the outcome of dominant global brands such as MacDonald, Coca Cola, General Motors, Cable News Network, Hollywood and Chevron (Ntamu, 2011).

Although seen by some as a domineering role, noisy and materialistic, America has sacrificed substantially in terms of men, time and money in the fight against terrorism and installing good governance across the world. America's weak perception in particularly the Muslim world, comes with a history as it touches on the Middle East and the Israel debacle with the thoughts that the United Nations and NATO seen as the hand and voice of the United States (Ibid, 2011).

3.6 The Overview Brand Ghana office

Over the years there have not been such a conscious effort to brand and market Ghana as preferred destination for tourism, leisure and business until September 2009 were the Brand Ghana office was established by the late President Mills with the objectives of stimulating economy, social, and psychological wellbeing for all Ghanaians. Moreover, the Brand Ghana's office goal was to change the current branding of Ghana, which was an unconsciously branding through the people of Ghana. Among several reasons that necessitated the creation of the Brand Ghana office was the fact that Ghana is not adequately differentiated from the negative image of "Brand" Africa. Hence, the Brand office goal is to change the perception that exists in the minds of the consumer of the nation's tangible and intangible products and to develop a compelling image for the nation. This is done through conscious and proactive management of values and communications of all diverse expressions of the country by working together with

various stakeholders and consultants to ensure that the nation's branding strategy directs Ghana's acts and policies properly.

3.6.1 Governance and structure of Brand Ghana office initiative

The governance and structure of Brand office Ghana shall comprise the President being the Chief Patron and not more than eleven (11) member Brand Council appointed by the President in consultation with the Council of State for a two-year term. The following shall also be part of the governance of 'Brand Ghana':

- Two members shall be Cabinet Ministers, to represent Brand Ghana Office (BGO) to Cabinet
- CEO of Brand Ghana is an automatic Council member
- Members must be distinguished persons with high moral standing and relevant professional track record
- Project Advisory Teams when required
- Professional Management and Organization
- CEO appointed by the President
- The Brand Council (Brand Ghana) makes provision for admission of Brand Patrons/Ambassadors.

3.6.2 The Strategic Imperative for Brand Ghana

The Strategic Imperative define what really Ghana is, what really Ghana stands for and the building blocks Ghana should excel in order to achieve our unique vision (Brand Ghana).

Brand Ghana Vision is to be a truly democratic, stable and prosperous nation with vibrant and healthy people founded on the ideals of freedom and justice.

The Branding office goals are divided into two namely, national goals, and international equity goals.

The Nationhood Goals

This look at establishing social cohesion, building national unity, pride and patriotism, and again to instill the Development and Patronage of Brands of Ghana Origin or Made in Ghana Products (Brand Ghana.).

International Equity Goals

The ‘Brand Ghana’ International goal is to Positioning Ghana to enhance or Increase Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Export of Brands of Ghana & Products of Ghana Origin, Tourism, Major Global Events, Attraction of Skills, International Credit Rating, Currency Stability, Country Reputation, and Country Global Competitiveness (Brand Ghana).



3.6.3 Strategic Framework of Brand Ghana

The strategic framework defines how Brand Ghana as an institution is getting its mandate materialized. This is done through:

- Crafting and seamless implementation of a Focused and Differentiated Brand Platform and Plans
- Connecting with Stakeholders To Deliver Mandates
- Purposefully Shaping and Mobilizing Citizenship
- Building Strong Brands of Ghana Origin
- Building a Winning Organization.

Brand Ghana Office is working to make sure that the people of Ghana have a good, clear, believable and positive idea of what their country really is, what it stands for and where it is going, and manage to coordinate actions, investments, policies and communications of all main channels of national expressions so that they demonstrate and reinforce what the nation stands for. If they manage to do this effectively then Ghana will stand a better possibility of building and managing a competitive national identity, to the lasting benefit of exporters, importers, government, tourism, international relations and ordinary people of the nation.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter of the study outlines the methodology adopted by the researcher towards finding answers to the research questions in order to realize the research objectives. It outlines the research paradigm, the design of the study, the targeted population, the sample size used, data sources and the instruments used to collect them, the management of data, challenges and limitations encountered on the field as well as the ethical considerations.

4.1 Research Paradigm

All academic research is known to be based on philosophical perspective (Jonker & Pennink, 2010; Christensen, Carter, Rummukainen & Amanatidis, 2007; Procter, 2005). A research paradigm is a perspective about research held by a community of researchers that is based on a set of shared assumptions, concepts, values, and practices (Christensen et al, 2007). Jonker and Pennink (2010) posit that a research paradigm is a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher. Procter (2005) argues that academic research can be categorized into two extreme dimensions of philosophical positions namely the positivism and the phenomenology. It is imperative to mention that various authors, the ideas they express remain firm, have described the labels of philosophical positions differently. Authors like Malhotra and Birks (2007) titled their philosophical positions as interpretivism and social constructivism instead of positivism and phenomenology as used by Proctor (2005), whilst Holden and Lynch (2004) labeled them as objectivism and subjectivism.

The positivism approach to research according to Proctor (2005) posits that the social world exist as an external environment structure where definite structures affect people in similar ways and vice-versa, hence its properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than subjective.

However, phenomenological viewpoint of research also known as social constructivism or interpretivism focuses on subjective views rather than objective. With this philosophy, researchers believe that, access to reality is socially constructed through the meanings that people attach to them and are aimed at producing an understanding of the context of the information system and the process whereby the information system influences and is influenced by the context (Easterby-Smith, Lyles, & Tsang, 2008). The interpretivist see themselves as part of the phenomenon being studied and are therefore able to develop their ideas through the use of multiple data gathering methods such as the use of interviews, focus group discussions, and observations to investigate their samples (Proctor, 2005). The study therefore adopted the phenomenological (interpretive) worldview of research to analyze the topic under study.

