

# 17 The Prospects and Challenges of Positioning Ghana as a Preferred African-American Tourist Destination

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**Keywords:** African American, Destination, Diaspora, Ghana, Images, Positioning.

### **Abstract**

With reference to the literature on positioning and images, this paper identifies the shortfalls with attempts by the government of Ghana and other stakeholders to position Ghana on the African American market. The growth in the population and purchasing power of African Americans, Ghana's enormous heritage attractions connected with the Transatlantic Slave Trade and relative stable political atmosphere are seen as good prospects for positioning the country on the African American Market. However, such efforts are constrained by the general perception of Ghana as an expensive destination, a misunderstanding of the characteristics and motivations of the African American market, hostilities between African Americans and Ghanaians as well as the negative images associated with Africa. It is therefore suggested that a uniform image centered on the 'Slave Roots' should be projected by various stakeholders.

## BACKGROUND

Ghana is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Sub-Saharan Africa, due to its all-year-round attractions including, warm climate, coconut-fringed white sand beaches, historic monuments and a diverse culture. The sector contributed 4.8% to GDP in 2004 and is expected to grow by 5.9% per annum between 2004 and 2014 (WTTC 2004). The USA is Ghana's second highest tourist generating market outside Africa. Arrivals from the USA almost doubled between 1994 and 2002 (Table 1).

**Table 1, Tourism Inflows to Ghana by countries 1994-2002**

Country	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
USA	17896	20108	22950	26317	31834
UK	23490	26395	30126	34546	41787
Germany	13090	14709	16788	19251	23286
France	9804	11016	21573	14418	17440
Netherlands	6568	7380	8423	9659	11684
Canada	3645	4096	4675	5361	6485
Switzerland	2573	2891	3300	3784	4577
Scandinavia	3621	4096	4644	5325	6442
Italy	3294	3702	4225	4845	5860

Source: Ghana Tourist Board; 2004

### ***The African American Market***

A segment of the USA market which is of interest to Ghana is the African American market. It is composed of Americans who are of African ancestry or who relate to their history or culture (Magazine Publishers of America, 2004). Blacks in the USA form 13% of the total population (US Census Bureau, March 2002). African American travellers are interested in participating in cultural events, urban nightlife and gambling (Soul of America, 2004). They are particularly interested in learning their shared cultural heritage with Africa. In a 2000 Gallup poll commissioned by the National Summit on Africa, 73% of them indicated that they were interested in learning more about

Africa. This is epitomised by a study conducted by Abanga (1999), which revealed that cultural heritage is the most important reason for African Americans visiting Ghana.

It has been suggested that parts of West Africa, including Ghana are the best destinations for African Americans who want to return to their ancestral homeland (Wyllie, 1990). This is perhaps due to the fact that the majority of slaves sent to the 'new world' (Americas) from Africa were from West Africa in general and Ghana in particular (Curtin, 1969; Perbi, 1995). Since independence, in 1957, Ghana has been one of the countries most often chosen by repatriated Africans from the Diaspora. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah through his policies on Pan-Africanism, welcomed diasporan Africans, including African Americans into Ghana (Lake, 1995). Also, the efforts of Nkrumah in developing Ghana's traditional arts endeared him to some prominent blacks in the Diaspora, prompting people like Maya Angelou, Malcolm X, Richard Wright and W.E.B Dubois to visit the country (Greene, 1998). African Americans continue to visit Ghana both as tourists and to relocate permanently. Sixty percent of the diasporas African population in Ghana as at 1989 was African American (Lake, 1995). Also, in 2003, 27,000 tourists visited Ghana from the Americas, with approximately 10,000 of these African Americans (Bernhardt and Eroglu, 2004).

The Ministry of Tourism and other tourism organizations have recognized the potentials of this market and continue to develop new products to appeal to it. However, it seems the travel and tourism industry has not yet devoted significant levels of marketing efforts to encourage the African American traveller to consider all that Ghana has to offer (Saunders, 2004). A study conducted by Bernhardt and Eroglu in 2004 revealed that African Americans have very little awareness of Ghana, and the little they know is often inaccurate. Though Ghana has been branded with images such as 'the black star of Africa', 'home of pan-africanism', 'proverbial hospitality', and 'Mecca for African Americans', there appears to be no consensus as to which images to project as the various organisations and stakeholders involved in the promotion of the country seem to be doing things independently (Table 2).

