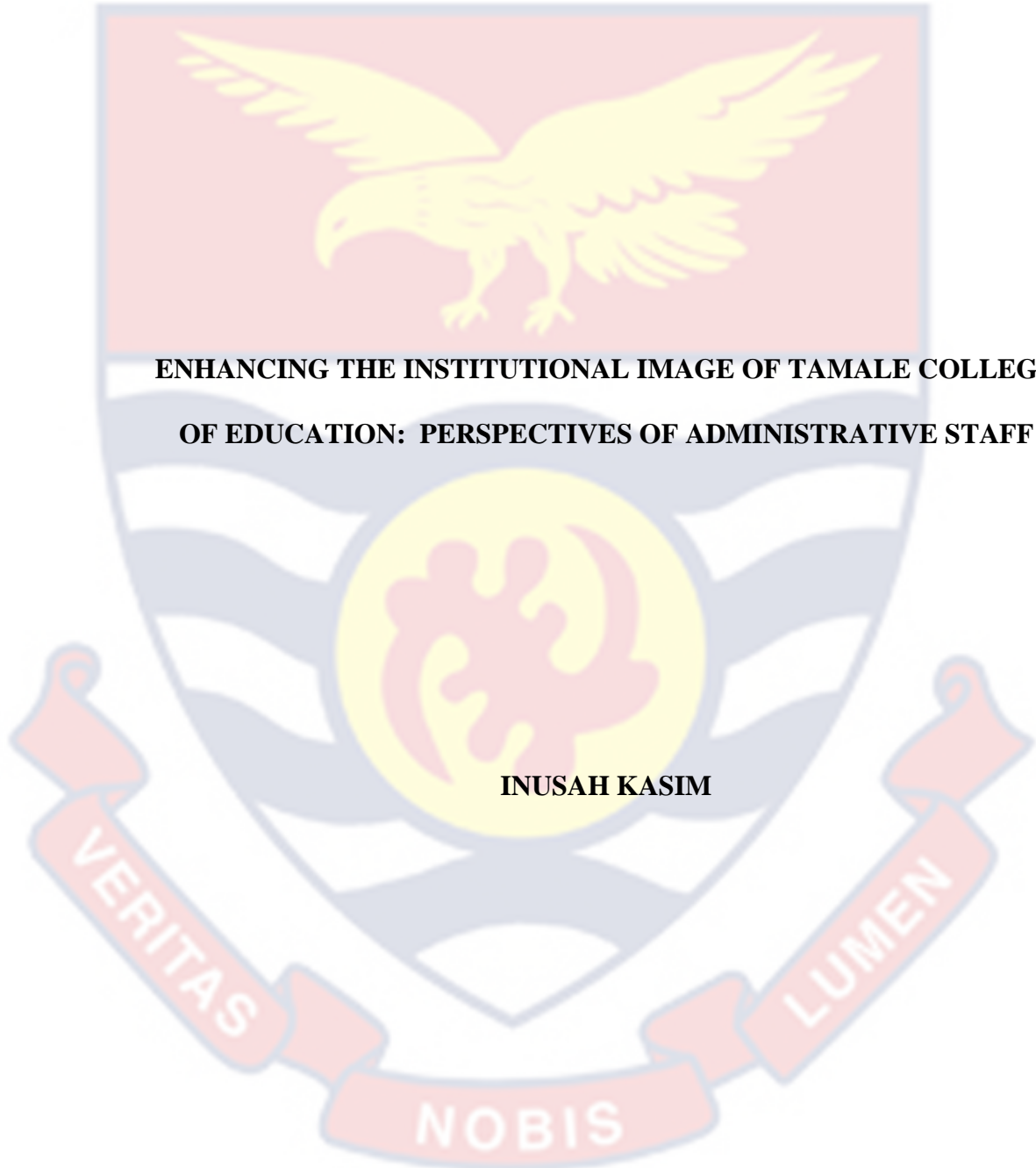


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



**ENHANCING THE INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE OF TAMALE COLLEGE
OF EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

INUSAH KASIM

2023



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE CAOST



ENHANCING THE INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE OF TAMALE COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

BY
INUSAH KASIM

Thesis submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration,
University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award
of Masters of Philosophy in Administration in Higher Education

FEBRUARY, 2023

DECLARATION

Candidates' Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidates Signature.....Date.....

Name:.....

Supervisor's Declaration

We hereby declare that, the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature.....Date.....

Name:.....

Co-Supervisor's Signature.....Date.....

Name:.....

ABSTRACT

Due to keen competition in the higher educational landscape, it has become imperative for higher institutions to improve service quality and institutional image to help induce high patronage. Studies explored how student preferences shape institutional image to the neglect of the perspectives of administrative staff. This study explores the gap by examining the perspectives of administrative staff in enhancing the institutional image of Tamale College of Education. A collective case study approach was adopted to study thirty (30) purposively selected administrative staff who were interviewed and audiotaped from 8th to 22nd April, 2022. Ethical standards such as permission, consent, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through appropriate communicates, inform consent, digital data security and unification of data respectively. Data was analysed using thematic content analysis. It was discovered that, institutional image was generally perceived as the overall mental view of people about an institution's popularity or goodness, which view, can be individualistic or communal. Participants perceived Tamale College of Education to be good and popular because it is well-known and prepares its graduates effectively. The overarching insights revealed that, the perception of administrative staff of the importance of their roles in improving institutional image motivated them to work diligently. They implemented good records system, staff development and also worked overtime without compensation. However, administrative staff faced challenges such as poor conditions of service, infrastructural shortage, dusty environment, lack of means for emergency mails and water shortage. Opening multiple campuses, multistory structures, vehicle for emergency mails and mechanized boreholes are recommended.