4.2 Research approach

The two main approaches to research according to some scholars (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). These approaches are qualitative and quantitative (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). Bell and Bryman (2007) stress that; qualitative research is inductive while quantitative is deductive in their observation on the relationship between research and theory. Each approach is considerably different in the way data are gathered and analyzed. Both approaches are widely used in conducting research.

4.2.1 Qualitative Versus Quantitative Approach

A quantitative research approach relies on quantification and statistics in its data collection and analysis whilst qualitative research approach relies on words or non-numerical data and descriptive in its data collection and analysis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Qualitative research approach is said to be subjective while quantitative approach is described as objective and emphasize that, qualitative research aims at exploring, making meanings of a situation, what drives an action by way of purpose and its reality (Saunders, Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill).

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2011), and Harwell (2011) explain that the quantitative study consists of standardized variables which describe people's experiences or opinions that are given numbers through usage of response alternatives that are determined beforehand. Christensen et al., (2007) explain that the quantitative information is collected through surveys, interviews and archive material, which is often presented in the form of tables, diagrams and graphs.

For the purpose of this research, the qualitative approach is used. In terms of justification, Coll and Chapman (2000) argue that research approach should be based on the purpose or objective of the study rather than commitment to a particular paradigm. Hence, for the purpose and objectives of this study qualitative approach was employed to explore and analyses the current image perception of Ghana and the relevance of nation branding. Again, majority of the literature on nation branding employed qualitative approach. For instance, the following studies employed qualitative approaches: Yousaf and Huaibin (2014); Mitza and Oni (2013) Rojas-Mendez et al., (2013); Huang and Hsieh (2011); and Wanjiru (2006).

4.2.2 Deductive Versus Inductive

Researchers approach the building and testing of theory from two directions namely inductive and deductive (Neural, 2006). According to Gray (2013) the deductive approach moves towards hypothesis testing, after which the principle is confirmed, refuted or modified. In the case of the deductive approach, hypotheses present an assertion about two or more concepts that attempt to explain the relationship between them. Concepts themselves are abstract ideas that form the building blocks of hypotheses and theories. The deductive approach normally starts from a general assertion to more specific. Sometimes researchers try to examine theories that are more related to a topic of interest and then narrow the theories down to specific research questions or hypotheses that can be tested (Saunders et al., 2009). To Saunders et al. (2009) and Gray (2013) researchers use various forms of methods to answer questions or confirm hypotheses, in quantitative ways in order to be able to generalize the findings.

In contrast, the inductive approach moves from specific observations to broader generalization and theories (Saunders et al., 2009). Gray (2013) argues that the inductive approach plans are made for data collections, after which the data are analyzed to see if any patterns emerge that suggest relationships between variables. From these observations, it may be possible to construct generalizations, relationships and even theories. Saunders et al. (2009) stressed that a small sample size is appropriate for the inductive approach. Gray (2013) argues that induction is based on multiple cases or observations just to ensure a degree of reliability. It can be argued that the inductive approach does not set out to corroborate or falsify a theory but through a process of gathering data, it attempts to establish patterns, consistencies and meanings (Gray, 2013). The study therefore adopts the inductive approach.

4.3 Source of data

Yin (2009) posits that there are two main sources of data, primary data and secondary data. Primary data is said to be originated by the researcher for the specific purpose of addressing the research problem (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). It is what the researcher collects on his/her own based on the research purpose and questions through observation, interviews or questionnaires from the sample or target population. Secondary data on the other hand are collected for some purpose other than the problem at hand (Malhotra & Birks 2007). Secondary data has to do with data that are collected from secondary source such as publications, personal records, and census among others that have already been collected by other researchers for another purpose.

Data for this study is from primary source through an in-depth interview with officials of the brand Ghana office, and Ghanaians. This is because the researcher wants to explore and get an in-depth understanding on the topic under study.

4.4 Study Population

Populations defined as any complete group of entities such as people, organizations, institutions, or the like that share some common set of characteristics in agreement with the purpose of the study under investigation and about which researchers want to be able to draw conclusions and plan to generalize (Malhotra, Pathak, Nath, Mukherjee & Shanker, 2011). However, the accessible population of this study consists of the personnel of the brand Ghana office and graduate students of University of Ghana Business School Marketing Department. The brand Ghana office was chosen because they are the official institution mandated by the state to develop a compelling image for branding the nation. The students are also chosen because of easy accessibility, knowledge in branding and marketing, and cooperative support.

4.5 Sample size

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research seeks to make a sense of, or interpret phenomena with respect to the meanings people bring. This study chose a sample size of twenty-six (26). Out of this number one official of brand Ghana office, namely the Chief executive officer was interviewed. Five focus group discussions made up of five members each were also conducted. The focus group was made up of graduate students from the Marketing Department of University Ghana Business School. The participant of the brand Ghana office was selected based on expertise in country branding. The graduate students in the marketing department were also selected based on their knowledge on issues concerning branding. This study considered that literature deems small samples to be acceptable and credible in qualitative research, more-so for research that samples elites for primary data collection on the condition that the small sample provides in-depth and rich data for the study, as was the case for this study and as is cited by: Merriam, (2009); Lee and Lings (2008); Crouch and McKenzie (2006); Murphy and Dingwall (2003); and Patton (2002)

4.6 Sampling Technique

A non-probability sampling technique was used for this study since the dominant aspect of non-probability sampling is that it provides researchers greater freedom and flexibility in selecting the individual population units than probability sampling (Tongco, 2007). Specifically, purposive sampling was considered appropriate for the study. This was because; the researcher had to ensure that only respondents with the requisite knowledge and information were included in the study. For instance, purposive sample were employed by Rojas-Mendez (2013), Huang and Hsieh (2011) and Wanjiru (2006).