**Table 2, Organisations and Stakeholders involved in the promotion of Ghana**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Promotional Activities</b>
Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City (MOTMCC)	Initiate and formulate tourism policies taking into account the needs and aspirations of the Ghanaian people so as to make Ghana a sustainable and international quality destination.	Determine the overall promotional strategy for the country.  Develop special projects and events to enhance the image of the country such as the 'Joseph Project' and Emancipation Day celebrations.
Ghana Tourist Board (GTB)	To ensure standards of tourism businesses are of international quality and to enhance the image of the country so as to capture a fair share of the tourism market.	Market tourism locally and internationally; by attending international tradeshows, publications and other public relations and social activities.
Tour Operators' Union of Ghana (TOUGH)	To contribute to tourism development and ensure high standards in the industry.	Created a comprehensive website to market Ghana's tourist attractions  Contribute money towards helping the MOTMCC with its marketing activities.  Promote domestic tourism among first-cycle students through essay competitions and organized tours.
Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC)	To encourage, promote and facilitate investments in all sectors of the economy including tourism	Collect, collate, analyse and disseminate information about investment opportunities and sources of investment capital, and advise on the availability, choice or suitability of partners in joint-venture projects.  Provision of incentives such as tax exemptions to investors in tourism under the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act, Act 478.

Source: Telephone interview with representatives

This paper therefore looks at the prospects and challenges of positioning Ghana as a preferred tourist destination for African American tourists.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Destination Positioning and Images***

Positioning is a very important element of every organization's marketing strategy since it contributes essentially to the realization of the entire marketing programme for a destination (Heath and Wall, 1992). Though it has been described in different ways such as; managing customers' perceptions of a product, service or place (Arnott, 1993) and how a brand can effectively compete against a specified set of competitors in a particular market (Keller, 2003: 150). There seems to be a consensus that it is a process of establishing a distinctive place for a product or service in the minds of the target market (Kotler *et al*, 1993; Echtner and Ritchie 1993; Ries and Trout, 2001). According to Aaker and Shansby (1982), positioning is concerned with three issues; segmentation decision, image creation and selection of product features to emphasize.

Positioning has become one of the important aspects of destination marketing and has engaged the minds of tourism researchers (see Chacko, 1997; Sorma, 2003; Pike and Ryan, 2004; Ibrahim and Gill, 2005). Kim *et al* (2005) define tourism destination positioning as the process of locating a destination or the attractions of a destination in the minds of potential tourists within its target markets. This will consequently inform how they (the tourists) define such destination in relation to other competing destinations.

Connected to the positioning of a destination in a market segment is the image of the destination (Ryglova and Turcinova, 2004). Image is a set of ideas and impressions that a people have about an object or place (Crompton, 1979; Kotler, 2003). The link between images and positioning is that destination positioning is essentially a process of building and maintaining images for a destination (Sarma, 2003). In view of this, Ibrahim and Gill (2005) recommend that a destination-positioning strategy should be based on the customers' (tourists') image of the tourism product. There have

been a number of studies on destination positioning and images (Chacko, 1997; Botha *et al*, 1999; Power *et al*, 2005; Etchner and Ritchie, 2003) but most of these studies have been undertaken in western industrialized countries with very little done on destinations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Images of destinations are formed on the minds of actual or potential tourists, so to position a destination; such images are either enhanced or recreated. Ryglova and Turcinova (2004) are of the view that the image that people have of a place is a complex variable. It is influenced by both past and present internal and external environment factors. The complexity is also due to the fact that tourist images coincide with images reflecting various other domains of the reality of the world such as geographic, historical, cultural, social, political and economic among others (Levy and Matos, 2002). Destination images also have different dimensions; organic and induced (Gunn, 1972; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991); and cognitive and affective (Dann, 1996; Baloglu, 1999; Pike and Ryan, 2004). Pike and Ryan (2004) add a third dimension, conative which they describe as the intent or action component of destination images. Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) also introduced the concept of a 'beneficial image' which they defined as what influence the tourist's decision to visit the destination.