KEY WORDS

Administrative Staff

Enhancing

Image

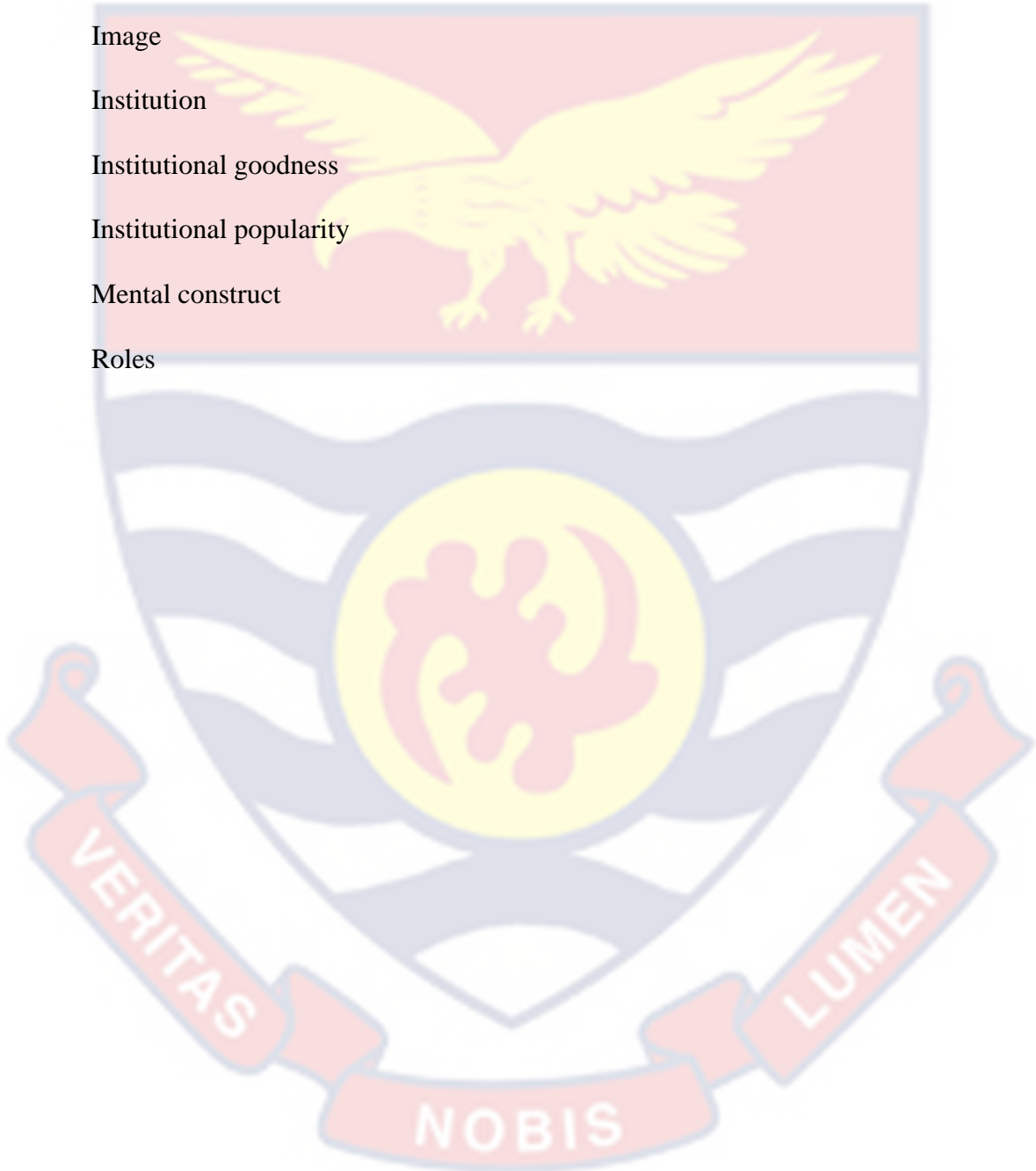
Institution

Institutional goodness

Institutional popularity

Mental construct

Roles

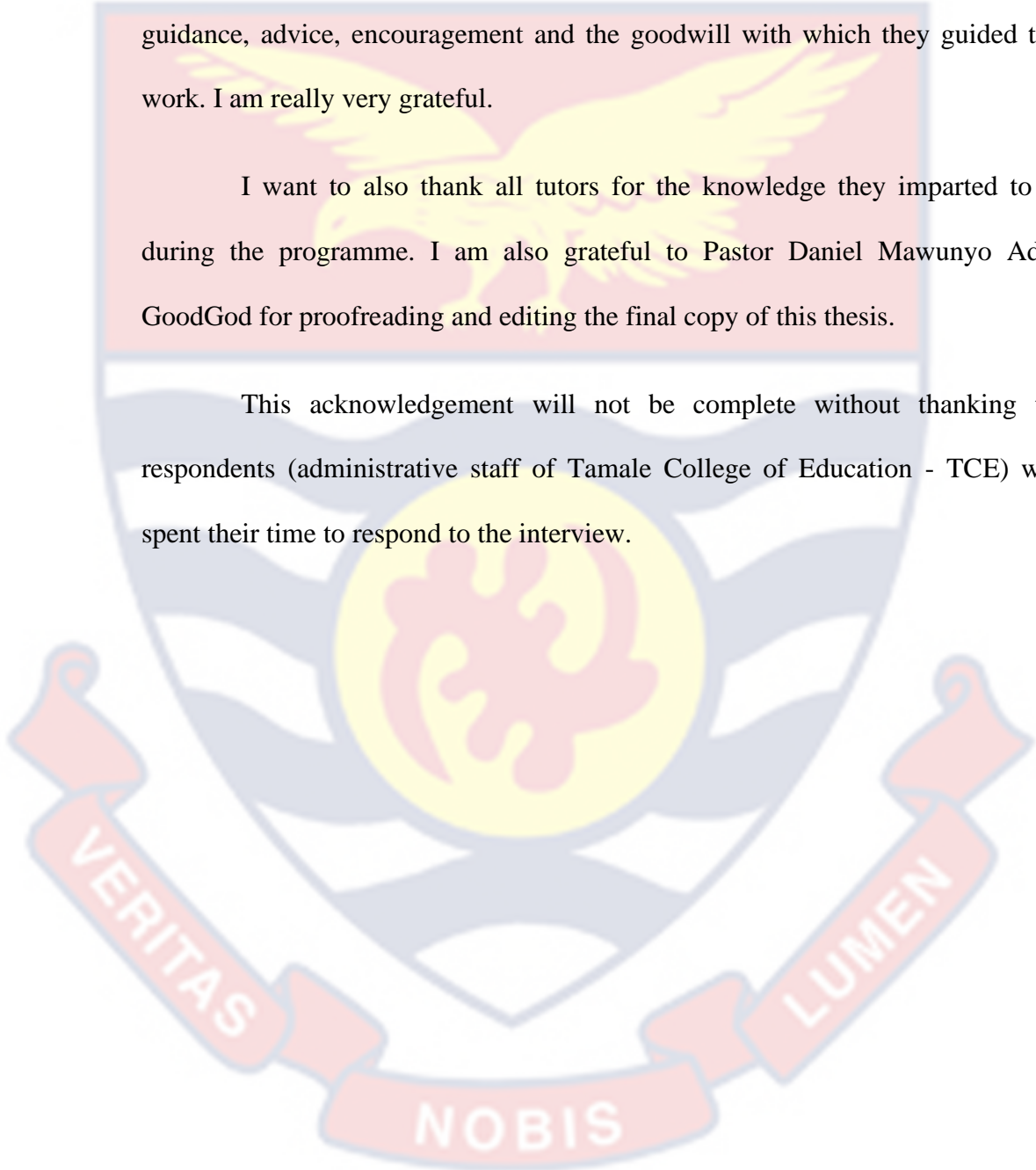


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DEDICATION

To my wife, Gifty and my children, Favor and Miracle



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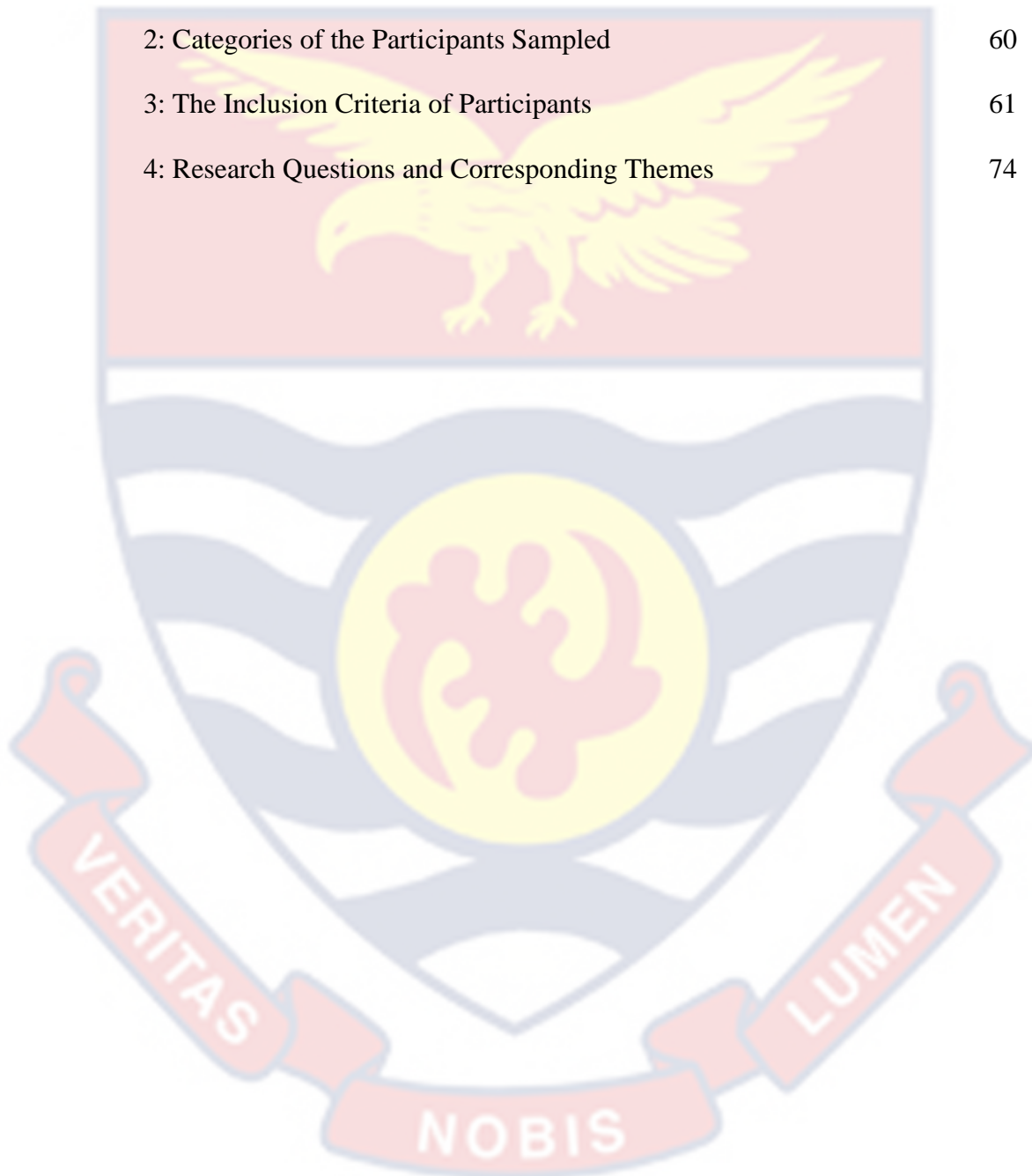
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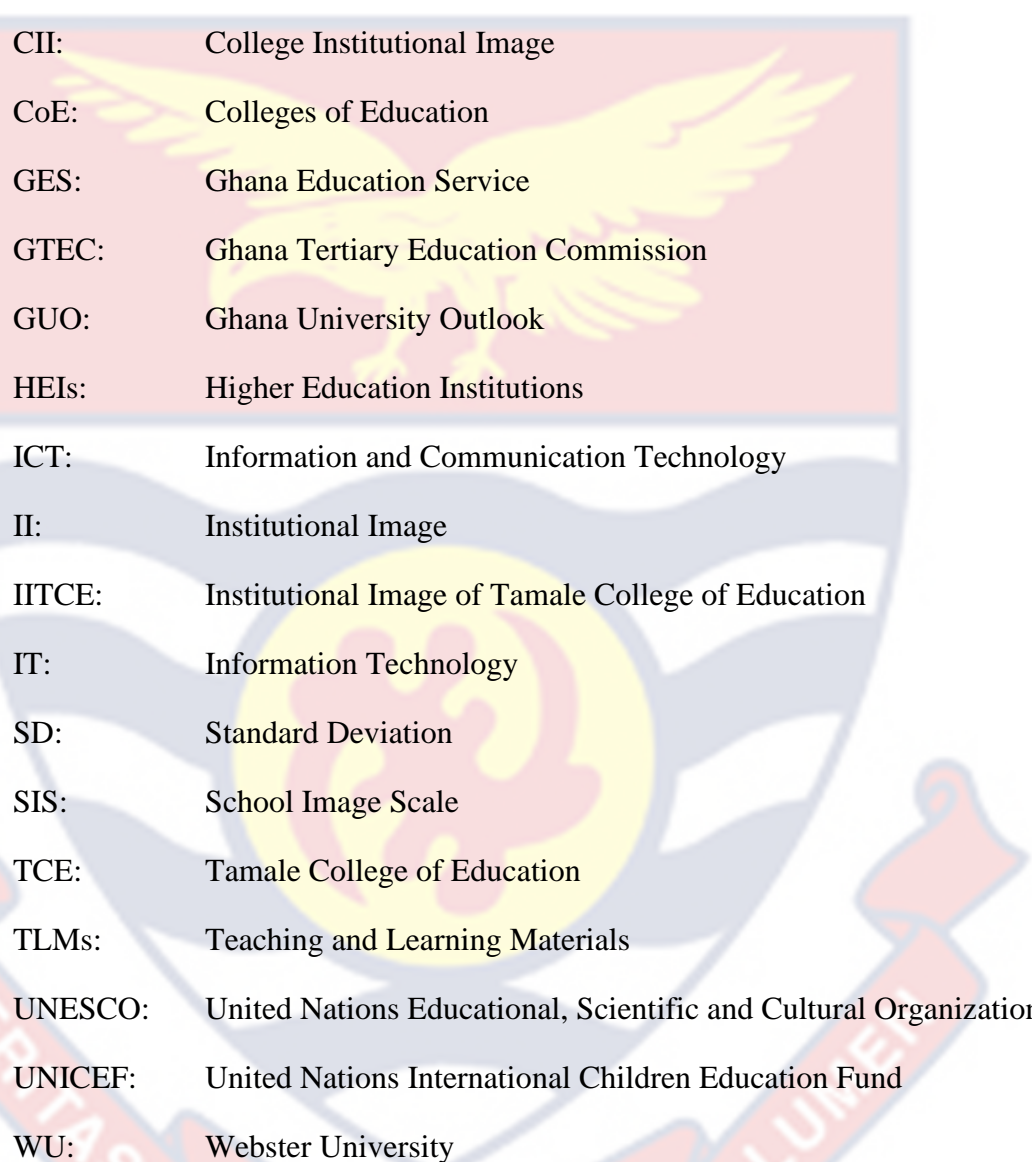
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAU:	Association of African Universities
BUIC:	Bangkok University International College
CII:	College Institutional Image
CoE:	Colleges of Education
GES:	Ghana Education Service
GTEC:	Ghana Tertiary Education Commission
GUO:	Ghana University Outlook
HEIs:	Higher Education Institutions
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology
II:	Institutional Image
IITCE:	Institutional Image of Tamale College of Education
IT:	Information Technology
SD:	Standard Deviation
SIS:	School Image Scale
TCE:	Tamale College of Education
TLMs:	Teaching and Learning Materials
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children Education Fund
WU:	Webster University

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Institutional image which will be used interchangeably in this study with corporate image, is very important in attracting and fostering trust among students in selecting a particular College of Education. As such, it is very essential for administrative staff of various institutions in sustaining operational success and effectiveness (Da Costa & Pelissari, 2017). According to Suparjo and Sunarsih (2018), institutional image is defined as what consumers think about an institution/company. This definition is narrow because it is limited to what the consumers think without consideration for administrative factors. Thus, this study adopts Honover's (2015) definition which gives a more comprehensive meaning. According to him, institutional image is defined as the average mental construct of the public, most especially the stakeholder groups, about an institution which is a function of perceived operational, financial and prospective advantage (Suparjo & Sunarsih, 2018). The word construct is used in this study to denote any activity of administrative staff aimed at enhancing, improving and shaping institutional image. Administrative staff is operationally considered in this study to connote all staff categories in an educational institution that are responsible for the day to day governing of the institution including all non-teaching staff categories.

Between the 20th and 21st centuries, the constitutional freedom of education which is an indispensable right of citizens of countries has led to a global educational revolution (Zezeza, 2021). Globally, there is a multiplicity of

higher educational institutions reaching 18,772 in 2018 (Zezeza, 2021). Africa has experienced its share of the educational revolution leading to proliferation of higher education institutions reaching 1500 in 2021 (Zezeza, 2021). However, out of the 1,500 higher educational institutions in African only 97 were recognized to have attained the global image standards as at 2023 (Baty, 2023). Besides, it was discovered that, commitment to quality assurance and research at the higher education institutions in Africa is marginal. This is because Africa invests only 1.01% of the worlds' total research quality expenditure in research; only 2.50% of global researchers and only 3.50% of the world's scholarly publications came from Africa despite the many scholars being produced from the higher educational institutions on the African continent (Zezeza, 2021).

In Ghana, the increasing importance of education and the consistent growth of the population and corresponding educational needs cannot be overemphasized (Parsons, 2016). This has placed much obligation on the country to train teachers of all kinds to teach in various schools in the country and beyond. The attempt to meet these educational demands led to the establishment of the Colleges of Education (CoE) and other higher institutions of learning in Ghana (Parsons, 2016).

In 2021, the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) reported that there were 50 accredited colleges of education in Ghana comprising 46 public and 4 private. Besides, there are other 110 private accredited tertiary institutions offering diploma and degree programmes (GTEC, 2021).

According to the Association of African Universities (2014), higher educational institutions otherwise referred to as tertiary educational institutions include all post-secondary educational institutions. The segregation of these institutions consists of 3 colleges of agriculture, 44 colleges of education, 10 Technical Universities, 63 private institutions, 11 nursing training institutions and 15 public universities (Ghana University Outlook, 2021).

The increasing number of Colleges of Education has triggered competitive spirit among them for prospective students making corporate brands and institutional images of colleges essential (Ivy, 2015). Due to the high competition in the higher learning sector, it is important to improve the level of service quality and corporate image in higher institutions. The role of service quality in higher education has received increasing attention in the past two decades. The management of higher education institutions is responsible in ensuring that all services provided to students are managed and well organised to enhance the institutional image which has a great role in attracting institutional patronage (Usman & Mokhtar, 2016). Similarly, Pérez and Torres (2017) posited that corporate image is an important factor that enhances corporate performance and competitiveness in the market domain with a growing demand for their products and or services.

In this regard, it has become very important for the management of colleges to keep up good service quality and corporate image since it will affect the level of students' satisfaction and attraction. It is true that, students are customers for every educational institution and hence, must be the main focus for

an educational institution; their satisfaction may indicate the success or failure of the institution (Abasimi & Xiaosong, 2016; Austin & Pervaiz, 2017). Service quality and corporate image are important constructs in determining satisfaction (Bapat, 2017). Subsequently, students' satisfaction with an institution will influence their choice and loyalty to it (Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001). In an investigation carried out by Sharifiatashgah and Aghaz (2015) to examine factors that influence institutional image, they found that local and international reputation, institutional members, academic planning and environment are important factors. The study by Sharifiatashgah and Aghaz (2015) further established a significant impact of perceived institutional image on students' trust in their choice of institutions.

However, administrative staff including (the principal, Dean of students, registrar etc) also have a vital responsibility of managing policies and processes and strategies that can help achieve service quality (Neuman & Hull, 2011). Current literature shows that there is inadequate empirical evidence on the mediating role that administrative staff play in managing institutional characteristics and stakeholder interests in order to improve the image of higher educational institutions and attract prospective students.

Statement of the problem

According to Neuman and Hull (2011), enhancing the image of any institution is essential for its survival and competitiveness among other institutions in the educational landscape. Meanwhile, quality assurance and image enhancement for higher education institution have been challenged by

politicization, lack of funds and research for effective and quality administrative work (Zezeza, 2021). In attempting to improve institutional image, studies turned to focus on the consumers or students point of view to the neglect of the perspectives of administrative staff – their mental construct and what they do to improve institutional image (Sharifiatashgah & Aghaz, 2015). It is a fact that, the mental construct of administrative staff about the institution influences their effort and policy directions. What students expect of their institution can only be translated into reality if efforts of administrative staff are in line with such students' expectations or if such expectations are translated into policies and implemented by administrative staff. Therefore, in exploring institutional image, the perspectives of administrative staff are very important.

In the past years, the institutional image of the Tamale College of Education has been questioned by many prospective students who ended up choosing other institutions (Colleges) over TCE (tace.edu.gh, 2021). The TCE also has a challenge of being limited in its capacity to admit more students due to infrastructure shortage and other challenges (tace.edu.gh, 2021). Meanwhile, there is no known study to explore the perspectives of administrative staff (AS) on the issues. Yet, understanding the perspectives of AS on the current image of TCE, the roles they play and the challenges could guide way forward. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge the gap by exploring the perspectives of administrative staff in shaping the institutional image of Tamale College of Education (TCE). I acknowledge that findings from this small study may not address all the issues, yet, it can identify challenges and suggest the way forward in addressing them.

Furthermore, the findings can help to improve holistic policy and practice to enhance the image of Tamale College of Education to attract quality students and improve admissions.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the perspectives of administrative staff in enhancing the institutional image of Tamale College of Education. This purpose would be pursued through the following specific research objectives:

Research Objectives

Specifically, the research seeks to:

- 1) investigate perceptions of administrative staff of Tamale College of Education of its institutional image;
- 2) identify how administrative staff contribute to constructing the institutional image of Tamale College of Education;
- 3) find out the challenges staff face in constructing the institutional image of Tamale College of Education;
- 4) find out how these challenges can be addressed so as to improve the institutional image of Tamale College of Education.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How do administrative staff of Tamale College of Education perceive institutional image?
- 2) How do they contribute to constructing the institutional image of the college?

- 3) What challenges do the administrative staff face in enhancing the image of the college?
- 4) What strategies do administrative staff of Tamale College of Education consider as viable means of enhancing the institutional image of the College?

Significance of the Study

This study brings new insight into literature about college's institutional image by emphasizing the perspectives of administrative staff to which other studies seemed to have not clearly paid attention. Moreover, this study is worth conducting because it is relevant to the administration of Tamale College of Education because it can contribute to effective policy formulation to improve the institutional image of the college. Lessons drawn from findings of the study can also be useful to the administrative staff of Tamale College of Education (the respondents) as a means to put their views and challenges across in order to have them addressed through acting on the recommendations made based on the findings of this study. Moreover, the study outcome is useful for the Government of Ghana in its efforts to ensure quality and improved standards in the Colleges of Education in Ghana. The outcomes can also serve as reference point for researchers who will conduct related studies.

Delimitation

This study is geographically delimited to the Tamale College of Education. This is because most students apply to other Colleges of Education instead of the Tamale College of Education (tace.edu.gh, 2021). The TCE is also limited in its capacity to admit more students due to infrastructure shortage and other

challenges (tace.edu.gh, 2021). The study explored the perspectives and role of administrative staff in constructing and enhancing the corporate image of the college. The key variables that are considered include: the perception of administrative staff of College Institutional Image (CII); what has been done to improve CII (what worked and what did not work); challenges in enhancing CII; and adopted to address the challenges. The study does not consider variables such as the views of students on what influenced their choice of an educational institution because existing literature reveals that studies have extensively explored it.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study lies in the data collection tool and data collection procedure. An interview guide is used as a tool for data collection. Interviews data are often considered as subjective and biased, and turn to constitute a limitation. This limitation could affect the findings by presenting the subjective position of an individual instead of the objective facts on the ground. Another concern about interviews is the effect of poor disclosure index. If administrative staff consider some information to be sensitive, they may be reluctant to disclose it. Thus the accuracy of the finding are limited by the extent to which the participants disclosed relevant information. However, these limitations were remediated through the application of confidentiality and anonymity principle. Having assured participants of confidentiality and anonymity, they were ready to disclose relevant but sensitive information since such information are not attributable to them as individuals. Also, the sampling

process applied acceptable measures to ensure that, participants who had some level of experience to speak appropriately to the issues were selected. Therefore the finding reflect the situation on the ground.

Organization of the Study

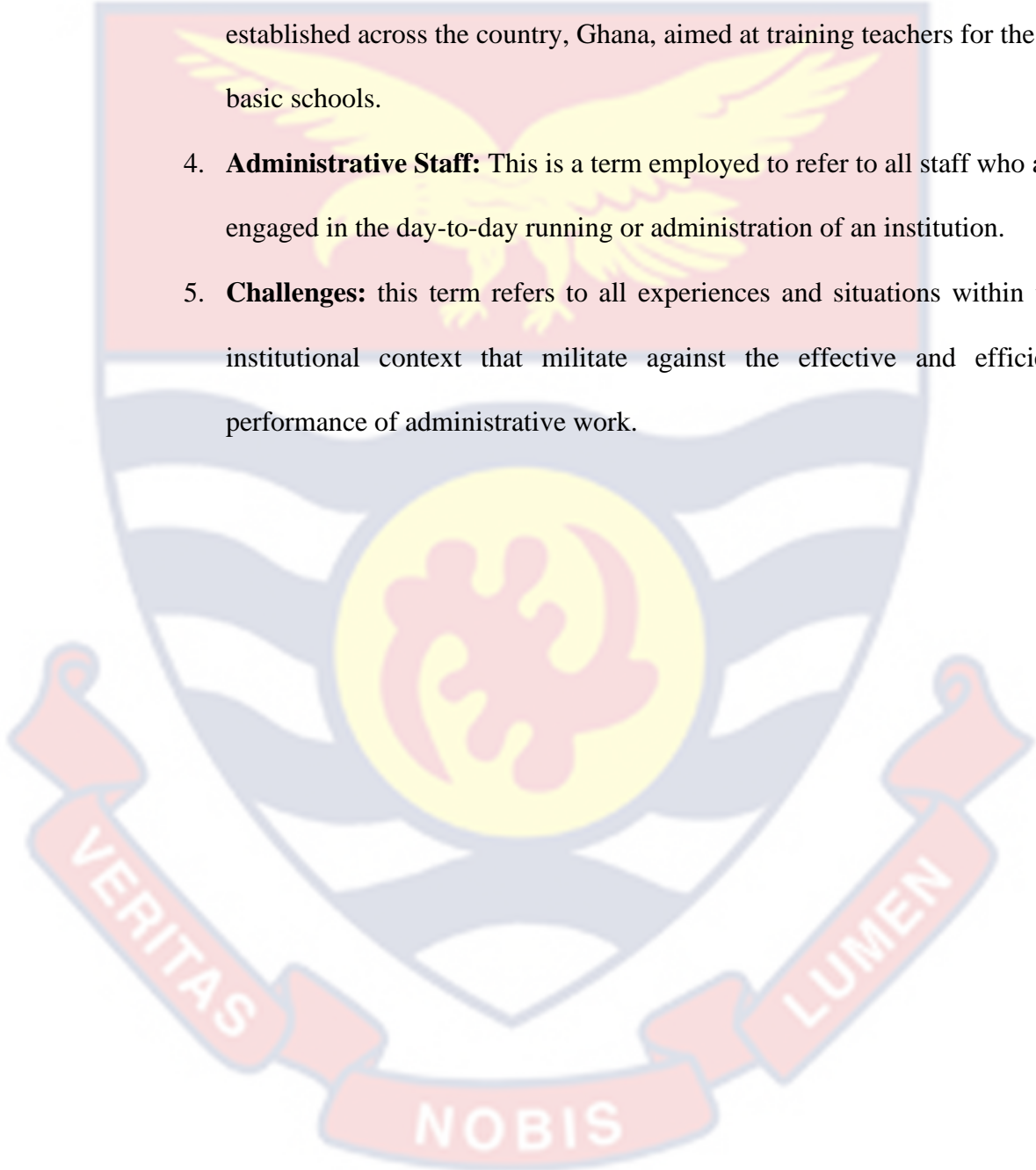
This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one which constitutes this chapter, considers items that form the general introduction of the study. These consist of the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, specific objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of study and limitation of the study. Chapter two reviews literature that are relevant to the topic. The review presents material under the key concepts, various specific objectives, theoretical framework and conceptual framework. Chapter three presents the methodology providing insight into the study design, study variables, profile of the study area, study population, sampling procedure, data collection instrument, piloting, data analysis procedure and ethical considerations. Chapter four presents and discusses the results. The chapter five, which is the last chapter, summarizes the study and highlights the key findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Operational Definition of Terms

1. **Institutional image:** This is the average mental construct of the public, most especially the stakeholder groups, about an institution which is a function of perceived operational, financial and prospective advantage
2. **Institution:** This is considered to mean any setup providing relevant services within the framework of its administrative and infrastructural

setups. For the purpose of this study, focus is placed mainly on educational institutions.