4.7 Data Collection Instrument

The instruments used for data collection in this study were semi-structured interview guide and focus group discussion. The use of these two instruments was justified on the grounds that, it allowed for more flexibility in the sense that it gave room for follow up questions where necessary as well as changes to some questions which were later found to be irrelevant (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). It also gave room for interviewees to give other relevant information, which were not captured in the interview guide.

4.8 Data Gathering Procedure (Data Generation)

Before designing the interview guide, there was a thorough review of literature. Care was taken in designing the semi structured interview guide to ensure objectivity and consistency on the researcher's part, while ensuring a certain level of standardization of the research process and subjectivity on the participants' part. The participants were put into focus group comprising five members. All the responses during the interviews were audio recorded, save for one interview recorded manually at the request of the interviewee. All the interviewees also with the exception of one, requested anonymity and hence the interviewees were referred to as respondent 1 to respondent 5 (R1-R5). Transcripts were compiled for data analysis from the recordings of the audio interviews and the notes collected.

4.9 Data analysis

Concerning data analysis, the study employed qualitative content analysis to generate meaning from the raw data generated from the field. The interviews recorded were transcribed and categorized into themes to enable analysis and interpretation to be carried out. In line with best practice, the thematic categorization of the data was done to

reflect the research objectives (Namey, Guest, Thairu & Johnson, 2008). Qualitative content analysis according Guion, Diehl, and McDonald, (2011) aimed at interpreting volume of a text data by identifying the important themes and patterns through the researcher's careful examination and constant comparison. This technique was chosen as an analytical tool due to its ability to make reasonable inferences in interpreting the data (Guion et al., 2011). The qualitative content analysis technique was implemented through these three approaches; data description, data analysis and data interpretation. The first step was to develop thorough descriptions of the phenomenon under study. The description provides the 'context of action, the intentions of the actor, and the process in which action is embedded. However, the ultimate goal of analysis was not just to describe the data but to interpret, explain and understand the meanings attached to the phenomenon. The adoption of these three techniques in the analysis and the constant comparison with the literature helped to achieve the objectives of the study (Marks & Yardley, 2004).

To ensure the reliability of the study, the researcher: (1) Fully disclosed the research approach and epistemology of the study; (2) attempted to establish a relationship of trust with the interviewees and strove to understand their perspectives and experiences; (3) ensured the themes and interpretations from the data collected were grounded by linking them to excerpts from the interview text.

To ensure the internal validity of this study;

- The researcher did not attempt to generalize the findings of the study to different types of persons, settings and times.
- The study was conducted based on a clearly stated aim and research questions.

- The researcher obtained verbatim accounts in the language participants were comfortable in (English), from which literal statements and quotations from interviewees (primary data collection) and documents (secondary data collection) were extrapolated.
- Data was mechanically recorded (with the consent of the interviewees) using voice recording software on the interviewer's laptop.

To ensure the external validity of this study;

- The interview schedule as the data collection instrument went through rigorous research committee review process as part of the approved research proposal for this study.
- The researcher briefed interviewees on the purpose research as well as the working definition. This ensured the informed consent of all the participants in the study.

4.10 Data presentation

Data collected for this study were presented in the form of texts and where appropriate, verbatim quotations were given.

4.11 Ethical considerations

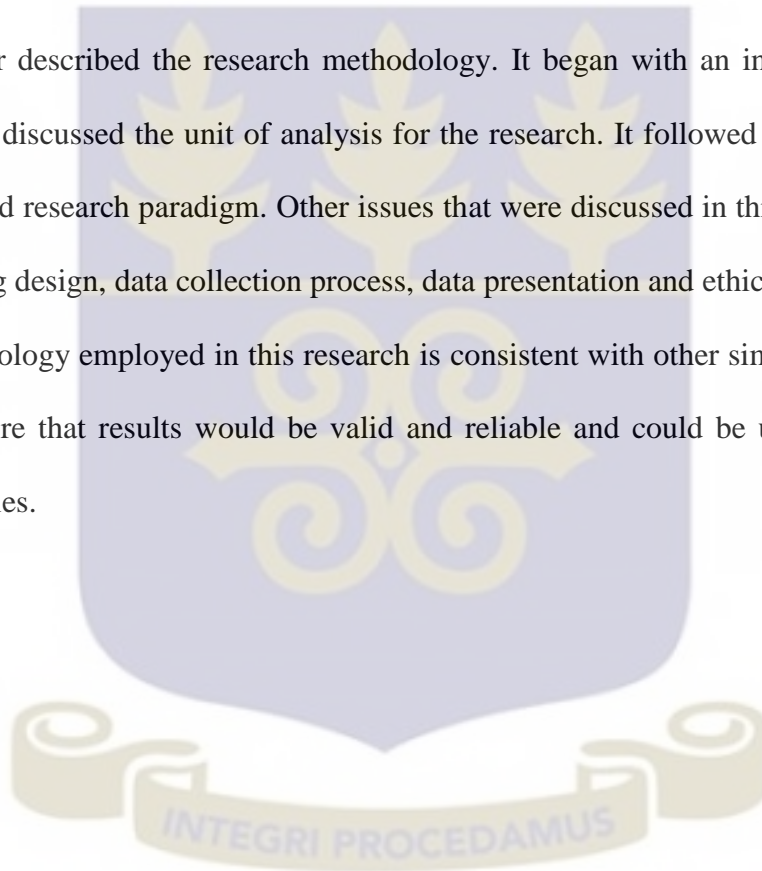
Ethical issues which were much considered in this study included anonymity, informed consent and confidentiality. Concerning anonymity, the researcher ensured that the interviewees remained anonymous as far as this study is concerned. The researcher achieved this by ensuring that, the names and identity of respondents did not appear in the study. Furthermore, informed consent was achieved in the sense that, the

interviewees were duly informed about the purpose of the study and could only participate in the study only if they were willing to do so.