Travellers' level of knowledge about a destination culminates in the image of the destination that they perceive. Their level of knowledge about the destination is influenced by their learning, media news stories, their previous travelling experience as well as the geographical and cultural distances between their originating country and the destination. Marketing activities can also be deliberately used to influence peoples' knowledge about a place and hence the place's image (induced image). In spite of this, Pike and Ryan (2004) are of the view that images alone are not enough for understanding the position of a product or service on the mind of the consumer but also a frame of reference with the competition. Reich (2001) suggests a detailed analysis of all aspects of an organization's internal activities and its competitive market place in order to determine its position on the market.

### ***Developing a market position strategy for travel destinations***

According to Rigger (1995), the lack of a comprehensive definition is inhibiting both practitioners and academic scholars in developing appropriate means of measuring the operationalisation of

positioning. Moreover, positioning services is more difficult than positioning physical goods due to the peculiar characteristics of services (Bateson, 1995; Blankson and Kalafatis, 1999). Chacko (1997) also believes that positioning the destination, which is intangible, is a complicated process.

On account of the above difficulties, the literature is replete with a number of prescriptions on how to position a destination accurately. These include the creation of images using the attributes of a destination perceived as important by visitors (Crompton *et al*, 1992; Witt and Moutinho, 1995); positively reinforcing what already exists on tourists' minds (Botha *et al*, 1999) and matching benefits provided by a destination with benefits sought by a target market (Woodside, 1982; Crompton *et al*, 1992). Morgan (1996) with reference to Splashdown Leisure pool, cites a three pronged strategy for positioning; derivation of the key benefits sought by the customers (tourists), design of the product in accordance with customer preferences, and communication of the product features to the target market through promotional campaigns. According to Chacko (1997) there are two tests of effective positioning. First, the position must be believable in the tourist's mind. Second, the destination must deliver that promise on a consistent basis.

## **POSITIONING GHANA: ACTIONS, PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES**

There have been attempts by successive governments and private organizations to position Ghana on African Americans through diverse initiatives. During the immediate pre-independence era (1956), and post independence era (1957-1966), the Convention Peoples' Party (CPP) government under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah made Ghana the hub of the pan-African movement. The socialist-inclined government did not however deliberately promote tourism development (Akyeampong, 1996). This nonetheless led to a number of African Americans including George Padmore, Maya Angelou and W.E.B Dubois coming to live in Ghana. Some state resources were branded with the 'black star label' proposed by Marcus Garvey; Black Star Line (the state shipping line), Black Stars (the national football team) and Black Star Square (now known as the Independence Square). Also, specific products which afford African Americans the opportunity to visit the 'motherland' have been developed by tour operators. These are tours to slave sites in Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, Senegal and Gambia.



Ghana was a key player in the Transatlantic Slave Trade and is therefore playing an instrumental role in the Slave Route Project proposed by UNESCO. The Slave Route Project provides a common platform for integrating some of Ghana's attractions with other slave route features in other West African countries, so as to promote a common heritage of monuments, sites, manuscripts, archives and documents related to the slave trade among these countries. The Ministry of Tourism has also launched a program termed 'the Joseph Project' to encourage blacks in the Diaspora to return to their roots. Due to the importance that the government attaches to Diasporans in general and African Americans in particular, the name of the tourism ministry was changed from Ministry of Tourism and Modernisation of the Capital City to Ministry of Tourism and Diasporan Relations on April 28, 2006.

Events have also been used to position Ghana; notable among them is the Pan African Historic Theatre Festival (PANAFEST) which is used to promote the ideals of Pan-Africanism through theatrical and musical performances. Also, Emancipation Day, which was already being celebrated in the black Diaspora has been adopted and is celebrated annually in Ghana. The African American community also observes 'Juneteenth' and Black History Month.

There have also been efforts by governments to brand the country. According to the American Marketing Association (cited by Kotler, 1997), a brand is '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'. Branding the country has been through the use of slogans like 'the friendliest people on earth', 'proverbial Ghanaian hospitality', and 'best kept secret in Africa'. Ghana has also been positioned as 'the gateway to West Africa'. Under this strategy, the

Ghana Investment Promotion Council (GIPC) and the Ghana Free Zones Board (GFZB) were created to attract investment; there was a symbolic return of the mortal remains of two slave ancestors back to Ghana through the 'door of no return' of the Cape Coast Castle for final interment at Assin Manso, an important slave market; and the expansion of the Kotoka International Airport, to reinforce the gateway position.