3. **College of Education:** A college of education is seen to be all institutions established across the country, Ghana, aimed at training teachers for the basic schools.
4. **Administrative Staff:** This is a term employed to refer to all staff who are engaged in the day-to-day running or administration of an institution.
5. **Challenges:** this term refers to all experiences and situations within the institutional context that militate against the effective and efficient performance of administrative work.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on various perspectives of institutional image, challenges and coping strategies as well as theories that provide the framework for the study. The review also presents various prospects of institutional image, and the conceptual framework that underpins the study.

Image

It is important to first of all understand the term image so as to form basis of understanding institutional image. The term “image” has been generally defined and investigated in research contexts concerning profit and non-profit organizations as well as higher education institutions (HEIs) (Sunarsih, 2018). Azoury, Daou and Khoury (2014, p.3) defined image as “the mental representation of a real object that acts in that object’s place”. Linking to an institution, Martineau (2013) considers the image of an institution as the manner in which the institution appears in peoples’ minds depending on the psychological dispositions of people that results over a long time of considering the qualities and attributes of the said institution. An image serves as the immediate set of insight that is formed by an observer who comes into experience with the structure, characteristics and operational qualities of an object observed (Azoury, et al., 2014). Basically, an image is the final result of what the observer believes, or the ideas he has, or feelings and impressions that were formed about an institution at any period of time due to past or current experience with the institution (Azoury,

et al., 2014). Images signify the outcomes or the consequences of how the messages sent by the appearance and activity of what is observed is interpreted by the one observing the object (Azoury, et al., 2014). In the case of an educational institution, the messages about the institution could be delivered through medium such as the media, direct observation through visitation to the school, working with the systems and structure of the school for some time, listening to an account given by a family or friend or employees of the institution (Azoury, et al., 2014). Image can be formed based on various considerable factors such as: the size of the object that is being observed, the extent of diversification, how familiar or otherwise the observer has become of the object he observes, how certain or otherwise the observer has become of the object being observed (Polat, 2011).

Institutional Image

Institutional image can basically be described as ‘the image of an institution’ (Suparjo & Sunarsih, 2018). The image of an institution is generally the whole mindset that consumers have from the corporate environment. Institutional image is a collection of beliefs, ideas and impressions people have about the institution (Suparjo & Sunarsih, 2018). This definition is a classical presentation of the perception of consumers that influences their behavior towards the goods and services of a particular institution. However, a deficiency in the definition by Suparjo and Sunarsih (2018) is that, they focused solely on the consumer, which in educational contexts often refers to students. This makes the definition somewhat narrow. The fact is that institutional image is not only a construct in the mind of students. School administrative staff also have their

mental construct about what they think the image of their institution is and what they want the image to be. The true image of an institution therefore, lies in the intersection of the two main constructs (that of the students and that of the administrative staff), as well as other intervening players such as lecturers, national and international policy and local environment. In this regard, Honover (2015) gave a more comprehensive definition. According to him, institutional image is defined as the average mental construct of the public, most especially the stakeholder groups, about an institution which is a function of perceived operational, financial and prospective advantage. Though this definition says something about the aspects of both the operational and consumer perspectives, it also neglects the actual image in the minds of administrative staff about the institutions they lead or work in. I argue that administrative staff's construct and expectation about an institution is very important in policies relating to the development of an institution because these staff are responsible for coordinating views of stakeholders as well as their own views into policies and practices that determine the direction of institution.

Meanwhile, the concept of institutional image was perceived by Karacabey et al. (2016) to be a complex one which encompasses an array of aspects related to organizational reputation. Institutional image was understood based on both tangible and intangible elements of an organization (Karacabey et al., 2016; Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2015), or functional and emotional components (Wilkins & Huisman, 2013). According to Pelissari and Gonzalez (2018), institutional image is a composite of various elements both reflecting and

communicating the identity and reputation of an organization. Similarly, da Costa et al. (2019) proposed that institutional image can be regarded as a mental picture of a particular organization based on observer's cognitive and affective dispositions. Institutional image therefore reflects both internal and external stakeholders' perceptions and conceptions of the organization (Polat, 2011). Besides, Kurt and Kalman (2019) went further to explain that, organizational image is the result of the complex and multifaceted struggle of attributes processed by individuals through the messages received from the organization based on social, historical, experiential, physical and material considerations. As a multifaceted enterprise, institutional image therefore describes to a large extent, an intersection of various factors relating to an institution perceived as a result of the individuals' interaction with, and interpretation of organizational components (da Costa & Pelissari, 2016).

Notwithstanding this conceptualisation, Kotler and Armstrong (2010) suggested that institutional image is a terminology that conveys the service distinctive benefits and positioning of the products and services provided by a particular institution. In this regard, Kotler and colleague admitted the relevance of organizational services in contributing to organizational image. This is similar to the impression given by Suparjo and Sunarsih (2018), who describe institutional image from the consumer's perspective.

Moreover, Kuo and Ye (2009) have emphasized how broad the concept of corporate image is and the fact that it covers a wide range of aspects such as the overall image of the institution, the reputation or respect attached to such

institution, and reliable or otherwise such an institution can be. Similarly, Wong (2017) reveals that, corporate image is formed by two main dimensions which are institutional effectiveness and institutional reputation. Institutional effectiveness refers to the aspect of the institution which regards its current functionality while institutional reputation has to do with the construct of the people about the historical impact and track record of such an institution (Wong, 2017).

In addition, Azoury, et al. (2014) introduced the concept of brand image to suggest that most institutions have distinguishable images. According to Azoury, et al. (2014), brand image is an observation or the quality and attraction associated with the brand name of the organization. At the company level, image has been described as perceptions of an organization which is portrayed in the connection that the observer makes between the said institution and what is in memory (Azoury, et al., 2014). Consumer characteristics and behavior are greatly determined by the brand image portrayed by the said institution. Thus, the image influences the increases in sales and strengthening of brand loyalty. Therefore, brand image must be considered as a pressing factor in company development as well as enhancing the image of institutions both in profit making and non-profit making arenas. Institutional image is therefore a means to boost company profitability and competitiveness. Various universities are working hard to maintain competitiveness through enhancing their image so as to attract student preference and investor opportunities in both the business and educational contexts (Azoury, et al., 2014). Brand image includes a cognitive dimension as well as an affective dimension of the overall subjective considerations which

inextricably leads to the formation of designative and evaluative perceptions (Azoury, et al., 2014). Azoury, et al. (2014) believed that corporate image encompassed "...the representations, both rational and affective, that individual or group of individuals associate with a company or institution as a net result of the experiences of, attitude toward, feelings and information about the company that the group has".

From the definitions set forth from various researches, it is clear that, institutional image is the sum of "images" in the receiver and controlled by the organization. All individuals, regardless of gender, origin, characteristics and attributes can have an image or mental picture which can be positive, negative and indifferent about any organization, its products, its reputation, its functionality and many other considerations. When that is done, such a mental picture is referred to as institutional image (Wong, 2017).

Relevance of Institutional Image

Notwithstanding, institutional image is an important topic for consideration in the domain of higher educational institutions due to the progressively competitive landscape within which they operate (Perez & Torres, 2017). This importance of institutional image was confirmed by a study conducted by Mujkic and Husic-Mehmedovic (2020) that evaluated whether the corporate image of a particular higher education institution affects students' satisfaction, loyalty and enrollment decisions. The results show a positive correlation between corporate image and student satisfaction; the study (Mujkic & Husic-Mehmedovic, 2020) further explained that corporate image influences

satisfaction among students thereby plunging their interest to apply to such school. That is to say that, Mujkic and Husic-Mehmedovic (2020) corroborated that, corporate image of colleges can strongly and remarkably influence the satisfaction, loyalty and enrollment intentions of students.

Regarding the relevance of institutional image, Alves and Raposo (2015) also conducted a study to analyse the influence of institutional image on student satisfaction and loyalty. A descriptive model tested through the use of structural equations was applied among a study sample of 2,687 students. The results were analysed descriptively and it was found that, institutional image is the construct that mostly important in determining student satisfaction and behaviour. The influence of institutional image is also relevant on student loyalty. Alves and Raposo (2015) suggested that, the keen competition between higher educational institutions can be won through a deliberate measurement, and matching up with the the institutional image held by students. Alves and Raposo (2015) portrayed that, the construct which most strongly influences students' satisfaction and loyalty in higher educational domain is the image construct of an institution. The statistical test revealed a total effect of $S = 0.86$ and $L = 0.73$ correlating with $I = 1.0$; where S = satisfaction, L = loyalty and I = image. In another way, a ratio of $1 : 0.86 : 0.73$ exists between institutional image, satisfaction and loyalty respectively among students. Thus, if the institutional image rises or falls by a unit satisfaction increases or diminishes by a proportion of 0.86 and loyalty by a proportion of 0.73. Corporate image is generally significant in determining the success of the institution. In effect, corporate image is a strong antecedent for student

satisfaction, student loyalty and consequently, student enrollment intentions. Therefore, institutional image with its associated effect is very important for the survival and operational success of higher institutions such as colleges and universities.

How College Institutional Image is Perceived

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) perceives that institutional image is a product of institutional norms that have cognitive and moral dimensions (UNESCO, 2020). Thus, the UNESCO presents institutional image as a perception and mental construct of the people about an institution. Similarly, Lafuente-Ruiz-de-Sabando (2018) considers institutional image as a normative pattern in an institution that is enforceable by laws, informal customs and institutional practices. One issue that has been of controversy is whether institutional image is about the institution being good or being popular. Honover (2015) discovers in his review study on recommended methods for enhancing brand awareness and reputation identification in higher education that institutional image is a fusion of being good and being popular. The study found out that organizational standing positively has a relationship with brand recognition as institutions with good reputation, but little publicity misses the possibilities to interact with a larger base of possible contributors, students, and funding organizations. In effect, Honover (2015) is suggesting that, institutional goodness cannot exist independently of institutional popularity. If an institution is good but not publicized, such an institution cannot succeed because, the public may not be aware of its existence.

Moreover, Gunalan and Ceylan (2015) see organizational image as a complex construct that is based on the perception of the public or personnel of an organization that carry out a differentiating and comparative appraisal of its characteristics. In this regard, Gunalan and Ceylan (2015) tries to give a sense of total departure from the concept of goodness and popularity by introducing a new idea focusing on the appraisal of institutional characteristics by the public. However, Gunalan and Ceylan's (2015) idea does not constitute a departure at all upon a careful consideration. This is because after appraising the institutional characteristics, one will come to a conclusion of whether such characteristics suggest the institution is good or popular. It is this mental conclusion after appraising the institutional characteristics that constitutes the institutional image.

According to Usoh et al (2019), an educational institution has its institutional image which is made up of two main elements; corporate personality and corporate identity. Corporate personality was seen as the way of life of the people in the said institution which develops over a long period of time and which guides institutional conduct and practices in a particular manner. Corporate identity refers to the actual actions, activities and performance of the said institution. Similarly, institutional image can be explained as institutional design (which comprises of equipment, facilities, design of classrooms logo, architectural design of buildings, advertising materials, school brochure), institutional identity (the ideology of the said school, the clients' own perception of school, the defined goal and objectives of the school), institutional culture (the values, norms and beliefs which shapes the manner of interaction that takes place in the organization,

organizational uniformity and other elements that are common to all members or, as sub-cultures by some groups of members), and corporate communication (as the key task of public relations) (Usoh, et al, 2019).

Components of Institutional Image

Current research has not agreed on a standardized definition of institutional image, yet there is a consensus of the multidimensionality of the concept. Thus, institutional image is multifactorial encompassing several factors contributing to it. Azoury, et al. (2014) discovered a cognitive and effective aspects of institutional image. Azoury, et al. (2014) conducted their study to explore university image and attributes, and how they influence student satisfaction. The study looked into the interrelationships that exist between the various elements of the university image and how such components or elements affect the satisfaction of students. The study tested hypotheses on the relationships between the affective elements, the cognitive elements and the overall image in association with student satisfaction. A multinational empirical investigation was conducted on a representative sample of 763 students selected from 8 countries in the Middle East. After the investigation, the findings showed that, the cognitive component of institutional image is an antecedent of the affective element. In turn, the two components of institutional image (affective and cognitive) influence the formation of the overall image of a college. The study by Azoury, et al. (2014) also revealed that, the affective and overall institutional image of the institutions in the selected 8 countries had statistically significant effect on the overall satisfaction and loyalty of students in their respective colleges.

Moreover, Shamaki (2015) classified two components of institutional image which are totally different from Azoury, et al. (2014) classification. Shamaki (2015) reveals functional and emotional components of institutional image. The functional component explains the tangible characteristics that encompasses the physical and special environment expressed in its beauty, size, arrangement, layout, organization and conduciveness. The emotional component on the other hand is a measurable stimuli and emotional reactions that are attached to the said institution which drives people's attitude and feelings about the institution (Shamaki, 2015).

Furthermore, many recent studies (Mudassir & Norsuhaily (2015); Shamaki, (2015); Duruji et al, 2014) have also presented educational environment as a major component of image of an educational institution. Stated differently, the image of an educational institution has been noted to have been a function of the institutional environment. Tukur et al (2019) conducted a study in Kwara State, Nigeria aimed at presenting an acceptable marketing mix for universities in Kwara State. The study observed the increasing urge for higher education as contrasted to unimpressive patronage of some private universities and hence adopted a survey research method to investigate the situation. "Marketing Mix Services and Students Enrolment" Questionnaire was used to collect data which was analysed using descriptive statistical tools such as means, t-test and Pearson product-moment correlation statistics. The findings revealed that physical environment was rated first as a factor considered by majority (96.3%) of the respondents in selecting an educational institution. The study also found that

physical environment of educational institutions accounted for 4 times a determinant of enrolment to the said school compared to school fees or price ($X = 19.300$, $SD = .907$, $Sig = 0.00$).