Confidentiality is also a crucial ethical issue that is considered by the researcher. The respondents were assured that, every information that they provided were solely used for research purposes only.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter described the research methodology. It began with an introduction of the chapter and discussed the unit of analysis for the research. It followed with the research approach and research paradigm. Other issues that were discussed in this chapter include the sampling design, data collection process, data presentation and ethical considerations. The methodology employed in this research is consistent with other similar studies. This was to ensure that results would be valid and reliable and could be used as bases for similar studies.



CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter of the study presents the data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the outcomes from data collected in the subject area. First, profiles of the selected institution, responses to interview questions from participants were classified under each of the three research questions. The data collected was analyzed, then conclusions were drawn. All the participants' responses were analyzed on the bases of the central themes. These include exploring the current image of Ghana, examine the perception of Ghanaians on the status of Ghana's brand equity, and the benefits Ghana could derive from branding herself. Essentially, qualitative research was carried out in the form of focus group discussions, and In-depth interviews using an interview guide. In all cases, the participants were asked open-ended questions in line with the central themes.

5.1 Analysis

Brand Ghana Office (Profile of respondent)

The brands expert (BX) has been with the Brand Ghana office for the past four years. (BX) holds a master of Business Administration in Marketing (MBA) and a Chartered Marketer. (BX) has great experience in brands and advertising.

(a) Perception of Ghana's brand image by the Brand Ghana office

With respect to the perception of the current image of Ghana, the Brand Ghana office were of the view that Ghana's current brand image can be attributed to its rich cultural heritage, stable political environment, and tourist centers. For instance, in answering a question on what can Ghana be identified with in terms of its brand, one brand expert with initials (BX) pointed out that ... *"I think Ghana can be identified with its friendliness*

and hospitality.”He further reiterates that *“Ghana I think can be associated with tourism and culture”* (BX).

In line with a question on information about how Ghanaians response to brands from Ghana, (BX) explains that the Brand Ghana office does not have a database related to Ghanaian consumers within Ghanaian market, but there is some level of evidence that Ghanaians are beginning to buy into brands from Ghana as quoted *“I think the ‘Friday wear’ is a clear manifestation of some confidence in made-in-Ghana products.”*

The Brand Ghana office also ascertained that, *“largely I would say Ghana is perceived as being over dependent on the export of raw materials for foreign exchange”* (BX).

When it comes to the issue of the dimension of Ghana’s brand that could offer competitive advantage, (BX) posit that, *“tourism, governance and sports would offer competitive edge to Ghana”*.

Answering a question on how Ghana should be perceived by others, (BX) quoted by saying *“Ghanaians should be perceived as the friendliest people in Africa, and an ideal place for leisure and business”*.

On the issue of whether the current image of Ghana can attract investment into the country, (BX) expressed the view that, *“for Ghana to attract the desire investment into the country especially foreign direct investment (FDI), the current image has to be reshaped to reflect the positive perception of the nation”*.

(BX) further pointed out that, *“perception of corruption among government officials, high rate of inflation, current energy crises and the deplication of the cedi coupled with the negative image of ‘brand Africa’ make it difficult for Ghana to continue to attract FDI”*.

On the issue of the perceived strength of Ghana, (BX) pointed out that, *“peace and political stability of Ghana consistently distinguish the nation from other countries”*.

Furthermore, (BX) reiterated that, *“Ghana is endowed with mineral and agricultural potential as these could serve as possible advantage for Ghana”*.

On the issue of perceive weakness of Ghana, (BX) said, *“Ghana has been perceived as having rising rate of crime and that makes it insecure for tourism”*.

(BX) further quoted by saying *“I think high rate disease prevalence especially malaria in Ghana does not portray a good picture for Ghana’s tourism”*. BX further asserted that, *“too much perceived corruption, and poverty is affecting the country’s brand equity”*.

On how Ghana could promote its image to the outside world, the Brand Ghana office believes that the local and foreign media as well as the citizenry have a major role in shaping and promoting of the current image of Ghana. (BX) quoted *“I think the media would play a major role and the citizens as well in shaping and promoting the image of Ghana to the outside world”*.

The Brand Ghana office expressed the perception about what Ghana’s brand equity has been. For instance, (BX) is quoted as saying *“I think Ghana’s brand equity lies with its culture and traditions. He further reiterates, “Ghana’s brand equity is strengthening by its policy of rule of law and democracy.”*

When it comes to answering question on the benefits Ghana could derive from branding herself, (BX) emphases that Ghana stands to benefit tremendously from consciously branding herself. For instance, (BX) pointed out that, *“I believe branding the nation could lead to economic gains such as job creations, foreign direct investment, and attract more tourists into the country”*.

Based on the responses, the Brand Ghana office seeks to create brand image of Ghana that could serve as bedrock for promoting investments, exports, tourism, and superior

citizen value as well as positioning Ghana as welcoming oasis of hospitability, stability and opportunity.

(b) Perception of Ghana's brand image by Ghanaians

Majority (76%) of the respondents were of the view that though the country is endowed with huge natural and human resources, and Ghana has improved somewhat, Ghana has under-performed in several critical ways. For example, respondent 1 of focus group 1 (R1 of FG1) pointed out that, *"I think the rising level of poverty and growing corruption in government institutions has made the image of the country"*.

Respondent 2 of focus group 1 (R2 of FG1) reflected thus: *"Ghana today is a potentially prosperous nation, but full of corruption, nepotism and tribalism"*.

Respondent 3 of focus group 2 (R3 of FG2) also has this to say about the country's image: *"I think Ghana has not achieved much in terms of economic growth and there are no values that identify Ghanaians as a people"*.

A section of the respondents (44%) however, perceived Ghana to be heading towards the right direction, although slowly. Respondent 4 of focus group 3 (R4 of FG3) quoted as saying *"I think the fact that governments today can be changed through the ballot box and not through violence is a clear indication of the deepen democracy of the nation"*.

Significantly, (80%) respondents across all the focus groups believed that Ghana has a potential to be great, but it is grossly underperforming.