**Table 3, Slogans, Clichés and Images for Positioning Ghana**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Slogan/cliché</b>	<b>Image(s) Portrayed</b>
Blast Tours	Undiscovered/ discovering Ghana	Undiscovered tourist destination
Citi Travels and Tours Ltd.	Home of hospitality	Hospitable people
Connectworld Group	A safe, affordable and friendly destination	Hospitable people/ affordable destination
Discover Ghana Tours	Ghana is an amazingly friendly country With wonderful, unspoilt places to visit	Hospitable people/ Unspoilt attractions
Eco Travel and Tours	The land of smiles	Hospitable people
Ghana Association of Travel and Tour Agencies (GATTA)	Smiles/ friendly and hospitable people	Hospitable people
Ghana Travel and Tours	Golden country that will dazzle you with culture, wildlife, history and landscape	Golden experience/ rich natural and cultural experience
Land Tours	The gateway and heart of Africa	Gateway country to the region/ heart of Africa
Ministry of Tourism and Modernisation of the Capital City (MOTMCC)	A golden experience at the heart of the world	Golden experience/ heart of the world
Tour operators union of Ghana (TOUGHGA)	We have a smile for you/the world's most hospitable people	Hospitable people

Source: websites of organisations and telephone interview with representatives

Also, in the tourism strategy document for 2003-2007, Ghana has been branded as a preferred tourism destination in Africa (MOTMCC, 2003). The government in June 2005 repositioned Ghana as 'a golden experience', based on advice from a team of investment advisors (Ghanaian Times, 2005). There has been another slogan which seems to be a convergence between the gateway slogan and the golden experience; 'Ghana, Africa's golden gateway'. In this regard, President J.A Kufuor launched Africa's Golden Gateway Project in Washington aimed at stepping up Ghana's efforts at attracting American investors and tourists (Daily Graphic, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2005). The current slogan is 'a golden experience at the centre of the world'. This is because Ghana is uniquely positioned at the centre of the world geographically. However, a content analysis of the brochures and websites of some major tour operators and other stakeholders in Ghana reveal that there is no uniformity in the images projected (Table 3). Images of hospitality, unspoilt attractions, gateway to Africa, and a golden experience have been projected in their brochures and on their websites.

A destination's image must be positioned to match the reality, if the slogan does not mirror what is on the ground; it shrouds the destination's credibility in doubt (Kotler, Haider and Rein, 1993). Also, a brand image must send a singular or unique message that communicates a product or destination's major benefits and positioning (Kotler *et al*, 2003). This is partly the problem with the positioning of Ghana, the inconsistency between slogans and the situation on the ground as well as no uniformity in slogans used to market the country. Though the African American market offers some prospects to warrant special marketing attention from Ghana, effectively positioning Ghana on the market is fraught with some challenges.

### **Prospects**

First, the African American market represents a market with growth potentials. It is growing rapidly, younger and has more buying power than ever before. The population has been increasing by 15.6% since 1990 (Centre for Media Studies, 2003). The estimated annual expenditures of the African American consumer market grew from US\$316.5 billion in 1990 to US\$645.9 billion in 2002 and were expected to increase to US\$852.8 billion by the end of 2007 (Wellner, 2003). This increase in purchasing power implies a greater propensity to travel to long haul destinations like Ghana. This is reinforced by a Gallup poll on the vacation preferences of Americans which revealed that household earnings and the likelihood of taking vacation away from home are strongly related, with 90% of those with good income (\$75,000) taking vacation away from home while those at the highest income level travel abroad for vacation (Jones, 2005). Even within the United States alone tourism involving African Americans increased by 16 percent between 2002 and 2004 though the industry itself grew by only one percent (Barbosa, 2004 cited in Santana Pinho, 2008). These prospects are to be translated into travel by African Americans to Africa as they are becoming more aware of the rich cultural and historical heritage of Africa (Saunders, 2004).

Secondly, Ghana has a wide collection of relics, and landmarks as legacy from the slave trade. Ghana was an active participant in the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Curtin, 1969; Perbi, 1995). This incident saw some 10-12 million Africans being exported from the continent to Europe and the Americas (Perbi, 1995). During the slave trade, lots of people were sent from the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) into slavery in the Americas. According to Perbi (1995), from 1620 to 1807, Ghana alone

provided about 16% of the total slave output required in the USA. Curtin (1969) on the other hand projects that 14.4% of slave exports from Africa between 1711 and 1810 were from the Gold Coast. Ghana can therefore provide a platform for African Americans to reunite with their kith and kin and to rediscover their roots. Already, a number of African Americans travel within the USA for family reunions (Vargus, 2002; Dickerson, 2006) and this could serve as a catalyst for annual pilgrimages to Ghana.