Nathaniel (2014) defined the environment of an educational institution as a blend of factors covering the social, special and physical qualities that are experienced in the educational institution. To Nathaniel (2014), the environment of an educational institution includes the way space is organized, furnished and maintained. Moreover, Pohnpei (2010), perceived the environment of an educational institution as the physical characteristics of such institution; which encompasses its size, buildings and how it is furnished. Kwa (2017) extended educational environment beyond the physical features and included classroom atmosphere, trust, co-operation and mutual respect, which he noted shapes people's perception about the institution and creates a very welcoming or conducive atmosphere for effective learning exercise in the institution. Miller (2011), lending her voice to classroom environment and its influence on the image of an educational institution emphasized that, classroom environment encompasses a broad array of educational components and ideas which includes the physical set-up of the school, the psychological climate of the school created through social interactions and numerous instructional systems related to instructor characteristics and behaviors that are regulated by a set of codes of conducts.

Various experiential studies have established that, whiles academic achievement history contributes to institutional image, learning environment is of

great importance for student's academic performance (Nathanielm, 2014). The educational process leading to educational development involves the interaction of physical environment, socio-cultural ideologies and psychological dispositions of educators and students. This interaction creates an amalgamated environmental arena within which learning takes place. If such amalgamated environment favours learner and instructor characteristics, and there is absence of environmental oppositions, learning could take place effectively (Mudassir & Norsuhaily, 2015). This demonstrates that a suitable setting is essential for effective learning (Mudassir & Norsuhaily, 2015). Similarly, Shamaki (2015) enunciated that, academic achievement is determined by the idealness of the environment for learning. Shamaki, (2015) studied the effects of the classroom environment on academic achievement of students in Yobe State in Nigeria where he found that, there was a notable deviation from the mean achievement marks of students taught in an learner friendly environment when compared to students instructed in a dreary setting.

Adamu (2015) also undertook a similar study to investigate the influence that learning environment has on student's academic achievements in Taraba State, Nigeria. The investigation was done among public secondary schools selected from the Taraba State and the findings showed that, there is a significant difference in the performances of the Experimental group and the control group. The experimental group were taught in well-resourced school environments while the control group was taught in a less-resourced, noisy, and disorganized school environments. Further investigations revealed that, the nature of classroom

building; class with adequate furniture; class with small class population and the use of teaching and learning materials has positive influence on the academic performance of students.

Moreover, Mudassir and Norsuhaily (2015) also examined how school environment influences students' performance in examinations in Kuala Terengganu. The result of the study confirmed that of Shamaki, (2015) and Adamu (2015) as it showed that, students from a school with adequate facilities, good teachers, good furniture, adequate space and favorable environment tend to do better than schools with fewer resources, nonprofessional teachers, and a less supportive climate.

In another study conducted by Duruji, et al. (2014), which examined the effect of the classroom setting on the academic achievement of student in Ota, Nigeria considered factors such as class size, setting, and physical structure of the school planning, school facilities, aesthetics, sanitation, conveniences and maintenance culture. After investigating the various factors, the study established that, the nature of the learning environment, its quality and kind of infrastructure and finishing, coupled with frequent and regular maintenance culture have strong impact on the academic performance of students in such schools.

Furthermore, another study done by Ezike, (2018) to investigated school environment and students' academic interests as correlates of academic performance in secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The result of the statistical investigation corroborated the findings of Duruji, et al. (2014) as it indicated significant relationship between school environment and academic

achievement. The outcome discovered by Ezike, (2018) is not also different from that of Gilavand (2016) in a study he conducted which aimed to examine the impact of environmental factors (noise, open space, lighting of the school and paintings in educational institutions) on school image and academic performance. Gilavand (2016) discovered that environmental factors, including appropriate coloring, lighting of educational environment and open space had remarkable influence on school image and academic achievement of students.

Odeh et al, (2015) after investigation the influence of school environment on 5 aspects of Student's Academic Performance in Nigeria, stated that, the school environment is a precursor to achievement as the school climate, discipline and physical facilities portrayed undeniable influence on academic outcomes of students in schools of Benue State, Nigeria. This implies that schools that failure to provide the necessary learning environment in the form of the needed infrastructure, social interaction, painting and psychological conduciveness could result in poor performance among students who might have performed excellently in another school environment better then theirs. This is because students hardly put in the best when the school environment is not motivate can conducive enough.

In another study conducted by Ihekoronye (2020) in Abuja which involves a study population of 700 students, 402 students were finally chosen as sample size. Consequently, 402 questionnaires were designed and administered. However, 394 questionnaires were successfully filled and retrieved for the analysis. Data collected through questionnaire were analyzed using mean statistical technique

where mean difference indicates the disparity in the influence of two different or mutually exclusive variables. After investigating whether school environment influences academic performance, it was discovered that favourable school environment has strong positive influence on students' academic performance as well as the mental construct of students about their institution.

Abbott (2014) also conducted a study and found outcomes that are congruent to that of Ihekoronye (2020). Abbott (2014) enunciated that, school environment is very important component for effective teaching and learning in educational institutions. Abbott (2014) explained school environment as a combination of physical, locational, contextual and cultural interactions that provides the medium for teaching and learning. Abbott (2014) admitted that, students may learn in a wide variety of settings and ways, and a good learning environment must be dynamic and flexible. Beside, Abbott (2014) recognizes that learning environment specifically applies to the classroom setting where there are arrangements purposely for learning. The term also includes the culture of a school or class, including how individuals interact cooperate with one another in the class, as well as the ways teachers organize lessons and their classroom practices. Some public secondary schools in Nigeria especially those found in rural areas are characterized by over-crowded student classrooms. There is the problem of inadequate and uncomfortable seats for students to sit and learn effectively. Issues of dirt, poor ventilation, and noise also defines an improper environment for learning which can affect the image of a school negatively (Abbott, 2014).

Institutional Image of Higher Education Institutions in Africa and Ghana

The image of African higher education institutions has been faced with the question of quality in an era of multiplicity of institutions (Zezeza, 2021). In 2018, there were 1,682 universities in Africa, up from 784 in 2000 and 294 in 1980. Clearly, higher education has experienced explosive growth (Zezeza, 2021). Zezeza (2021), noted that, the image of higher education institutions in Africa and around the world is in a moment of rapid transition and transformation. Zezeza (2021) examined the past, present and future of African higher education; looking at the challenges reform and transformation, the desired trajectories for 2050. It was revealed that, the challenges facing African higher education are identifiable in terms of limited institutional supply in terms of the numbers of universities and enrolment ratios. Despite the recent multiplicity of higher educational institutions in Africa, Africa's proportional share of the world's higher education institution is little. Out of the 18,772 higher education institutions in the world, Africa's share was 8.9% compared to 37% for Asia, 21.9% for Europe, 20.4% for North America and 12% for Latin America and the Caribbean (Zezeza, 2021). Meanwhile, in 2023, Baty (2023) noted some marginal improvement as there are now 97 African higher education institutions included in the World Rankings of Higher Education Institutions.

Notwithstanding this, African universities also suffer inadequate financial resources, as all major sources are constrained, including tuition fees, auxiliary income, research grants, government subventions, philanthropic donations and concessionary loans. Human capital remains deficient, especially in terms of

faculty as African universities are not producing enough graduates with terminal degrees (Zezeza, 2021). African higher education institutions also face low research priority. According to the latest UNESCO Science Report 2021, Africa spends only 0.59% of GDP on research and development, compared to a world average of 1.79% (Zezeza, 2021). When computed, Africa research priority in terms of finance constituted 1.01% of global research and development expenditures, 2.50% of global researchers and 3.50% of scholarly publications, compared to 45.7%, 44.5% and 48.0%, respectively for a region such as Asia. Interestingly, the entire African continent, with a population of 1.3 billion, produces fewer scholarly publications than Canada (3.60%), with a population of 37.7 million (Quartz, 2022). Another important challenge that militate against improving quality image in higher education institutions in Africa is that, infrastructure is often suboptimal as physical facilities do not always match growth in enrolments. Moreover, leadership and governance systems regularly compromised by external interventions and politicisation, internal dysfunctions, authoritarianism and corruption affected the image of many public higher education institution of Africa (Baty, 2023). There is also a great disservice as there are persistent mismatches between university education and economic needs that translate into high levels of graduate unemployment rates (Awa, 2020). Quartz (2022) noted similar outcomes and stated that, the current pattern of skills production in Africa does not match labor market demand or development needs.

Another event that portrays the image of higher institution in Africa needs improvement is the fact that, African and Ghanaian universities do not fare well in

international higher education rankings as the Times ranking of Higher Education Institutions in 2021 resulted in only 60 African universities out of the over 1,500 were listed to have met global standards; led by Egypt with 21, followed by South Africa with 10, Algeria eight, Nigeria six, Morocco and Tunisia five each, and one each for Kenya, Uganda and Ghana (Zaleza, 2021). In Africa focused ranking of higher education institutions, Egypt and Algeria are the two best represented African countries in the ranking, with 28 and 15 universities each. While the top 10 is dominated by universities in South Africa, 12 South African universities are represented in the full ranking (Quartz, 2022). Higher education institutions in Ghana seem not to be perceived among the top rankings both in Africa and the world at large. This calls for the need to devise efforts towards improving the image of higher education institutions in Ghana (Quartz, 2022).

In Ghana, Zakari (2016) asserted that, the multiplicity of higher educational institutions has given students a wider variety of options as to where to pursue their studies, yet has also pose a challenge of quality assurance. The recent competition in the higher educational landscape in Ghana and Africa, however, points to the need for higher institutions to ensure good image and quality. Therefore, developing standards for measuring service quality in higher education institutions has become even more vital. Zakari (2016) explored Ghanaian students' perception of service quality in higher educational institutions and its effects on their loyalty. Interaction and non-interaction effects of service quality dimensions, institutional reputation and level of education on students' satisfaction and loyalty were examined using quantitative approach with

questionnaire to collect data from 379 students attending the University of Ghana Business School. Regression analysis and the structural equations model (SEM) were used to analyse the data and it was found that there is a variation in the key service quality dimension that were peculiar to the undergraduate and post graduate students. Tangibles, assurance, institutional reputation and responsiveness were found to be peculiar to undergraduates; whereas, institutional reputation, tangibles and empathy were found to be crucial to postgraduate students. Meanwhile, the overarching findings revealed the role institutional reputation and image plays in predicting students' satisfaction and loyalty. The study therefore, recommended that managers of higher educational institutions should concentrate on institutional reputation enhancement as a strategic tool in achieving students' satisfaction and loyalty.

Making efforts to improve the image of higher education institutions in Ghana and Africa is therefore imperative (Awa, 2020). Over several centuries of realizing the importance of higher education in Africa, it is surprising to note that, the first African Higher Education Summit was held just recently (March, 2015) in Dakar, Senegal (Zezeza, 2021). Yet, the good news is that, the summit identified the challenges and opportunities for African universities in the realisation of the African Union's Agenda 2063. It is expected that, in 2050, when Africa will have an estimated 2.5 billion people, 25.5% of the world's population (Zezeza, 2021). Quality and transformative higher education will therefore be indispensable to turn this numerous people into useful beings. Thus by 2050, Africa should have a greatly expanded higher education system with an average

enrolment ratio of at least 50%, a system firmly anchored on the values of access, affordability and inclusive excellence. Areas that were identified to need improvement towards achieving the goal is financial sustainability, efficiency, technological advancement, global competitiveness, high-quality students, faculty, leadership, research and partnerships (Awa, 2020).

Institutional Image, Student Satisfaction and Loyalty

Eger, Egerová and PISOŇOVÁ (2018) conducted a study to provide an understanding of school image through the development and practical application of a useful tool for assessing the elements of corporate image. Semantic differential scales were utilized in a marketing setup as a technique for assessing school image and its components. The investigation revealed that, communication with the public and the development and sustainability of a positive school image influenced not only the marketing of the school but also the educational process reflecting in effective teaching and learning in the school leading to student satisfaction. Thus, it is important to enhance school image as a means of inducing and maintaining satisfaction among stakeholders of the school.

The study by Eger, et al. (2018) provides a very good foundation for assessing the influence of institutional image on the satisfaction of students and their continuous enrolment and going concern of the said institution. Meanwhile, some other researchers examined satisfaction within the broader context of a competitive market. For instance, Ali, et al. (2016) enunciated that, in a competitive marketplace, where organizations seek for customers, client satisfaction becomes an important indicator of market advantage. This is because,

customer satisfaction extensively depends on the extent to which the business organization is making efforts to match or exceed the expectation of its clients. By measuring customer satisfaction, an organization will be able to get indication of how successful they have been in providing products that are cherished by the audience or customers in the competitive market. Customer satisfaction shows the extent to which the consumers prefer the products of the organization over other products that are supplied into the market by other competing organizations. Customer satisfaction is therefore an important antecedent of customer loyalty and commitment (Ali, et al. 2016). A positive influence of product utility on the consumer which indicates consumer satisfaction is usually expressed in purchase of the product with favourable attitude, use of the product, repurchase intention, positive word-of mouth, and the continuous use of the product (Bapat, 2017).

Consumer satisfaction has been a popular topic in marketing (Bapat, 2017). It has been used as a special avenue to maximize productivity and market advantage. Customer satisfaction which leads to building institutional image grows in three broad stages namely; the first stage which determines the initial utility derived from the product, the second stage which determines the established relationship between how the customer appraises the effort of the organization in meeting expectations through the quality of products they produce and the third stage concerns the results of consumer satisfaction, its effect on customers' prolonged purchase decisions, which affects company sales and profitability (Ali, et al., 2016). The target of the marketing as a practice is the effort towards organizations satisfying their customers. In the context of

educational organization, the schools must be intentional on the marketing strategies adopted to satisfy their students so as to induce loyalty and commitment. However, many educational institutions concern little about marketing; instead of thoroughly evaluating student satisfaction, they only refer to enrollment, attendance as indications that, customers are satisfied (Ali, et al., 2016). The disadvantage of this method of using enrollment as a means to measure satisfaction is that, just as satisfaction matures over time and customer reactions and consequences of such satisfaction realized in a later time, dissatisfaction also matures over time and hence when allowed to mature may bring negative client reaction at a stage or time when the company or school can do nothing to control it leading to company demise (Ali, et al., 2016).

Moreover, Tourangeau and Rasinskim proposed a process through which personalities arrive and showed their satisfaction, it involves at least five types of operations which are inclusive of interpreting the survey question, accessing relevant data on the institution from historical data or past experience, appraising the data according to its importance, summarizing the data or the information to gain its implication, and transferring that implication into practice by giving the necessary response (Burnett, 2008). Dang and Hathaway (2015) showed that, marketers perceive service quality as the level of effort required to achieve acceptability in the market. On the other hand, the customers see service quality as the amount of efforts needed to satisfy what they need. Andreassen and Lindestad examined corporate image and established that, it has a strong influence on customer satisfaction especially in situations where the consumer has little

knowledge about the service rendered to him (Economic Planning Unit, 2015). Consumers regard the image of the company as indicative of the quality of the products or services of that brand (Duque, 2013). Service quality is also described as the consequence of the comparison between expected service in either of the Nordic and an American perspective: The Nordic, describes service quality as a function of “technical quality” considerations that shows the utility that the customer gets, and “functional quality” considerations showing how the service is delivered to the consumer (Dang & Hathaway 2015). In a typical American perspective, service quality is seen as the relationship between customer expectations and company expectations (Dang & Hathaway 2015).

Enhancing Institutional Image: Strategies

With regards to enhancing the element of popularity, Kurt and Kalman (2019) conducted a study which focuses on developing a valid and reliable measuring tool to assess school image and explored their scale and parameters that potentially influenced school image in Southeastern Turkey. The overall aim of their study was to find out areas that administrative staff of colleges should be interested in during their efforts to improve institutional image. Exactly 668 students were selected between 2017-2018 academic year and examined using a School Image Scale. The findings indicated that the School Image Scale (SIS) incorporated six factors (including lecturer-administrator characteristics, sporting activities, school-parent interaction student profile, student support services, and physical conditions) as potential factors that influenced school image. However, lecturer-administrative characteristics served as uniting factor which mediates the

other factors towards achievement of desired image. Thus, the findings of the study conducted by Kurt and Kalman (2019) suggests that, appropriate regulation of factors such as school-parent interaction, sporting activities, student profile, lecturer-administrator characteristics, student support services, and physical conditions of colleges could help enhance the image of the colleges.

In a more marketing context, Honover (2015) discovered that, though traditional marketing methods including direct mail and print posts remain popular method of advertisement among colleges of education. Many institutions reported increasing use of social media marketing and email marketing to reach a broader audience in contemporary times. The social media marketing works better as they are faster in reaching a multitude of audience concurrently (Honover, 2015). Besides, Sharifiatashgah and Aghaz (2015) found out that, some workable attempts made by administrations of reputable educational institutions in building institutional image were devising innovative policymaking processes, including effective growth management strategies such as continuous professional development, introduction of higher degrees of learning and effective human resource management (Sharifiatashgah and Aghaz, 2015).