When it comes to the issue of brands from Ghana and their impact on Ghana's image, majority (60%) of the respondent believe that Ghana does not have any international brand. Respondent 5 of focus group 4 (R5 of FG4) indicated that, *"I think most if the brands we find in the Ghanaian market are imported products from China and other parts of the world"*.

Respondent 2 of focus group 5 (R2 of FG5) believe that, *“even though Ghana seems not to have recognize international brand, I think our traditional wear is gaining interest among Ghanaians of late”*.

On the issue of the dimension of Ghana’s brand that could offer competitive advantage, majority (76%) of the respondents believe that in the area of governance, political stability, arts and culture as well as tourism Ghana stands out among their peers in the sub Saharan African countries.

Respondent 2 of focus group 1 (R2 of FG1) asserted that, *“looking at how the country is endowed with rich and varied cultural heritage could serve as an impetus for Ghana’s tourism attraction”*.

Again, respondent 3 of focus group 4 (R3 of FG4) pointed out that, *“I sincerely believe that Ghana’s democratic governance has received praises from many foreigners, and could give Ghana a competitive edge”*.

When it comes to the question on how Ghana should be perceived by others, it became obvious that the image of Ghana to the outside world has been of interest to most of the respondents. A greater number (68%) of the respondents believed that Ghana is perceived by other countries as friendly people and peaceful with a big potential for growth. Respondent 4 of focus group 1 (R4 of FG1) said *“Ghana is hospitable and has the potential to become a successful and developed nation”*.

However, (72%) respondents want the nation to be perceived as a place where an investor can invest and work without frustration as quoted *“I want Ghana to be perceived as a must do business country”* respondent 2 of focus group 3 (R2 of FG3).

Respondent 3 of focus group 4 (R3 of FG4) also quoted by saying *“I want Ghana to be perceived as a must visit country for leisure and tourism”*. It was also stated by respondent 1 of focus group 5 (R1 of FG5) that *“I think Ghana should be a home for all*

irrespective of which place the person might be coming from and it should be a united Ghana with disciplined, hardworking and honest people”.

Respondent 2 of focus group 5 (R2 of FG5) were of the view that, *“Ghana must be known for her good quality, friendly, hardworking people with democracy that is functional”.*

On the issue of whether the current image of Ghana could attract investment into the country, there was a mixed reaction to this issue.

For instance respondent 1 of focus group 1 (R1 of FG1) pointed out that, *“I think because of the increasing rate of depreciation of the Ghanaian currency (cedi) against the dollar and other foreign currency, investor would perceive the country as economically unstable”.*

Furthermore, respondent 2 of focus group 3 (R2 of FG3) emphasizes that, *“the rising level of insecurity and violent crime happening in certain parts of the country would be a course to worry to most investors”.*

However, (44%) of the respondents believe that, Ghana is perceived on the international scene as being politically stable, and this could drive investors into the country.

Respondent 4 of focus group 5 (R4 of FG5) posited that, *“Ghana over the years have enjoyed smooth transition from one government to another and there is no indication at present that the level of political risk in Ghana would change in the near future “.*

On the issue of what Ghanaians perceive are Ghana’s strengths, majority (64%) of the respondents were of the view that apart from football which has portrayed the nation as one of the best football nations on the African continent, there are other strengths which were said to consistently distinguish the nation Ghana.. As quoted by respondent 2 of focus group 1, *“I think Ghana’s peace and political stability as well as its democracy and democratic values are one of the notable strength that can be attributed to Ghana”.*

Respondent 3 of focus group 2 (R3 of FG2) was quoted as saying, *“I think Ghana’s rich cultural heritage, mineral and agricultural potential gives an added advantage to Ghana”*.

On the issue of what Ghanaians perceive are Ghana’s weakness, majority (68%) of the respondents believed that Ghana does not have any fixed focus and direction and was described by one respondent as *“a two-headed bus going no-where...makes one step forward, another step backwards”*- Respondent 2 of focus group 1(R2 of FG1).

Respondent 5 of focus group 2 (R5 of FG2) quoted as; *“I think there is too much corruption and poverty in the country”*.

Another respondent was of the view that, *“Ghana does not have any notable brand internationally with the exception of Ghana’s cocoa”*- Respondent 4 of focus group 5(R4 of FG5).

On the issue of how Ghana could promote its image to the outside world, majority (76%) of the respondents believed that both the local and the foreign media have a significant role in the formation of the current image of Ghana.

For instance, respondent 2 of focus group 4 (R2 of FG4) said that, *“both local and foreign media plays a pivotal role because the media has got a serious role in shaping opinion and they shape opinions in either direction, negative or positive direction.”*

Respondent 1 of focus group 5 (R1 of FG5) expressed the same view elucidating that, *“the media has a very strong bearing on the perception of the country by outsiders.”*

As (R3 of FG5) asserted, *“...the first one challenge is the image of the country. You are aware of media reports on corruption, cedi depreciation, inflation. Interest rate and power crises affect the nation’s economy and people would not invest in the country because of the stable political environment, because also of the downturn in the economy...people want to invest in a growing economy...”*

However, respondent 2 of focus group 2 (F2 of FG2) also pointed out that, *“I think Ghana’s image could be promoted through its export products”*.

(c) Current status of Ghana’s brand equity

Majority (64%) of the respondent in the focus group also expressed the similar view shared by the Brand Ghana office regarding Ghana’s brand equity elucidating that, *“Ghana is seen as a country endowed with rich and varied cultural heritage”*- respondent 2 of focus group 3 (R2 of FG2). Similarly, respondent 3 of focus group 2 pointed out that, *“Ghana’s brand equity lies in its abundance of natural resources and tourism potentials”*. Respondent 4 of focus group 5 (R4 of FG5) asserted that, *“Ghana’s brand equity could be seen in the country’s relative peace and political stability”*

However, respondent 4 of focus group 5 (R4 of FG5) believed that, *“there is higher potential for growth in the tourism sector since Ghana abounds a lot of tourist sites.*

Majority of the respondents attributes Ghana’s brand equity to its governance (political stability, peace), People (friendliness), culture and tourism.