The Cape Coast and Elmina Castles have been designated World Heritage Sites by UNESCO and out of the about 43 forts and castles connected with the slave trade in West Africa, 33 are in Ghana alone. Out of these about 25 are in good condition (GIPC, 2005). A survey undertaken by the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities (MUCIA) further revealed that not less than 96 forts and castles have been constructed along Ghana's coast (MUCIA, 1995). Also, under the Slave Route Project, a number of slave landmarks, relics and monuments have been identified in Ghana as part of the project launched by UNESCO in September 1994. These monuments are a source of interest to African Americans because these were where their ancestors were held captive before being shipped to the USA. They could therefore serve as strong selling points if well packaged and marketed.

Moreover, Ghana is one of the most peaceful and stable countries in the West-African sub-region. After the 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 terrorist attacks on the US, security issues have become of prime concern to Americans especially and the whole world in general. Americans have become more cautious about where they travel to. A number of countries in the West African sub-region have remained unstable for some time now, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Togo. Ghana however remains one of the safest havens in a troubled and turbulent sub-region. After embracing multi-party democracy in 1992, five successful elections have been held. This peaceful political atmosphere is a good recipe for travel and tourism which thrives in a peaceful atmosphere. A study by Eilat and Einav (2003) revealed that political risk has a significant impact on tourism demand in both developed and developing countries. Ghana's relatively stable political atmosphere is therefore a good ingredient for tourism development and a positive image for crafting a position on the African American market.

## **Challenges**

Firstly, a lot of concerns have been expressed about the cost of visa acquisition and air transportation to Ghana. Ghana is seen as a relatively expensive destination in terms of cost of travel. African Americans find it cheaper travelling to destinations in the Caribbean such as Jamaica which also offer most of the tourist products in Ghana. Even within Africa, it is cheaper travelling to some destinations like Egypt, South Africa and Kenya. International airlines charge between \$1800 and \$2000 from USA to Ghana, whereas the same airlines charge about \$850 from USA to South Africa, which is a longer distance (Daily Graphic, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2005). The difficulty of travel to Ghana is also evident in the difficulty of acquiring visas. The acquisition of visas to Ghana has been described as costly and inconvenient (Barney, 2002).

Secondly, there seem to be a general lack of understanding of the African American market. A more effective understanding of the African American market is necessary for destination marketers to develop the products and services necessary to effectively serve this growing market (Strom Thurmond Institute, 1998). According to Kotler (1982, p. 107), 'the key to positioning is to identify the major attributes used by the target market to evaluate and choose among competitive offerings'. However, in Ghana, there is a general lack of understanding of the African American market, in terms of their motivations, tastes and preferences and this is evident in the development and promotion of tourism products targeted at this market as well as the attitudes of Ghanaians towards them. African Americans want the truth of the slave trade to be established, that is why they took exception to the restoration and preservation of the Cape Coast and Elmina castles in the early 1990s. This was under the Historic Preservation Project which involved the stabilization and restoration of the three World Heritage monuments, Cape Coast Castle, Elmina Castle and Fort St. Jago (Bruner, 1996; Osei-Tutu, 2003). The fact is there has not been adequate research to obtain insights into the demographics, psychographics, motivations and interests of the African American market.

Also, African Americans want to be seen by Ghanaians as brothers and sisters rather than strangers. However, Ghanaians often refer to them as 'obroni', a *Twi* word for whites (Bruner, 1996; Barney, 2002). African Americans in Ghana have also complained about the mistreatment and cold reception meted out to them by Ghanaians (Zachary, 2001; Mensah, 2004). There have also been accusations

of name calling and hostilities among Africans and African Americans in the USA (Mwakikagile, 2005). This apparent lack of understanding can be attributed to the fact that Ghanaians and African Americans grew up in different environments, have different cultures and have formed different perceptions about each other.