Quite differently, Mbawuni and Nimako (2015) proposed a unique approach. They noted that an important approach to enhancing a strong institutional image is the consumer perspective approach which considers what influences students' choice of institutions and then regulating the factors to fit students' taste. In a cross-sectional study conducted by Mbawuni and Nimako (2015) to explore the factors underlying students' choices in accessing higher

education in Ghana, it was discovered that, cost, quality of student support system, attachment to institution, recommendation from lecturers and other staff, failure to gain alternative admissions, location benefits, among others were potential factors that influenced students' choice of institutions. Thus, the ability of administrative staff to regulate these factors to fit students' taste will yield a good institutional image.

Usoh, et al. (2019) were more emphatic when they mentioned that, principals are realizing the need to work positively with community to ensure a good image of their institutions. In line with the assumption that the, leadership of principals are significant in promoting a positive image of colleges, Usoh, et al. (2019) conducted a study with the aim of examining the importance of projecting a good image of a school and roles of the principal to accomplish this objective. Their study utilized qualitative descriptive method. The data collected was from observations, reports, literature, and documents. The results show that promoting a positive image for school, as a market-oriented activity, requires the principal to exercise highly developed public relation skills. They need to have more interaction with the external community to promote the school, attract students as well as retain them. The study concludes that promoting a positive school image is a business-like effort in which school management should adapt some marketing approaches. Principal's role is a pivotal point in projecting a good image. The leadership of the principal is a key factor in gauging public opinion that contributes to the image of the school.

The finding of Usoh, et al. (2019) suggests that, the steps taken by most administrators to ensure proper image of educational institutions have been transformed into a more business-like context requiring business strategies instead of release of a simple prospectus to target market or society. This is why it has become imperative that, the discussion and planning process regarding how institutional image could be achieved must incorporate marketing tools and concepts so as to offer schools business and marketing advantage. Thus administrative strategies towards appealing to students must involve the effort of administrators to systematic analysis the market setting and developing a marketing strategy that can be effective at appealing to the prospective applicants. It is important that the image promoted must be a realistic one, not deliberately in contrast with what is actually the truth. Falsifying marketing information leads to misleading of many people. Usoh, et al. (2019) proposed five stages of marketing strategy for winning the school competitions; first is to perform a market analysis based on objectives of strength and weakness of competitor schools. Second, is and analysis of school's strength and weakness and its improvement needs, then formulate a strategic vision and finally, develop a budget plan (Usoh, et al., 2019). Several steps to conduct the program of image development comprises of identifying characteristics which are demanded by community; determine how the school must perceive those characteristics in demand; determine which characteristics are specific to the school; determine impressions held of your school by different groups associated with it; decide the kind of image that the

school wishes to develop; select the efforts to be conducted; and monitor the results (Usoh, et al., 2019).

Similarly, Enache (2011) noted that, HEIs could inform the market of its services based on a multiple sets of promotion channels. These channels could consist of advertising, public relations, publicity, promotional based sales efforts and personal sales contacts (Pratminingsih & Soedijati, 2011). The personal sales contact between the HEI and the student has shown to be of importance, as previous research shows that students outlined the need for personal advice when they examined different enrollment alternatives (Pratminingsih & Soedijati, 2011). The university needs to address and inform prospective students in such a manner that the educational product is understood. One important channel for transferring information to students is through a web site (Enache, 2011). After the student's first contact with the university, a web site could inform the potential candidate, and thereof be a useful tool for an efficient enrolling process. A website should also inform the student of general information and the university's opportunities as well as demands. The demands and opportunities are associated with the particular education (Enache, 2011). This channel of selling school brand must not be misleading as the customer may have expectations that the said institution cannot provide (Kumar & Gunaseelan, 2016). E-mail and advertising could also function as efficient tools for universities in order to inform and stimulate potential students for enrollment. Former students could aid the university in providing constructive experience towards prospective students. They could

thereby inform and encourage potential students to enroll, based on previous successes as a graduate from that particular HEI. (Enache, 2011)

Enache (2011) also found out that, students who were dismissed from their former institutions were the most ready recipients for HEIs. Promoting HEIs depends on the target market that the institution wants to reach, types of students, student requirements and expectations of the service (Pratminingsih & Soedijati, 2011). Another form of marketing that is relevant to colleges is the marketing towards public and potential funders or donors. This form of marketing needs to be based on a more direct approach. The college must first aim at building a positive public opinion about its operations, then this public opinion becomes a basis or foundation which is managed and advertised by a public relations officer who then works efficiently to improve the dissemination of information of the solicited support to various persons and organizations to support. Since the promotional strategy influences the image, HEIs needs to be careful of the message they disseminate as it is a great determinant of its reputation. This is important because, it is difficult to improve a damaged or depraved reputation; and therefore HEIs working through their administrative staffs, need to maintain and uphold a desirable reputation for the institution. However, some colleges find it difficult or unnecessary to engage in marketing activities due to cultural factors and complacency (Pratminingsih & Soedijati, 2011).

Besides, Lachowska, Alexandre and Stephen (2022), explored the efforts of administrators in investing more and more time in their administrative demands than they are paid for as a means to enhance the image of their institution.

However, Card, et al. (2013), working on workplace heterogeneity and the rise of West German wage inequality posited that, wages for staff must be based strictly on the number of hours they worked (Jardim, Long, Plotnick, Van Emma, Vigdor, Wething, 2021).

Moreover, some other strategies for enhancing positive image of institutions include a planned strategic approach (Card, et al., 2013). The planned strategic approach is a periodic plan of work which is specially designed to suit the localized conditions within which the institution is located. It usually aims at positioning the institution in a better way to explore and to take advantage of the available, reachable and identifiable opportunities closer to the institution. This plan must be collectively drawn by technical and administrative officers of the organization and vetted by a member of the most senior management team of the organization or by another qualified staff who is delegated to do so. Two most important factors that help in coming out with a planned strategic approach are a highly motivated internal morale towards reaching out to opportunities and achieving new things; as well as availability of wide range of identifiable opportunities (Card, et al., 2013). Another way to advertise the school is to commence events and well-organised programmes that can attract the attention of the public. Such programme must be of great benefit and interest to the target group of the marketing strategy; and a well-organised, clear and unambiguous marketing message must accompany the activities (Card, et al., 2013).

Comparable to the idea of Card, et al. (2013) on planned strategic marketing, Usoh et al. (2013) suggested that principals' roles are the most

important driving force for the enhancement and improvement of institutional image in schools. Leadership styles of heads has been portrayed as having direct influence on the perception of parents and society about the school and hence an influential determinant of the reputation of the school. Principals' relationship with other stakeholders such as students, parents, and instructors is determined by the leadership style being practiced by the head (Usoh, et al., 2019). Developing a positive image very much depends on the ability of the principal to foresee the perceptions of stakeholders such as community members, staff, and students and hence determine how such perceptions can be managed within a range of considerable reputation. This can be done by establishing a consistent and flexible relationship that ensures mutual understanding of inter-dependent expectations of both sides – the school and the stakeholders (Usoh, et al., 2019). Another important way to achieve high image of the school is to strategically instill the spirit of ownership into all stakeholders by making them feel part of the institution such that, they understand that the institution belongs to them and they must promote its activities (Usoh, et al., 2019).

Similarly, Murphy (2002), who earlier evaluated the development of school image at the elementary level discovered a similar idea as held by Usoh et al (2019). In his study, Muphy used diverse category of educators and stakeholders including and administrators, teachers, parents and guardians. Muphy highlighted that leadership role is the most influential determinant of successful contribution of all stakeholders to the school image. The principal is responsible for continual monitoring and measuring of the school image, both

formally and informally, through a consultation and interview with stakeholders, and engaging stakeholders in a manner that could direct their efforts towards arriving at the image expected by the principal (Usoh, et al., 2019). If institutional image could be improved, the principal needs to exercise a very high competence in public relation activities as he engages in interactions and interrelations with the external community in order to market the goodwill of the school, and attract students as well as retain them (Usoh, et al., 2019).

In Thailand, Starck and Zadeh (2013) undertook a qualitative case study to examine the marketing approaches private Thai higher education institutions (HEIs) adopted to appeal to foreign students so as to enroll them on their programmes. The study was conducted with the intention to recommend factors that students could value in the Bangkok University International College (BUIC) and Webster University (WU) so as to attract students to the schools. A market-based approach was adopted for the investigation. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through techniques such as interviews observation and surveys undertaken at the stated universities. Findings showed that, higher education institutions in Thailand uses different marketing approaches to attract and enroll targeted foreign students. Online marketing, IT tools, being present at events, were used to attract students extensively. The study also suggested that, BUIC should reconsider and restructure interaction during the enrollment process so as to contribute to maintaining students. It was however recommended to WU that, they should focus more on providing additional IT

tools and improve their mismanagement regarding image and reputation (Starck & Zadeh, 2013).

Similarly, Grant (2015) also conducted a qualitative case study to investigate the institutional barriers that are encountered by learners at a university in KwaZulu Natal. The study aimed at addressing the objective of the understanding institutional impediments to learning as perceived from the perspective of students, and to discover how these challenges influence the university culture and image at large. The overarching theory that underpinned the study was Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic theory. Besides, the concept of inclusive education was also adapted as the conceptual framework which guided the study. The focus of the study was on institutional barriers (barriers arising from the educational institution) which also has the potential to affect the image of the institution. The study looked at the physical, psychological and social environment of the campus, the policies and practices of the institution, and the resources and facilities available to students at this campus. A mixed methods research design was used with questionnaires and follow up interviews for the investigation. It was found that participants encountered barriers to learning related to overcrowding in classrooms, inadequate institutional resources, lack of access to information and the registration process. The path investigation indicates that these barriers have a negative impact on the image of the university as perceived by the students. Findings from the study also indicate some enablers to learning, including the inclusive, welcoming atmosphere of the campus, the useful online learning websites and the fact that the library and computer rooms closed

late in the evening, allowing students more time to work. Path investigation also shows that the enablers of learning have positive impact on the university image as perceived by the students. It was recommended that, in order to enhance university image, administrators should focus on reducing the institutional barriers to learning identified by the participants of the study such as to enhance the capacity of the university to cater for the number of students registered, to provide a longer and more effective orientation programme and to provide more efficient administrative procedures.

Furthermore, Usman and Madudili (2019) suggested regular monitoring, supervision and evaluation of college activities should be carried out by management in order to assess participation, involvement, and understanding of the students and offer support to teachers who lack competencies required to improve the learning situation and environment of their learning environment or classroom. Usman and Madudili (2019) after their investigation stated that, in order to improve institutional image, teachers who are the link between knowledge and learning in our educational system should be given relevant opportunities to engage in regular training; mandatory professional career development and refresher courses to enable them have a good grasp of the principles and philosophies of education; and also be able to practically translate such principles into the classroom environment. This will help to normalize the teaching and learning environment and ensure quality assurance in the education system.

Challenges in Enhancing Institutional Image

Honover (2015) found out that redeveloping an institutional brand often involves significant challenges, with cost and faculty resistance being the most common of such challenges. Advertisement costs and staff/faculty resistance could exert significant limitation on efforts to enhance institutional image (Duque & Carvajal, 2015). In a longitudinal survey conducted in United States by Inside Higher Ed and Gallup (2021), it was discovered that only 34 percent of higher educational institutions met their enrollment targets for the year 2017. Besides, there was earlier decline from 42% in 2015 to 37% in 2016. Financial difficulties were recognized as an important challenge contributing to the decline as 71% of the 400 participants interviewed agreed that higher education institutions are facing significant financial difficulties. Other challenges identified in the study are college mergers and acquisitions, online education, declining international student enrollments, lower world rankings and fewer high school graduates. The study by Inside Higher Ed and Gallup (2021) also noted that, the global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the reliability of traditional models, putting pressure on institutions to readjust their strategies.

Duque and Carvajal (2015) noted that, given the available financial investment, an institution should carefully consider whether its internal marketing team has the resources to undertake an initiative, or it should consider external consultancy. His precaution could help avoid wastage of the financial investment made in the particular initiative or programme. Outsourcing, though has some disadvantages, may also be beneficial however; as it helps to get the expertise

with wider range of experience from commercial resource persons and also foresters relationships with such outsourced organisations (Duque & Carvajal, 2015). However, institutional image has notable long-term value that could mitigate the cost of challenges with extended benefits (Duque & Carvajal, 2015). In addressing the challenges, administrative staff of higher educational institutions needs to explore new technologies, business models, and strategies to reach or attract new student populations (Da Costa, Pelissari, 2017). This exploration approach to addressing challenges to institutional image is an administrative endeavour that brings to bare the mental constructs and expectations of administrative staff about their institutions and their measures to achieve that. It is in light of this that administrative staff' perspectives of institutional image are very important.

Lifecycle Theory of Institutional Evolution

The study is underpinned by the Lifecycle Theory of Institutional Evolution propounded by Neuman (2012). The theory proposes that institutions go through five major stages that affect their image namely creation, evolution, reformation, decline and demise. Creation occurs when incepted idea and plan about establishing an institution is implemented such that the institution is built and operationalized. Evolution is a period the institution takes to become fully operationalized at its initial capacity. Reformation occurs when the current demands necessitate the reequipping and expansion of the institution to a broader scope and capacity of operation. Reformation process is usually informed by the experience during the evolution period. Lessons learnt during evolution helps to

guide further efforts towards a reformation that can help the institution to better meet current demands. Decline refers to a situation where there is a diminishing operational capacity or effectiveness such that the institution will have to readjust by laying off workers and machinery. Demise, which is the last stage of an institutional lifespan connotes a total collapse of the institution. At demise, the entire life of the institution in question comes to an end. This theory is very comprehensive in a sense that it concerns itself with the entire lifespan of an institution; from its creation to its demise. This theoretical framework is appropriate for addressing issues on institutional image because it provides a better and broader platform for understanding the operational life of institutions, signs that show decline and what administrative staff do to sustain their image.

This study explores variables such as the institutional image of Tamale College of Education, perception of roles of administrative staff, challenges and viable means of addressing them. The lifecycle theory relates to these variables in institutional development. From evolution, it is important for administrative staff to consciously, intentionally and consistently make efforts towards improving the image of Tamale College of Education until it reaches the stage of reformation.

Talking about reformation, and how it connects to the perception of roles of administrative staff as a variable of this study, it is important to note that, to accommodate the current pressure and demand on educational institution due to educational evolution; and to be able to take a proper share of the prospective students in need of college education, the Tamale College of Education must undertake a reformation process to overcome some of its long-existing challenges

so as to reposition the institution in an attractive perspective. To do this, roles of administrative staff is important. How do they perceive the importance of their roles in this reformation effort? This question, is thus, a relevant consideration.

Failure to identify the challenges so as to address them in a reformation effort will let the third stage of lifecycle (decline) set in. Long existing challenges, if not addressed will let the capacity of the college decline making the college unable to meet the current educational demands.