(d) Examine the perceive benefit of nation branding

Majority (72%) of the respondents believed that there could be tremendous benefit to Ghana in branding and promoting the country. For instance, respondent 2 of focus group 1 (R2 of FG1) asserted that, *“when your nation’s brand is recognized and appreciated by others it inspires confidence and hope”*.

Respondent 3 of focus group 2 believed that, *“branding Ghana could lead to the attracting skilled labour into the country to help build the economy”*. Respondent 4 of focus group 4 pointed out that, *“branding Ghana could help attract more tourists into the country which would bring in more foreign exchange”*.

As (R5 of FG2) suggested, *“nation branding help attract investors to create jobs in order to reduce the rate of unemployment in the country”*. Similarly, (R1 of FG1)

declared, *“I certainly think nation branding would inspire confidence in Ghanaians as citizens would be proud of their nation and its brands”*.

Respondent 2 of focus group 4 (R2 of FG4) established that, *“...if you have got a good brand it is easier for FDI, tourists and talents to come into a country”*.

Majority of the respondents are of the view that positive brand image of Ghana could increase job creation, improve exports, inspire hope and confidence in the citizens, and attract foreign tourists.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The data collected during the course of this study was generated in a methodical manner and was objectively analyzed guided by the hermeneutic approach to data analysis. The following are the key findings (themes) that emerged from the study:

Objective 1

5.2.1 Finding 1

Ghana has negative brand image as an investment destination.

Interviewees had both positive and negative word associations with Ghana as a brand, with Ghana being associated with words such as hospitable, friendly, peace, and political stability summing up the positive association with Ghana. On the other hand, some of the interviewees associated Ghana with negative words such as, violence, crime, insecurity, mediocrity and corruption. The description of Ghana in reference to individual traits drew descriptions such as, resilient, innovative, intelligent, hospitable and adaptive, while other interviewees characterized Ghana as going through changes, confused, always shooting his own foot and having no sense of direction.

An almost similar approach to contextualizing a nation's brand image was used by Freemantle (2007), who employed the juxtaposition of positive and negative attributes in his study *Brand South Africa: Dutch impressions of the 'Rainbow Nation'*. In seeking to gauge the strongly negative versus the strongly positive perceptions of South Africa, the study presented participants a table with five countries; New Zealand, Canada, India, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Participants were given a defined list of adjectives to associate these countries with and according to the study, Dutch impressions of Africa were that of, "...Poverty, Crime, Weakness, Autocracy and Laziness." (Freemantle, 2007) although these were the top six labels of Africa, 61% of the Dutch respondents associated Africa with the word 'Filth' Freemantle (2007). Even though this finding cannot be inferred to represent the perceptions of foreigners, investors, and tourists, the findings are an indication of the perceptions that existed in most African countries including Ghana since Ghana cannot entirely disentangle its self from the negative image of 'brand Africa' and such perceptions are still in play in Ghana.

The findings of this study also suggest that Ghana has a negative brand image as an investment destination and that both the local (Ghanaian) and foreign media have a significant role in the reshaping the current image of Ghana. With particular reference to the role of the media in this negative image, all the respondents were of the opinion that the media had and continue to have a significant role in informing perceptions of Ghana. Kidane (2010) in his study on nation branding found that in the case of Ethiopia and its image, even though poverty is a real problem in the country, many believed that it has been magnified and talked about repeatedly to spoil the image rather than solve the problem. The study also indicated that the interviewees expressed a similar opinion that the media had a major influence on the brand of a country (Kidane, 2010), which is consistent with this current study.

5.2.2 Finding 2

The image of Ghana as a nation in general has a considerable effect on its ability to attract FDI and its investment promotion efforts and tourism. An emergent theme from this study was that while Ghana has a myriad of investment opportunities for both current and potential investors, Ghana faces a multitude of challenges in investment attraction and promotion stemming from its current national brand image. With that in mind, it is safe to say that one cannot separate brand Ghana from its offerings to consumers (investors) and that Ghana needs an enabling environment before initiating a nation branding program.

However, given Ghana's challenges, the country is unable to attract meaningful investment. Challenges identified by interviewees included the uncertain economic situation where the cedi keep on duplicating against the major foreign currency in Ghana, negative publicity by the local (Ghanaian) and foreign media and more importantly the growing corruption in most government institutions.

With this theme in mind, it also emerged that there is a co-relation between the image of Ghana and its ability to attract investment, tourist, and increase in export, as much as Ghana's image as an investment destination has a causal effect on the country's ability to attract FDI. It also emerged that the image of Ghana has an influence on the type of investment Ghana attracted. A study by Kamalova and Konrad (2010), found that the Nation Brand Index (NBI), a subjective nation brand assessment and analytical tool based on the Nation Brand Hexagon (NBH), was statistically significant and had a positive influence on FDI inflows to a country. Their study pointed to the fact that the NBI as a measure of intangibles (brand image and perceptions) in an investment destination had a predominantly positive effect on FDI. Kamalova and Konrad (2010) found that a one-point increase in the NBI could be associated with a 27% increase in the

inflows of inward FDI to a particular country. “FDI flows into a host country rise as its nation image, the value of its intangibles improves” (Kamalova and Konrad, 2010). These findings substantiate the views of the respondents in this study that there is a causal relationship that exists between the image of Ghana and ability to attract investment and FDI.