Finally, another obstacle that needs to be corrected in order to effectively position Ghana on the minds of African Americans is the negative image of Africa among the African American community. Ankomah and Crompton (1990) cite negative images as one of the inhibitors of tourism development in sub-Saharan Africa. Due to centuries of separation and the influence of the western media, Africa is perceived in a negative light by African Americans; poverty, primitive, diseases, famine, HIV/AIDS and the jungle. According to Kromah (2002) western media practitioners present fatalistic and selectively crude images of Africa. The resultant effect is the negative images that Blacks in the Diaspora harbour about the continent and its people. Unfortunately, African countries including Ghana have not done enough to correct these negative images. In Ghana, the Ministry of Tourism is preoccupied with producing a number of products to attract African Americans to the country; PANAFEST, Emancipation Day, Slave Route Project and Joseph Project among others. However, very little has been done to correct the image of the country. Image is very important in destination marketing because tourists evaluate and purchase place products based on perceptions and images formed on their minds.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

In effect, the Ghanaian government is trying to make the country a destination of choice for African Americans; however, these efforts have been restricted to developments of new products and branding. There seem to be no clear understanding of the African American market and there is no consensus yet on what images and slogans to use. Though Ghana's stock of monuments and relics of the Transatlantic Slave Trade as well as its relative stability could draw African Americans, the obstacles that could deter them from coming to the country such as the perceived negative image of Africa and the relatively high cost of travel to Ghana are not being addressed with the urgency they deserve.

Positioning Ghana as a preferred destination for African Americans should be informed by an analysis of the country as a tourist destination, other competing destinations like Nigeria, Senegal, Benin and South Africa as well as the African American market. This will enable the Ghana Tourist Board (GTB) to identify opportunities and challenges to effective positioning. This calls for further research into the motivations, characteristics and psychographics of the African American market, which will form the basis for further analysis of the market.

Ghana currently seems to lack a clear position on the African American market. There is however the need to clearly position the country along the lines of its shared cultural and historical heritage with African Americans, centred on the 'Slave Roots'. This should also reflect the slogans that are used to brand the country. Fortunately, some African Americans already perceive Ghana as a destination of black heritage (Abanga, 1999), and this should be positively reinforced as suggested by Botha *et al* (1999), rather than committing other resources towards creating conflicting images like 'Golden experience' and 'Gateway to Africa'. Ghana is endowed with a diversity of historical resources like slave castles, relics, monuments and events more than most of the other countries connected with slavery and these could be harnessed to position the country along the Slave Roots just as Egypt has also capitalised on its pyramids, Pharaohs and other rich historical resources to effectively position itself as 'the cradle of civilisation'.

A major problem with positioning Ghana is the lack of uniformity in images projected by different organizations. Stakeholder consultations on the benefits to emphasize to African Americans in all external communications are very vital to the positioning process. Consultations between the GTB and the various stakeholders will help develop an appropriate positioning statement that will guide the marketing activities of all stakeholders at the destination. This will enable the destination to arrive at a single and relevant image. Such a meeting will also afford the GTB the opportunity to address some of the perceived positioning problems with the supply side of the destination such as the cost of travel to Ghana and the quality of services provided by tourism-related organisations. The GTB and other stakeholders will also agree on the benefits that Ghana offers that should be emphasized to African American travellers.

African Americans like to participate in cultural events, reunite with their kith and kin (family reunions) as well as trace their roots and learn more about the slave trade. Ghana can therefore emphasize benefits like its authentic and colourful festivals and celebrations, the hospitality of its people and the diversity of castles, forts, monuments and other relics connected with the slave trade. These will enable African Americans to reconnect with their ancestors and to embark on a healing process.

Finally, the need to embark on Public Relations (PR) campaign to address negative perception of the destination cannot be overemphasised. The negative image held about Africa of which Ghana is part, is a major constraint on positioning the country. Ghana is not insulated from the negative perceptions of West Africa as unsafe and insecure (Bernhardt and Eroglu, 2004). The solution to this problem is a deliberate PR campaign geared towards correcting this negative image and erroneous impressions associated with Ghana. The PR outfit could make use of media patronised by African Americans such as 'Ebony' and 'Black Entertainment Television'. The private sector could also support the GTB financially to undertake a common promotional campaign in the USA by setting up a promotional office in a major USA city like Atlanta, Washington or New York which will be tasked with marketing the country.

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