This theory is pictorially represented on Figure 1

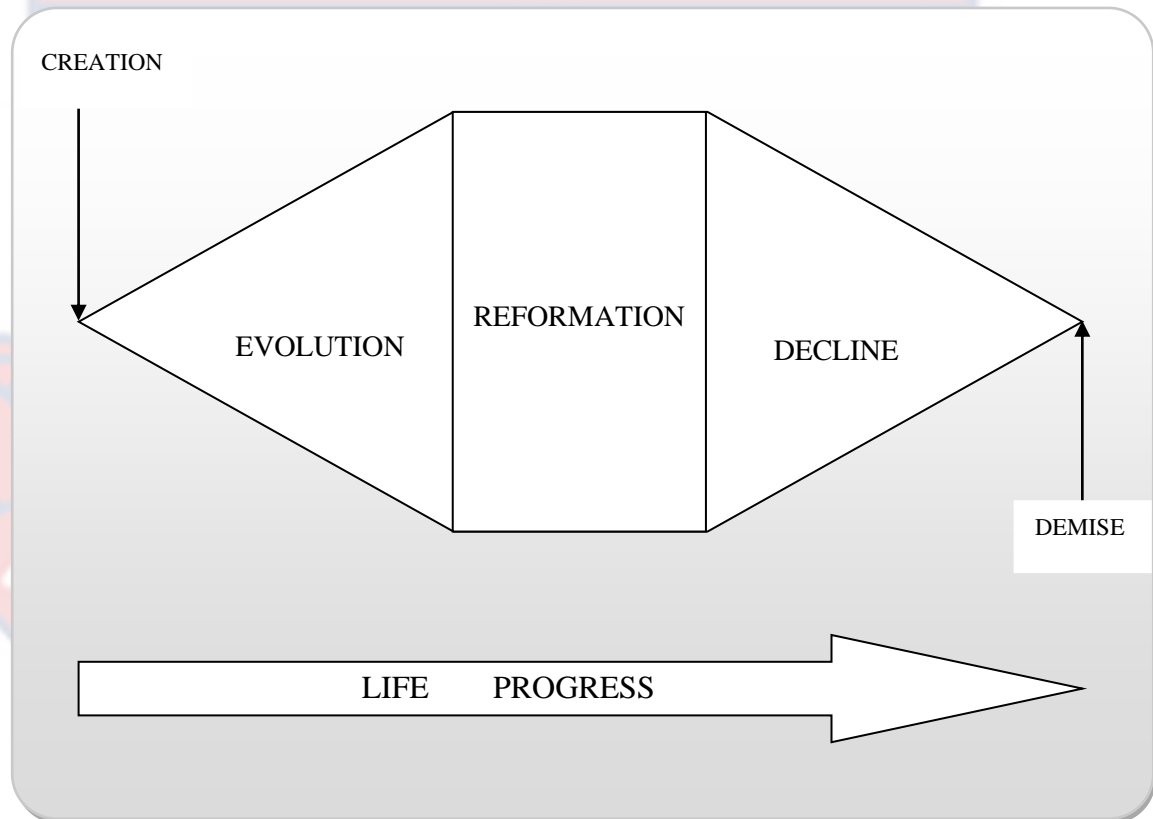


Figure 2.1: Life Cycle of an Institution from Creation to Demise

Source: Adaptation of Neuman's Life Cycle Theory into Pictorial Form. June, 2021

The lifecycle theory by Neuman (2012) has a strength of extensive imperial support and application in the area of institutional change, spatial planning and organizational development. Kempenaar (2019) applied the lifecycle theory in studying the connection between regional designs and spatial planning. Kempenaar (2019) noted that regional designs influence other sub-spatial planning arenas leading to the development of other organizations and institutions. Wang and Chan (2019) also applied the lifecycle theory to study institutional factors that affect urban green space provision from a local government administrative point of view. Wang and Chan (2019) established that, in urban planning, institutional structure is a very vital factor for the sustainability of institutional life, and also fundamental factor for the translational and historical evolution of institutions. Navarro-Ligero and Valenzuela-Montes (2022) studied institutional connectivity in a metropolitan context explaining the importance of transport in urban planning and positioning of institutions.

However, the lifecycle theory is limited in a sense of not paying critical attention to the fact that, in the lifecycle of a particular institution, there could be several moments of decline and reformation without demise. The theory portrays a picture that, once there is decline in the image of any institution it is followed by the demise of such an institution which is not the reality.

Conceptual Framework

This study conceptualizes that institutional image is not only influenced by the consumer perspectives (students' preferences), it is also influenced by other

perspectives such as administrative staff, international and national policies, lecturers' perspectives and local environment.

A pictorial representation of the conceptual framework (Figure 2.2) is found illustrated below.

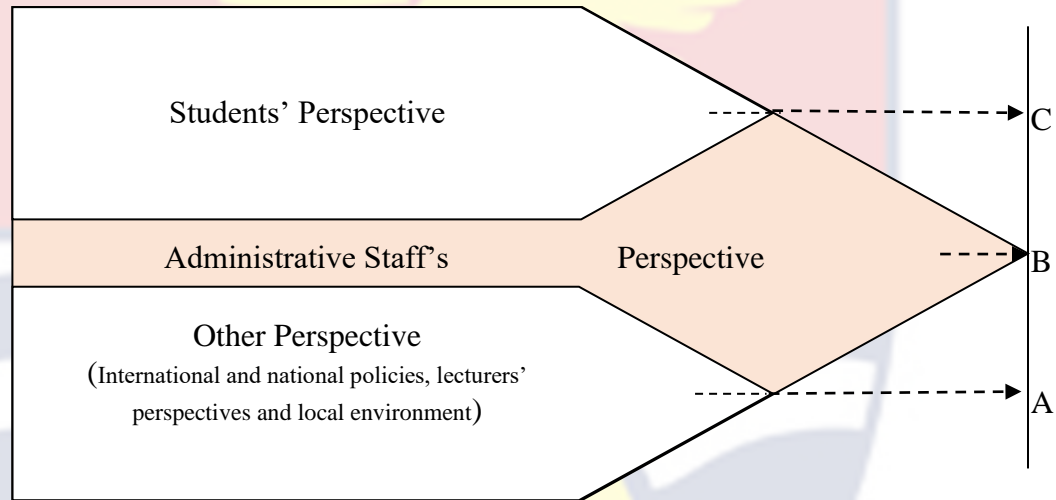


Figure 2.2: Institutional Image:

Source: Author's construct, June, 2022

In the diagram above, point A, B and C are perspectives of different categories of stakeholders of an institution. Each of these perspectives (Students' perspectives & other perspectives) have their own targets based on their unique positions. While students perceive that the institution should be targeting its efforts at achieving point C, other factors (such as international and national policies, lecturers' perspectives and local environment) would have been compelling the institution to target point A. Meanwhile, administrative staff, which forms the shaded portion, work in-between the two perspectives (students'

perspectives & other perspectives). Administrative staff therefore operate to form a middle ground aiming at achieving point B. Each of the arrow-like shapes represents the perspective of a particular category of people suggesting to the institution what to aim at achieving. While students in their views will like the institution to target C, other factors (such as international and national policies, lecturers' perspectives and local environment) like the institution to target A. Meanwhile, it takes administrative staff to leverage all the perspectives to achieve a middle ground at B.

In this regard, administrative staff is the final determiner of what the institution must eventually achieve. They determine the final point of direction for the institution to follow. It is also worth mentioning that, in performing the function of direction setting, administrative staffs are influenced by their own aspirations and expectations of the kind of image they desire for their institution. However, a good administration will not be guided only by their own desires. A good administration will also deem it important to consider both the perspectives of students which serve as the main clients of the institution as well as other perspectives (such as international and national policies, lecturers' perspectives and local environment). In effect, administrative staffs carry the most ideal perspective that should be best considered in constructing the image of any institution because they are able to unify three different perspectives (namely, personal perspectives, student perspective and other perspectives) into a single perspective.

Consequently, students' preference and other perspectives will hold much less significance in constructing institutional image if not adjusted to the general administrative perspective of a particular institution. Thus, administrative perspectives should be considered as important in shaping institutional image given that it helps to leverage all perspectives of stakeholders into a well-defined policy direction that needs to be followed to construct the overall image of the said institution. This is summarized on Figure 2 below.

Chapter Summary

The literature set forth generally reveals a revolution of studies aimed at understanding institutional image as one of the central concepts in educational development across the globe (Suparjo & Sunarsih, 2018; Honover, 2015; Karacabey et al., 2016; Wilkins & Huisman, 2013; Pelissari & Gonzalez, 2018). Although institutional image has been generally understood in literature to mean a mental construct of the people about the said institution (Suparjo & Sunarsih, 2018; Karacabey et al., 2016), there seems to be no standardized definition of the concept of institutional image as many authors considered the concept from different perspectives (Sunarsih, 2018; Azoury, et al., 2014; Polat, 2011; Suparjo & Sunarsih, 2018).

Yet, it has been indisputably discovered that, institutional image is a complex, multifaceted, composite, multicomponent and multidimensional idea comprising of several aspects such as functional and emotional, tangible and intangible, cognitive and effective, external and internal, historical and present; as well as popularity and goodness, effectiveness and reputability considerations

(Karacabey et al., 2016; Pelissari & Gonzalez, 2018; da Costa et al., 2019; Kurt and Kalman, 2019).

Institutional image has also been noted as an essential for inspiring loyalty and commitment to institutions (Eger, et al., 2018; Ali, et al., 2016). This gives credence to the need for efforts by institutions (educational institutions in this context) to enhance their image. In line with this, prevailing literature reveals that, institutional image is a commodity that must be enhanced through good administration, enhancing learning environments, appropriate regulation of factors such as school-parent interaction, sporting activities, lecturer-administrator characteristics, student support services, and social marketing strategies (Enache, 2011; Pratminingsih & Soedijati, 2011; Kurt & Kalman, 2019). Meanwhile, scholarly works that are available have also extensively agreed on the fact that, efforts towards enhancing institutional image are not without challenges (Honover, 2015; Duque & Carvajal, 2015). Administrative staff and other stakeholders who sought to achieve reputable image for their institutions faced several challenges. Cost and staff resistance were noted as the prominent of such challenges (Higher Ed and Gallup, 2021; Da Costa, Pelissari, 2017).

Notwithstanding this, the general understanding of institutional image in prevailing literature is bias towards consumer perspectives to the neglect of the administrative considerations (Usuh, et al, 2019; Enache, 2011; Honover, 2015; Duque & Carvajal, 2015; Higher Ed & Gallup, 2021; Da Costa, Pelissari, 2017). Available literature is more concerned about how students and or customers perceive the image of institutions and how that influence their loyalty and choices.

This bias has created a gap that is worth exploring. Thus, there is the need to understand how administrative staff also perceive things based on the prevailing conditions and challenges within the institution, and what roles they play admits of the challenges to enhance the image of their institutions. This study is intended to achieve that. The next chapter discusses the research methodology.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter discusses issues relating to the research design, study area, study population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data management and analysis, and ethical issues including positionality.

Research Design

The study deployed the collective case study design. The collective case study design studies a group of individuals in a particular setting. Other qualitative research designs are ethnography and grounded theory. Ethnography, the study of cultural groups' common patterns of behavior, language use, and beliefs (Olafson & Gran, 2014) is inappropriate for this study since the study does not involve a specific cultural group but participants (administrative staff) who come from different backgrounds. The goal of grounded theory is to inductively develop a theory from facts, and pre-conceptualization is typically avoided in its design (Glaser & Holton, 2014). Since this study's research parameter have already been established by reviewing the literature, it implies that it is impossible to avoid pre-conceptualisation and thus, makes grounded theory design unsuitable for the study. Qualitative case study was more appropriate for this study because the study focused on examining the perspectives of administrative staff on the institutional image of Tamale College of Education. As Yin (2014) explains, case study is appropriate when researchers intend to examine in-depth perspectives on a phenomenon in its real world context which in this case is the institutional

image of the Tamale College of Education. This viewpoint is underscored by the constructivist worldview or philosophy that reality is a social construction that is subjectively experienced (Kusi, 2012). In line with the enlightenment from the literature review which portrays institutional image as a mental construct, it is therefore, appropriate to base this case study on the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm which establishes that “reality is constructed in the minds of individuals” (Hansen, 2004). The constructivist paradigm suggests that meaning is a hidden phenomenon which must be unveiled through reflection. Similarly, Ponterotto (2005) suggests that reflection can be stimulated by a researcher-participant dialogue which reflects the very process of qualitative interview as in the case of this study. Qualitative case study design allows for flexible and in-depth scope of information to be gathered and analysed unlike quantitative studies that come with rigid options and discrete data points which may lead to losing detailed information.

Study Area

The research site is Tamale Metropolis in the Northern Region of Ghana. The population of Tamale Metropolis, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, is 374,744. Males constitute 185,051 representing 49.3% and females, 189,693 representing 50.7%. The proportion of the population living in urban localities (81.0 per cent) is higher than that living in rural localities (19.0%) of the metropolis. Of the population 11 years and above, 60.1% are literates and 39.9% are non-literates. The proportion of literate males (69.2%) is higher than that of females (51.1%). Of the population aged 3 years and older (84,897)

currently attending school in the metropolis, 52.9% are males and the remaining 45.1% are females. 15.1% are in nursery, 18.2 % in JSS/JHS, 12.5 % in SSS/SHS and the largest proportion (40.0%) is in primary. Only 5.7 % of the population in the metropolis is currently attending tertiary institutions such as colleges of education, technical universities and universities. Some of the notable tertiary educational institutions in Tamale are Tamale College of Education, Bagabaga College of Education, Tamale Vocational Training Institute, Kofi Annan Vocational Training Institute, and the Tamale Technical University (Tamale Polytechnic).

Tamale College of Education is a major teacher education college in Tamale. It is one of the oldest colleges of education in Ghana, established in 1958 with the aim of training well-equipped teaching staff for educational institutions in the basic and second cycle schools (TCE, 2019). The vision of establishing TCE was spearheaded by the first president of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (TCE, 2019). The college was first a unisex training college enrolling only female students until 1977 when the college was turned into a mixed educational institution (TCE, 2019).

The TCE offers programmes such as Certificate 'A' Post Middle, Diploma in Basic Education post-secondary, Diploma in Basic Education, and Diploma in Basic Education post 'A' sandwich. The Tamale College of Education has academic facilities including ICT centre, Science Laboratory, Library, and Assembly Hall. However, many students preferred other colleges of education to

TCE because of inadequate infrastructural facilities and less competitive institutional image (Modern Ghana, 2019).

Population

The study population consists of fifty (50) administrative staff of TCE which data was gotten from TCE in 2023. The research explored their perspectives on the institutional image of the college including how it can be enhanced. In view of the stated aim of the study, it was important to select administrative staff because of the essential role they play in enhancing the image of educational institutions. They play an important role in relation to decisions regarding policy directions about what to do, and what not to do in an educational institution. They take decisions pertaining to the image and reputation they expect to achieve for their institutions. For this reason, they were the most appropriate population category to examine for better understanding of issues relating to enhancing the institutional image of the college.

Table 3.1: Population Summary

Category	Number	Percentage
Top Administrative staff	4	8.0
Head of department	6	12.0
Accounting and finance staff	8	16.0
Quality Control staff	4	8.0
Warehouse staff	2	4.0
Secretariat staff	9	18.0
Technical staff	4	8.0
Postal staff	2	4.0
Library Staff	3	6.0
Security staff	2	4.0
Others (cleaners, others)	6	12.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Tamale College of Education, 2023

Sampling Procedure

Out of the 50 administrative staff, a sample size of 30 administrative staff was estimated and purposively selected for the study. The 30 administrative staff were purposively selected based on their willingness to participate in the study and in-depth knowledge based on at least two (2) years' experience at TCE that enabled them to give relevant information for the study. As Fugard and Potts (2015) suggested on sample size for thematic analysis, selecting a large number of interviewees leading to an overload of information may confound analyzing of viewpoints. This implies that the crucial factor to consider in sampling participants for qualitative study is not the number but quality – those who are able to provide rich and appropriate responses to the research questions. Therefore, purposive sampling technique was used for the selection. Staff with a minimum of 2 years of work experience in the TCE were selected. This choice is based on the recommendation of Corporate Job Bank (2019), a network of an association of employers who argue that two or more years of work in an institution are enough to enable them to provide considerable knowledge about the institution. Such knowledge includes the participants' perspectives on institutional image and what they have done to enhance the institutional image of Tamale College of Education. Table 3.2 shows categories of the participants finally sampled.

Table 3.2 Categories of the participants sampled

Category	Number	Percentage
Top Administrative staff	2	6.7
Head of department	4	13.3
Accounting and finance staff	5	16.7
Quality Control staff	3	10.0
Warehouse staff	1	3.3
Secretariat staff	7	23.3
Technical staff	3	10.0
Postal staff	1	3.3
Library Staff	2	6.7
Security staff	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

Source: Tamale College of Education, 2023

The details of the individual participants included in the sample are displayed in Table 3.3 according to pseudonyms.