Objective 2

5.2.3 Finding 3

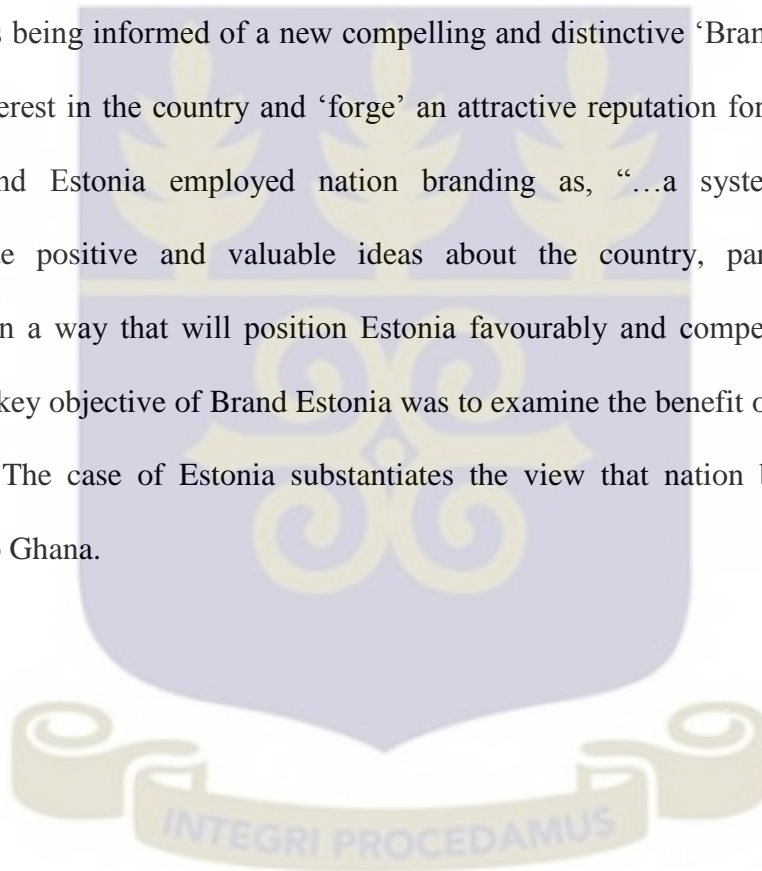
Provenance or country of origin plays a part to the brand equity, and it could reinforce the brand image. Export promotion is an area of huge potential for Ghana. Now, there are few if any high profile Ghanaian export brands. This should be seen as an opportunity rather than a weakness. However, Ghana is perceived as being over dependent on the export of raw material for foreign exchange. Corporate enterprises have for decades been able to add value to their products and services based on their effective use of marketing and branding techniques. This finding is partially consistent with the findings of Pappu and Quester (2010) who believe that a country’s brand equity may be transferrable to products and brands from that country. In addition, this finding supports previous study by Josiassen and Assaf (2010) that focuses on the effects of country of origin on purchasing and consumption behaviour.

Objective 3

5.2.4 Finding 4

Nation branding could be considered the nexus of Ghana’s turnaround as an investment promotion, tourism, exports and talent attraction destination. In the Ghanaian context, nation branding is viewed as a tool for re-shaping Ghana’s image to derive the needed

benefit. It also emerged from the study that, the utilization of nation branding would facilitate the re-packaging and dissemination of Brand Ghana as an attractive country for both citizens and foreigners maintaining that Ghana must take the initiative to market and reach out to outside world through branding. This finding is consistent with the findings of Dinnie (2008) in the case of Estonia, which illustrates how nation branding can be utilized for the promotion of tourism, investment and trade, plus public and cultural diplomacy. Little known Estonia sought to revamp its image arguing that consumers and stakeholders being informed of a new compelling and distinctive 'Brand Estonia' would generate interest in the country and 'forge' an attractive reputation for Estonia (Dinnie, 2008). Brand Estonia employed nation branding as, "...a systematic means to communicate positive and valuable ideas about the country, particularly foreign audiences, in a way that will position Estonia favourably and competitively" (Dinnie, 2008). One key objective of Brand Estonia was to examine the benefit of nation branding to Estonia. The case of Estonia substantiates the view that nation branding may be beneficial to Ghana.



CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the major findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study. In addition, the chapter focuses on direction for future research and limitations of the research.

6.1 Summary of the Study

The study sought to investigate three main objectives. These were first to explore the current image of Ghana, examining the status of Ghana's brand equity and explore the benefits Ghana could derive from nation branding. Three research questions emerged in response.

Areas addressed in the review covered areas such as concept of brand and branding, nation as brand, place branding, nation branding, brand images and identity, concept of nation brand equity, country brand perception, and benefits of nation branding. While country brand image was identified as a key facilitator of nation branding in extant conceptualizations, it was brought to light that the mental pictures of nations, influence all decisions made by individuals when dealing with that nations. This raises question for any nation wishing to elevate its profile in the world and amplify the key factors in advancement, like trade, export, governance, investment and tourism. Anholt's (2007) Nation Brand Hexagon (NBH), Dinnie's (2008) asset based brand equity and Lassar's (1995) customer based brand equity was used as a practical guide to measure citizens' perception about the country's governance, investment, tourism, culture and heritage and the human capital.

A qualitative research approach was used to investigate the research problem. The results obtained from the data analysis suggest that Ghana has a negative brand image as an investment destination. It was nevertheless significant to find out that, the image of Ghana as a nation in general has a considerable effect on its ability to attract FDI and its investment promotion efforts and tourism. Moreover, the findings show that country of origin plays a part to the nation's brand equity, and could reinforce the brand image of Ghana. Export promotion is an area of huge potential for Ghana, and now, there are few if any high profile Ghanaian export brands.

Based on the analysis of results, conclusions and recommendations were made.

6.2 Conclusions

Nation branding is still mounting the growth curve, as it is gradually being perceived as pre-requisite rather than a choice and the way forward for developing countries like Ghana to bridge the economic gap between the developed nations. Countries all over the world are shaping and re-shaping their national identities as they compete with neighbours, regional blocks for power, influence, prestige and wealth. Similarly, the image we have about a country impacts significantly, on how we view it as a tourism destination, a place to invest, and a place from which to buy our favorite brands. It is therefore imperative for a developing country, like Ghana, to be branded, with the careful look at existing perception and reconciliation of varied components of the country into harmonious and distinctive whole. The biggest challenge in nation branding is how to communicate a single image or message to different audiences in different countries. The image of a nation is so complex and fluid that it defies the clarity implicit in a term such as brand image, and different parts of a nation's identity come into focus on the international stage at different times.

In support of the findings, this study seeks to raise new conceptual questions while focusing attention on a missing category of stakeholders, the citizens of a place engaged in nation branding initiatives. This study argues that nation branding leverages the history, traditions, culture and reception skills of place dwellers who act as citizens, service suppliers, employees, endorsers, and even characters' in the commercialisation and theatrical representation of the place in favour of tourists, foreign investors, and foreign employers. In a way, the collective identity of these groups is crafted by nation branding actions and later marketed to varied array of prospect targets with whom these people have to interact, exchange, and negotiate.

This research also draws conclusions from studying the benefits of nation branding. Nation branding could be considered the nexus of Ghana's turnaround as an investment promotion, tourism, exports and talent attraction destination. Hence, nation branding is viewed as a tool for re-shaping Ghana's image to derive the needed benefit. In addition, the country would prosper further in the long run for it enhances not only the competitive advantage against competitors, but also improves the country's economy on the overall.

Furthermore, the perception gap between the brand identity (projected by the country) and brand image (perceived by the rest of the world) will be reduced through nation branding. Nation branding is a collaborative effort of the country's people and the government to help build the nation's brand. Every country has its own reputation, brand image, brand identity, and brand value. The people, tourism, culture, governance, economic strategies (exports, investment and immigration), could and would contribute to the country's image. The efforts put forth in all these areas will help build or destroy (with bad decisions) the nation's brand equity or brand value.

6.3 Recommendations

To clear the ill perception regarding the image of developing countries such as Ghana, nation branding has become a pre-requisite rather than a choice. On this premise, it is recommended that, the government of Ghana through the Brand Ghana office strongly consider the initiation and development of a nation branding strategy aimed at revamping the image of the country as a whole, accentuating the positive image of Ghana while simultaneously trying to change the realities that give rise to its negative image (The first step in Nation- Brand Identity development).

Secondly, this study recommends that the government through its Ministry of tourism, Ministry of trade and other key stakeholders work out a long-term strategy for a more positive investment destination profile via concrete developments and improvements on the problematic areas of the economy and the allocation of budgets to investment brand image development activities. This implies creating an enabling environment for investment and effectively marketing it thereof. (The second step in Nation- Brand Identity development).

Thirdly, this study furthermore recommends that, Ghana's nation branding be implemented as a multi-stakeholder (government, business, individuals and NGO's) program managed by the right people with the requisite skills. It is paramount that the initiative be inclusive and apolitical. Forth, Ghana must identify acceptable brand ambassadors in the form of products and/or individuals to effectively communicate with Ghana's target audience in an integrated marketing communication approach. (Communicators of nation Branding Identity).

Fifth, the citizens must be involved in the effort of branding the country through stakeholders' consultation for internal buy-in and support. The reason why internal buy-in is essential is, if stakeholders in a nation are not interested in the image and reputations that representing their nation, then they cannot expect other countries recognize their brand.

Finally, branded export is a crucial support in creating reputation for a nation in abroad. It is important that the country need to make sure that its export promotion authority be effectively resourced because it is a key asset in nation-brand equity for Ghana in order to develop a new nation branding strategy.

6.4 Limitations of the Study and Future Research Directions

There are a number of limitations to this study. First, the study is limited to small sample size, and therefore the findings cannot necessarily be generalised. It is therefore, recommended that future research should be conducted using larger and varied respondent to allow for effective generalisation of the findings. Additionally, the study focused on only Ghanaians respondents. Future studies should consider replicating the study by focusing on other stakeholders such as foreigners. Furthermore, the study employed the cross sectional approach in conducting this study. Future research should adopt alongitudinal strategy in examining the image and relevance of nation branding.

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APPNDIX

INTRODUCTION

This interview guide is designed to solicit views on how Ghana has been branded and how it could be rebranded as well as the benefits Ghana could derive from branding. I am a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) student of the University of Ghana. This thesis is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Business Administration (Marketing).

I would be very grateful if you could help by supplying information for this study. This is purely for academic purpose and your response will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and anonymity. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

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Interview Questions for Brand Ghana office

1. What is the core task of brand Ghana office?

This is to gauge whether the core mandate of brand Ghana office is clear in the minds of its handlers on its agenda of branding Ghana.

2. So what can Ghana be identified with?

This is to explore self perception (identity) of Ghana as a brand to determine the unique set of associations the brand aspires through the mind of the customers.

3. So how well do you think people recognize brands from Ghana?

This is to assess the country of origin effects to determine whether the country has particular strength in that regards.

4. So do you think brands from Ghana could guarantee some level of reputation for Ghana?

This is to gauge brand value of Ghana.

5. In your opinion, what dimension of Ghana's brand do you think could give Ghana competitive advantage?

This is to assess which dimension of the nation's brand offer a competitive advantage and brand equity.

6. How is Ghana actually being perceived by others?

This is to gauge the actual image, reputation and stereotype of the people.

7. So how do we want to be perceived as a country by the outside world?

This is to determine the desired future brand image of Ghana.

8. How is Ghana currently promoting its image to the outside world?

This is to assess the currently projected image of Ghana and the medium through which the promotion is carried out.

9. What need ought to be done by Ghana in order to achieve the desired brand image?

This is to ascertain whether the branding strategy is clear in the minds of its handlers on its agenda of branding Ghana.

10. So what benefits could Ghana derive from quest of branding herself?