Table 3.3: The inclusion criteria of participants

S/N	Pseudonym	Position	Gender	Years of Experience at Tamale College of Education
1	Sackey	A top administrative staff	Male	over 15 years of experience
2	Tossi	Secretariat staff	Female	3 years of experience
3	Ampiadu	Quality Control staff	Male	4 years of experience
4	Simon	Quality Control staff	Male	7 years of experience
5	Clud	Head of Department	Male	9 years of experience
6	Williams	Secretariat staff	Female	8 years of experience
7	Eunice	Secretariat staff	Female	6 years of experience
8	Tuolong	Library staff	Male	8 years of experience
9	Kossah	Head of Department	Male	12 years of experience
10	Tassa	Secretariat staff	Male	7 years of experience
11	Jakes	Head of Department	Male	9 years of experience
12	Wane	Accounting and finance staff	Female	4 years of experience
13	Duut	Technical staff	Male	6 years of experience
14	Yoke	Technical staff	Male	3 years of experience
15	Felicity	Secretariat staff	Female	7 years of experience
16	Kate	Library Staff	Female	9 years of experience
17	Denbang	Security staff	Male	8 years of experience
18	Shaikh	Security Staff	Male	6 years of experience
19	Jayon	Secretariat staff	Female	7 years of experience
20	Yahaya	Warehouse staff	Male	6 years of experience
21	Wayeh	Technical staff	male	4 years of experience
22	Anane	Accounting and financial staff		
23	Kasuri	Head of department	Female	13 years of experience
24	Winifred	Secretariat staff	Female	4 years of experience
25	Denyo	Accounting and financial staff	Male	5 years of experience
26	Sika	Accounting and financial staff	Female	2 years of experience
27	Nsanya	Postal staff	Male	9 years of experience
28	Beauty	Accounting and financial staff	Female	3 years of experience
29	Baby	Quality control staff	Female	6 years of experience
30	Dacosta	A top administrative staff	Male	17 years of experience

Source: Tamale College of Education, 2023

The gender, positions and years of experience of the research participants were used as selection criteria to ensure gender sensitivity and participant triangulation.

Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured interviews were used for the study. Thus, the participants took part in a one-on-one semi-structured interviews which were audiotaped after voluntary consent of the participants was sought. An interview guide was designed for the research participants to share their perspectives in depth on the research questions. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) noted that interviews are advantageous for studies aiming at in-depth understanding of the issue under investigation, for example, the perspectives of administrative staff on enhancing institutional image of Tamale College of Education. Thus, interviews afforded respondents the flexibility to express detailed and relevant insights which could be missed if questionnaires were used. In this way, interviews were more appropriate for the data collection.

However, interviews have some weaknesses including interviewer effect which can induce suspicion that can lead to sharing information to please the interviewer or shielding of information. The participant triangulation as explained in the sampling section was aimed at averting these challenges. I also tried to address the problem of non-disclosure by presenting an introductory letter from the University of Cape Coast to the participants explaining that the study was purely for academic purpose and was not intended for malicious purposes. Interviews can also lead to information overload that can make analysis difficult. To address this, prompt checks were used to ensure that responses did not deviate

from the research questions. However, where necessary, probes were used to gain in-depth insights into matters that were pertinent to the research questions.

The interview guide was structured across five main themes: the Demographic characteristics of the participants; their perception of the institutional image of Tamale College of Education; what has been or is being done to improve TCE image (what worked and what did not work); challenges to constructing and enhancing TCE's image; and measures that are taken to address the challenges.

Piloting the Instruments

The data collection instruments were piloted on five administrative staff who were purposively selected from the Bechem College of Education on Tuesday, 22nd March, 2022 to Tuesday, 29th March, 2022. The purpose of the pilot study was to identify ambiguities in the questions and to correct them before the main data collection was conducted. It was also to test the effectiveness of the audio recorders as well as familiarize myself with their usage. Bechem College of Education was finally chosen instead of Bagabaga and St. John Bosco's College of Education in Navorongo (northern sector) because, though the latter two colleges were applied to, access was not granted on time. The Bechem College of Education was then considered and applied to. This was because the Bechem College of Education also share similar characteristics with TCE; being co-education in character, running Certificate A and Diploma in Education programmes. Bechem College of Education granted the permission on time and therefore considered by the researcher.

The data collection instrument was also subjected to expert (supervisor) and peer reviews in order to achieve a standard tool for the investigation. The instrument was also further refined by the reviews done on it by my supervisor and the co-supervisor. These processes helped to enhance the appropriateness of the instrument. Some lessons were learnt from the pilot study. One of the most important lessons that finally guided me in the main study was how to apply prompts and probes appropriately to keep the interview conversations within the confines of the questions and at the same time, gain in-depth insights from the participants. I noticed that, it was difficult for me during the pilot study to control the interview leading to longer interview sessions with participants. Most of the pilot interview sessions extended longer than the expected period I allotted (25 minutes). Another lesson that emanated from the pilot testing was that the questions were clear to the participants. These lessons helped me to organize the main study successfully.

Positionality, Originality and Trustworthiness

This research study was the result of human efforts and actions. Thus, the outcomes were likely to be prone to human error and biases that may compromise the trustworthiness of the study. Therefore, I was reflexive – being conscious of my own biases and redirected my thoughts and actions within ethical standards of sensitivity and objectivity (Atkinson and Delamont, 2008).

Trustworthiness was ensured through the four Lincoln and Guba criteria as cited in Forero et al. (2018) – credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility was ensured through participant validation and

rigorous technique for the collection of data. Transferability was also ensured through the piloting of the data collection instrument in different institutional context (though similar) so as to ensure that, the data resulting from the instrument administration could be applicable to other colleges as well. Besides, dependability was ensured by employing a well-accepted and documented analytical process (thematic content analysis). Confirmability was also ensured through the elimination of personal bias (both on the part of participants and researcher) by ensuring reflexivity in data collection and analysis processes. I kept respondents in line through the use of prompts. During the data collection process, there is repeated checks through listening and re-listening to audio; and reading and rereading of text notes.

Moreover, probing was applied requiring further clarification of the responses by respondents to crosscheck a wide range of the information gotten for the study (Atkinson and Delamont, 2008). I also made sure that the interview was conducted at a more appropriate and convenient environment (mostly in the office of respondents) to which they are familiar to ensure the absence of communication barriers and distraction of attention. As Kolb (2012) states, friendly and conservatory environments can allow for free and flexible communication of information. These efforts enabled me to collect credible and reliable data whose analysis led to trustworthy outcomes.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection started 8th April, 2022 and ended 22nd, April, 2022. The procedure that was followed in the data collection is summarized into five (5) as;

self-introduction, explanation of purpose of study, seeking participants' voluntary consent, interview and gratitude. In the first place, I introduced myself to the participants individually to make them free from any suspicions. Secondly, the purpose of the study was explained to them. This also helped them to know about the importance of the study and made them willing to give relevant information. I then sought consent of the participants. The consent form was read to them and those who agreed to take part in the study willingly consented and were interviewed. This helped them to freely confirm their readiness to participate in the study.

Each of the 30 participants participated in individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Prompts were adopted where necessary to achieve clarity of information and to avoid deviation from the research questions. Each interview lasted for averagely 25 minutes and was audiotaped to ensure a high recall index as suggested by Rukmini (2021). The replay of the recorded interview allows for repeated listening that re-enacts the interviewing and facilitates and guaranties a high recall index. The audiotapes were listened to several times and transcribed to transform them into text. To assist with recall, notes were also taken and memos created.

Data Processing and Analysis

The views and thoughts shared by the thirty (30) administrative staff were processed through a rigorous and a progressive analytical process to uncover and to consolidate the salient and most important insights. Data was managed and preserved during the lifespan of this research through the application of consistent

file naming conventions. Data for this research were mainly audio recordings of views shared by interviewees. File naming system was developed in which each recorded interview was named according to the order of records using an abbreviation IITCE (which stands for Institutional Image of Tamale College of Education) and followed by an Arabic numeral indicating the order of the interview. Thus, interview with the first respondent was recorded and saved as IITCE, 1; the second interview was saved as IITCE, 2; the third interview was saved as IITCE, 3 and so on. Data were recorded first using a handset and then backup onto a personal computer using a zip archiving technique. Then another backup was stored on pen drive to prevent data loss. To satisfy data security issues, a password was used in the zip-archiving process so that no one else can get access to the data except the researcher.

As suggested by Robson and McCartan (2016), data analysis started with the research activity. Both the analysis of units and cross-analysis techniques were applied to the analysis. Regarding the analysis of units approach, various interview questions were asked to induce responses from individual participants. I listened to the narratives from each respondent during the interview. I propped along their viewpoints to ensure that, emerging ideas were clearly developed while maintaining the originality of the information being put across through restricting a total influence on what respondents have to say. Careful thoughts were given to the messages they put across in the context of each respondent so as to better grasp the viewpoints and ideas expressed as responses to the interview questions as well as the probes.

Furthermore, a cross-analysis approach was adopted to cross-examine the respondents. This approach involves a repeated comparison of information across participants (Kolb, 2012) as well as grouping and mapping similarities and contradictions. As the process of analysis continues, I aimed at narrowing down information gathered into themes that directly relate to the research quest:

- How do administrative staff of TCE perceive institutional image?
- How do administrative staff of TCU perceive their roles in enhancing the institutional image of the college?
- What are the challenges faced by administration of TCE in enhancing its image?
- What strategies do administrative staff of TCU consider as viable means of enhancing the institutional image of the College?

The various themes that emerged during the initial analysis of the study were later shaped by a replay of the recorded interview which gives the researcher the opportunity to review the respondents' views in a more comfortable and convenient environment which allowed much thought to be given to these views.

After the analysis, the following were few of the initial themes that emerged:

- 1) Institutional image a Mental construction
- 2) Increasing admission
- 3) Quality of students admitted into TCE
- 4) Discipline/character of students admitted
- 5) Employability of products/students on the job markets

- 6) Fees payment
- 7) Quality control
- 8) Infrastructure development of TCE
- 9) Importance of the roles of Administrative Staff
- 10) Staff development
- 11) Academic excellence.
- 12) Planning
- 13) Continuous professional development
- 14) Water problems

The initial themes were further shaped into final themes upon listening to the narratives over and over again. The final themes that emerged were as follows:

1. Institutional image, as mental construct
2. Institutional image as goodness versus popularity
3. Institutional goodness and institutional popularity as mutually inclusive concepts
4. Perception of the image of Tamale College of Education
5. Perception of the Relevance of their Role
6. Perception of what has been done to contribute to the Image of TCE
7. Perception of what is being done to contribute to the Image of TCE
8. Presence of challenges was unanimously admitted
9. Challenges Identified
10. Addressing challenges identified

11. Other Viable strategies to enhance Institutional Image of TCE

These themes were presented and further discussed in the results and discussion section to bring a holistic explanation that helps to make sense of the information gathered. These were then presented in a systematic manner to respond to the various research questions. The contexts of narratives were also compared with literature to present a discussion that connects the situation being expressed to available knowledge and to make sure that the findings of this research are positioned within the body of knowledge available. The final themes that emerged are presented and discussed in chapter four.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical issues that were considered were issues of permission, consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Regarding permissions, an introductory letter from the University of Cape Coast was submitted to the administrator of the TCE. Follow ups were made until approval was granted. Regarding the issue of consent, the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents and an informed consent form administered to them to seek their consent before they participated in the study. Anonymity was also assured as the participants were not requested to provide their names, and their names were not also mentioned as part of the results but data collected was put together and analyzed. Thus, anonymity of information was upheld through the unification of data together. Pseudonyms were used instead of real names to designate individual respondents. For example, Sackey is a pseudonym used to represent one of the interviewees who occupies top administrative position.

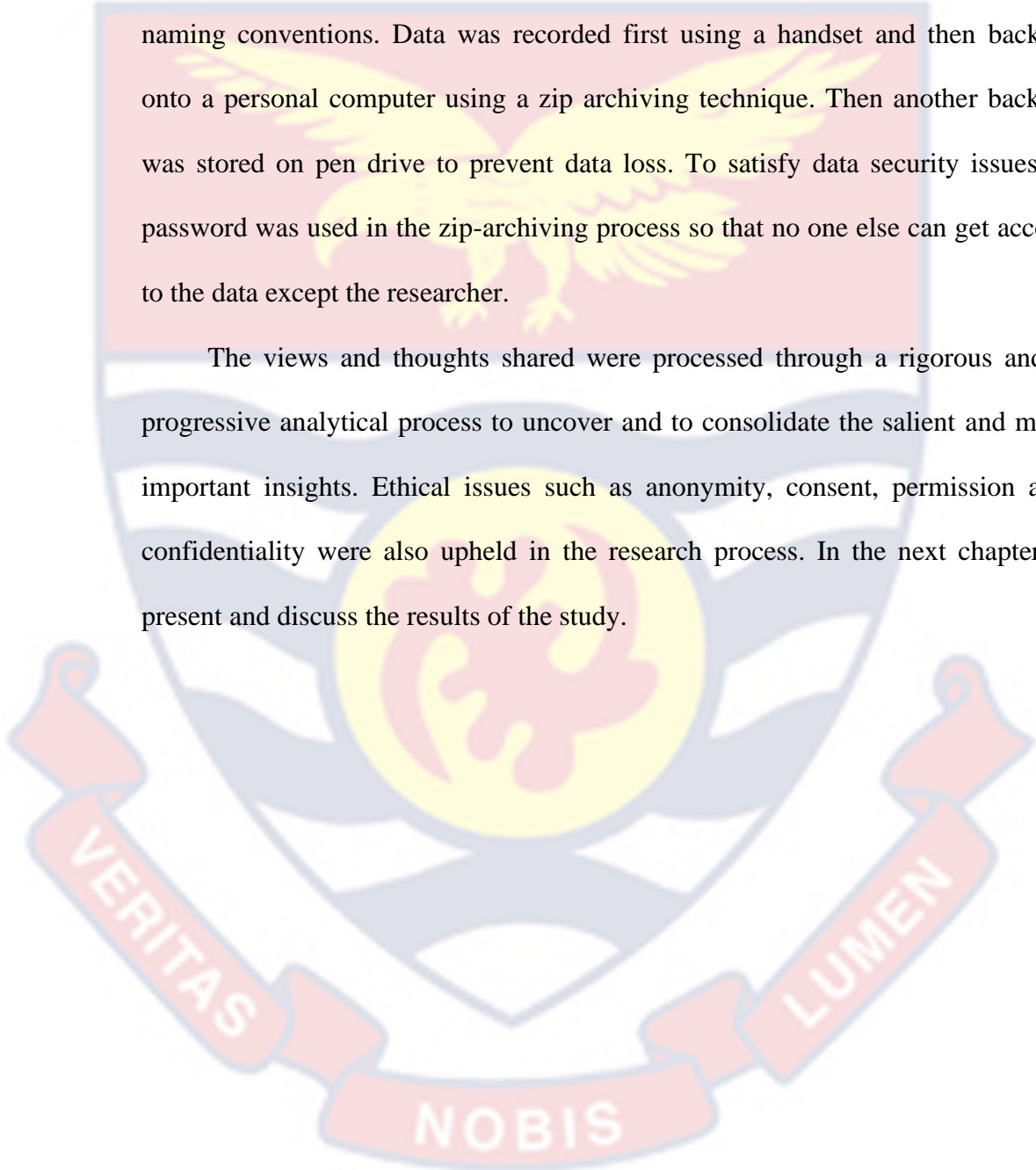
Furthermore, the respondents were verbally assured of confidentiality of the information they provided. The terms of confidentiality were also included in the informed consent form so as to ensure that the respondent were fully aware of the terms of confidentiality to serve as a motivation for them to be open and honest in responding to the interview questions. Specifically, respondents' narratives were zipped in a soft copy folder and kept in a special pen drive meant for the study. Such pen drive was not used for any other purposes. The investigator made sure that personal protective equipment such as nose masks and alcohol based sanitizer were in place for both himself and respondents to ensure that safety was ensured when communicating during data collection.

Chapter Summary

The study deployed qualitative case study design. The study population consists of fifty administrative staff of TCE of which a sample size of 30 administrative staff volitionally and willingly participated in this study. Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of staff with a minimum of 2 years of work experience in the TCE. This choice is based on the recommendation of Corporate Job Bank (2019), a network of an association of employers who argue that two or more years of work in an institution are enough for them enable them to provide considerable knowledge about the institution. The participants took part in a one-on-one semi-structured interview which were audiotaped. An interview guide was designed for the research participants to share their perspectives in depth on the research questions. The instrument was piloted on five (5) administrative staff from the Bechem College of Education where ready

assessment was granted for the piloting to be done on time. Data collection lasted for four weeks between March and April 2022. Data were managed and preserved during the lifespan of this research through the application of consistent file naming conventions. Data was recorded first using a handset and then backup onto a personal computer using a zip archiving technique. Then another backup was stored on pen drive to prevent data loss. To satisfy data security issues, a password was used in the zip-archiving process so that no one else can get access to the data except the researcher.

The views and thoughts shared were processed through a rigorous and a progressive analytical process to uncover and to consolidate the salient and most important insights. Ethical issues such as anonymity, consent, permission and confidentiality were also upheld in the research process. In the next chapter, I present and discuss the results of the study.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the investigation conducted through the application of the stated methodologies and procedures. The chapter also discusses the results by drawing implications and insights from the information gathered. Materials in this chapter are informed by the research questions which guided the study. The presentation under each research question is according to major themes that emerged from analysis of the thoughts and views of the research participants. Under each research question, the various themes were presented and analysed one after the other. The results from the analysis were then discussed by making inferences, comparing to literature and drawing implications of the issues.

Table 4.1 shows the summary of research questions and their corresponding themes.

Table 4.1: Research Questions and corresponding themes

Research (RQ)	Question	Corresponding themes
RQ1: How do administrative staff of TCE perceive institutional image?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional image, as mental construct • Institutional image as goodness verses popularity • Institutional goodness and institutional popularity as mutually inclusive concepts • Perception of the image of Tamale College of Education
RQ2: How do administrative staff of TCU perceive their roles in enhancing the institutional image of the college?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of the Relevance of their Role • Perception of what has been done to contribute to the Image of TCE • Perception of what is being done to contribute to the Image of TCE
RQ3: What are the challenges faced by administration of TCE in enhancing its image?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of challenges was unanimously admitted • Challenges Identified
RQ4: What strategies do administrative staff of TCU consider as viable means of enhancing the institutional image of the College?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing challenges identified • Other Viable strategies to enhance Institutional Image of TCE

Regarding the first research question which seeks to explore how administrative staff of TCE perceive institutional image, the main themes that emerged related to:

- Institutional image, as mental construct
- Institutional image as goodness verses popularity
- Institutional goodness and institutional popularity as mutually inclusive concepts
- Perception of the image of Tamale College of Education

Institutional Image as Mental Construct

Institutional image was generally perceived as the overall mental view of people, individually or collectively about an institution. For example, Tossi, a female secretarial staff said: “To me, institutional image is the perception people have about the institution, whether it is real or just something...”. Similarly, another respondent remarked “...institutional image is what an individual think about the institution, how they do their things, the products they train...” (Eunice Nane). This context portrays that institutional image was seen as something that actually occurs in the mind of people. In other words, it is the mental construct of people about the institution in question. While this mental construct can be influenced by what people see or hear about the institution, each person ends up forming a conclusion in the mind regarding the said institution. This mental conclusion is termed as the institutional image for such a person.

The narrative further showed the possibility of such a mental construct of an individual to be real or superficial. This was made clear as a respondent remarked (“To me, institutional image is the perception people have about the institution, whether it is real or just something...” (Tuolong). Thus, an individual’s perception about a particular institution may be real or something that is not actually the truth, but otherwise a superficial one. The phrase “...whether it is real or just something...”, as indicated by Tuolong also suggests that, different individuals could have conflicting image about the same institution – one being real and the other superficial.

In addition, institutional image was also perceived in a broader societal context. As a departmental secretary remarked: “the image of educational institutions may be collective as many people may think the same way about the institution” (Tassa). One other respondent remarked “everybody, for example, staff and students want to work, or come there” (Anane). This is not an individualistic view of the school but a broader view held by a vast number of the research participants about the said school. This context connotes the collective mindset of a group of people about the said institution. This view implies that, although institutional image is developed in individual terms, it is possible for a group of people living in a particular society to have identical perception about same educational institution. In this regard, such mental constructs could be addressed as societal image about the said institution in collective terms.

Institutional Image as Institutional Goodness Verses Institutional Popularity

Two major concepts appeared prominent in the general perceptions shared by participants on what they believed institutional image is all about. These concepts were institutional goodness or quality and institutional popularity. Most of the participants expressed views that encompass the two concepts in their personal understandings about what institutional image should mean.

Institutional Image as Goodness/Quality of an Educational Institution

Overall, the participants mostly saw the goodness of an educational institution as a potential in such an institution that expresses itself in the impact the institution is able to make on the lives of its students and staff. In other words, the goodness of any educational institution is definable by the calibre of its products. Thus, people determine the goodness or quality of educational institutions by looking at the quality of the graduates they churn out. In this regard, Institutional goodness, which was also referred to as institutional quality was perceived by many participants to mean an educational institution which is able to prepare it adequately for the job market. This perspective is reflected in multiple views of respondents with one of them asserting that, “a good educational institution is one that equips its trainees so that when they enter into the job market, they can deliver on the job as expected” (Denyo, an accounts clerk).

In response to what a good educational institution really is, another person commented:

...one that can impact positively on its products. The products in this case mean the students it produces. If someone attends a school and afterwards is able to make positive impact on society or job he finds himself, it means that, where the person is coming from is a good school (Dacosta, a top administrative staff).

This implies that many administrative staffs perceived good educational institutions beyond the grades their products can make. Administrative staff also looked at the effectiveness or contribution of the graduates in the job market. This perception could be described as industrial mindedness where individuals are equipped not only with a 'book knowledge', but also with the practical skills they need to deliver effectively and efficiently on the intended job. It is worth remarking based on this insight that, perceiving the image of educational institutions in this way could lead to increase productivity in the teaching field since teacher trainees are prepared purposely for the job.

Similarly, it was also gleaned that, a good educational institution was also perceived as one that adequately prepares students for future resilience and societal acceptability. One participant, a top administrative staff stated: "...a good educational institution should prepare students adequately for life ahead of them, to be able to fit into any society they find themselves" (Sackey).

A careful and a deeper analysis of the narrative reveals that, in the process of developing a good perception about a particular college, two key impressions were expected to be evident in the lives of its students or graduates. These are; first, the preparedness to face life ahead of them; and second, the ability to fit into

any society they find themselves. Clearly, these two perspectives point to purposefulness (being able to face life ahead of them) and ethics (being able to fit into societal moral standards). These traits are often shaped by the standard of discipline and instructional effectiveness in such an institution. Regarding discipline, it was believed that every human institution is confronted with the issue of discipline because all humans are not equal and some may not be willing to obey the acceptable standards. As one of the top administrative staff (Sackey) pointed out:

TCE is a human institution and all of you cannot be the same. It is human to have such social challenges because all people may not accept a particular course of action and adhere to it absolutely. So you see some deviating from it (Sackey).

Ethical acceptability of an educational institution and its products within the society they find themselves was also portrayed by a participant as follows:

When products portray to society in a positive manner what they are capable of doing, the image will be formed but if they don't, otherwise is the case. Ethics and behavior are very important in forming institutional image. If the character and behaviour of your products are good they society will note that your school is good... (Clud, a Head of Department).

Sackey further confirmed that, "If the school's name is protected and your name is not dragged into anything negative and everybody wants to be part of you, then they school will have a good image.

Additionally, insights from the interview data showed that although the goodness of an educational institution could be affected by external factors, it was perceived to be influenced more by internal factors. As one of the library staff contended: “Good institution has internal controls firmly in place in terms of administration, human resource, academic and nonacademic staff, highly qualified staff...” (Kate).

However, participants presented a different understanding of what popularity of an educational institution represents.

Popularity of an Educational Institution

According to the research participants, unlike the goodness of an institution, the popularity of an educational institution connoted an educational institution being well known. As s. Winifred declared, “the popularity of an educational institution is one which is well known for academic performance”. Another respondent, Kasuri reported as follows: “An institution that is popular is one that people describe as remarkable and want family members to attend, and people are proud to be products of that institution”. Thus, a school’s popularity was construed in light of the willingness of people to recommend it to others and how proud people are to be products of such a school. Similarly, it was said that a popular educational institution is “well known such that people talk about it and wherever you mention the name of the institution, people can talk about it” (Wayeh, a technical staff).

Mutual inclusivity of Institutional Goodness and Popularity

Despite the fact that something may be popular but not good, a participant contended that, the popularity and goodness of any educational institution are mutually inclusive (Tassa). Similarly, Kossah, one of the department heads explained “Once you have quality infrastructure and quality human resource; teaching and nonteaching staff, and you produce quality graduates the school will become popular.” This narrative brings to light the connection institutional goodness has with institutional popularity. It suggested that the popularity of any educational institution comes as a result of how good or quality such institution is.

Clearly, the popularity and goodness of an institution cannot be separated in practice. They are mutually inclusive of each other as one leads to the other. Thus, an educational institution must first have good image before it could be considered as being popular. There was also a view that that “once you come out with quality products, people will get to know how good your educational institution is. This will propel them to look for such an institution and thereby making the institution popular. This was confirmed by Jakes, one of the heads of department in his inspiring philosophy: “Quality sells itself”. To Jakes, an institution which has good qualities can easily be known and patronized.

Meanwhile, the relationship between quality/goodness and popularity as portrayed in the context of the views expressed is a unidirectional relationship where institutional goodness leads to educational popularity but not vice versa. Thus, when an educational institution puts up the measures and the structures that make it good, and is able to effectively equip its graduates, it will become

popular as its goodness or quality will be well spoken of, and its fame will become widespread. However, it stands to reason that, an institution being popular cannot automatically make such an institution good.

Moreover, the phrase “quality sells itself” as narrated implies that popularity of a college does not come without a cause; it is a product of the quality perceived by people in the college. This statement therefore gives credence to the fact that, before the image of a college or any educational institution can be seen or constructed, much work needs to be invested in forming its quality. This probably is a recognition of the efforts administrative and other staff need to invest in planning and provision of necessary equipment and resources needed for effective functioning of the institution. Thus, quality cannot be left out if popularity could be achieved; and quality also cannot be achieved without proper internal efforts of management in terms of policy formulation and effective growth monitoring.

However, a careful analysis of the phrase “quality sells itself” reveals a very significant limitation in its application. This limitation occurs in its tendency to downplay the role of advertisement in producing popularity. Sometimes the quality of a product needs to be showcased on the necessary platforms and mediums in order to get the product well known and massively patronized by people, and so is an educational institution. Dacosta stated that, “institutions with good reputation, but little publicity may miss the opportunities to connect with broader base of potential students, donors, and funding agencies”.

Moreover, it was gleaned that, one can rarely perceive popularity in an institution without recognizing its goodness (Wane, an accounting staff). Institutional popularity was perceived by top administrative staff as a product of how much a school is liked by people. It was thus reported: “Popularity may not mean that people have heard about the school but that people like it” (Jakes, one of the Heads of Department)

Thus, an institution can be heard about by many, yet it may not be popular; unless such an institution is “liked” by people. This statement could be connoted to mean the relevance of social responsibility and ethical acceptability of the institution which is an element of its goodness. Besides, “like” in this case could also be actuated by the quality or goodness of the school or institution in producing the right caliber of graduates over the years. Thus, institutional popularity could not be totally separable from institutional quality. This suggests that goodness and popularity of institutions work together (mutually inclusive).

Perception of the Image of Tamale College of Education

The Perceived Goodness/Quality of TCE

Generally, there was strong positive perception among the participants about the goodness and Quality of TCE as an educational institution. This was reflected in the affirmative response by literally all the participants. Their views to justify such high positive perceptions about TCE revealed similar insights regarding what they think defines a good educational institution. One remarkable narrative drew my attention to the numerous graduates of the TCE over the years and how such graduates are able to deliver on the job of teaching across the

country. A female accounting staff, Sika remarked “We have the products of TCE all over and they are able to deliver; they teach effectively when given the opportunity...”. Another respondent similarly explained: “Yes because of testimonies of past students delivering as expected” (s. Baby, a quality control staff). Another participant solidifies the point by giving a more detailed account on how graduates from TCE are doing marvelously well in the teaching field. It was thus opined:

The past students or products of Tamale College of Education are all over, they are able to teach and they are also able to progress in the educational ladder. For instance, many students finish diploma in this school and within some few years the person upgrade... (Jayon, Secretary).

The narrative suggests various ways past students of TCE were doing well. These include their effective delivery on the job (they are able to teach) and their ability to further their education to attain higher heights within few years after their completion.

Regardless of the remarkable emphasis participants placed on job related performance of the graduates of TCE as stated earlier, the academic performance of its graduates was not entirely ignored. This became evident as most of the participants cited it as a justification for their considering TCE as a good college. A participant remarked: “The College is on top in the northern zone in terms of academic performance, they are making the grades” (Simon, a quality control staff). Another participant, a top administrative staff revealed: “Most of our

students have been winning awards, getting 1st class and we ever warn excellence awards, many of them” (Sackey).

Another reason given as a justification of TCE’s goodness/quality is the availability of quality human resource delivering quality services. These human resources were perceived to encompass both teaching and nonteaching staff, including the administrative staff. A top official responded to the question “do you perceive TCE as a good institution?” as; “Yes because it has necessary human resources in terms of both teaching and nonteaching staff” (Sackey). Another person stated: “We have quality staff giving quality education; environment is serene where people like to come” (Ampiadu, a quality control staff).

The perceived Popularity of TCE

Generally, there was strong perception of the popularity of TCE by the participants. When confronted with the question of whether or not TCE is a popular school, s Williams, a secretariat staff responded: “Yes! TCE is popular and well known, outstanding....”. Similarly, Kossah, one of the Heads of Department responded: “Yes because you see countless number of our products, which the school pass through them, doing well meaning the school is able to affect lives positively...”. These narratives imply that, TCE was popular because it was widely known.

It was also interesting to find out that, TCE’s popularity was also attributed to the outstanding sporting activities that its students engage in. This became clear as a security staff responded: “Yes TCE is popular because the school does well

in academics and sports” (Denbang). This implies institutional popularity does not only stem from the academic activities but also extra-curricular activities such as sports.

The high perception of administrative staff of the popularity of TCE was also revealed in how they describe the rank that TCE has attained among Colleges of Education in the Country. A top administrative staff commended: “If you take the popular colleges of education in Ghana, we are among the most popular colleges in the country. Within a rating of the top colleges in the country, we may be among the first five (Sackey)”.

TCE popularity was also perceived by the number of applicants that apply to the college in recent academic years. It was thus declared: “Yes, TCE is popular because last year we needed 500 and above but about two times the number who applied qualified. If the school were not popular, many of the people may not want to come” (Dacosta). Another participant remarked: This year, we have close to a thousand. But in actual fact, we could not take more than 600” (Sackey).

Popularity of TCE was also perceived in light of the diversity of staff working in the college. This was expressed by Sackey in this way: “People like to come to the school, diversified staff from all parts of the country, southern part such as Kumasi, and its areas, northern part such as Bawku...”.

Research Question 2 focused on how administrative staff of TCE perceive their roles in enhancing the institutional image of the college? Findings that emerged regarding this research question are:

- Perception of the Relevance of their Role

- Perception of what has been done to contribute to the Image of TCE
- Perception of what is being done to contribute to the Image of TCE

Perception of Relevance of their Role

Analysis of the interview data revealed that Administrative Staff perceived their role as one of the most important to the formation of the image of TCE. Administrative roles were portrayed to be in the very heart of the college. It is administrative staff that defines the very existence of the college. It was remarked by Nsanya, a postal staff as follows: “The administration is the heart of the institution”. Administrative staff sustain the college. They make the college a college ...”.

Another participant contended:

I can't speak for teaching staff but we (administrative staff) are the college because we sustain the college, we work longer hours. A teaching staff can come three hours and he is gone. We come 7:00am and leave here sometimes in the evening; we don't even have closing time, Yesterday for instance at 7:00pm we were still here. (Kate, a Library Staff).

Perception of what has been done to contribute to the Image of TCE

Administrative staff portrayed how much they have contributed to the formation of the current image of TCE. When confronted with the question of what has been done to construct the image of TCE, a participant remarked: “A lot” (Tassa, a secretariat staff). Probing on what has been done, a number of

contributions were enumerated by the participants. For instance, Sackey enumerated some of the roles they have performed as follows: "...changing of school from girl's school to male school, compiling of student names, signing of matriculation book is done by administrative staff...".

Another remarkable way the image of TCE was enhanced by administrative staff was the planning and investing in staff development programmes. Madam Kate, a library staff remarked: "... staff Development paying part of fee to higher learning institutions". This narrative suggests that, a very important way to enhance the image of any institution is to ensure that, its staff are given the opportunity and the support to further themselves for higher learning.

These implies the role of administrative staff, or what administrative staff have done over the years to help improve the image of TCE are numerous if not uncountable. Thus, administrative staff contributed significantly to bring TCE to where it is today. One cannot talk about the goodness or the popularity of TCE without making reference to administration.

Similarly, upon being asked to throw more light on how staff development programmes were done, it came to light that, staff development was done in the form of sponsorship for TCE staff who have gained admission to institutions of higher learning. This sponsorship was done in the form of payment of fees. Clud narrated as "...staff development, part of the fees of people who have attained admission to institution of higher learning....".

Further probes revealed that, the payment of fees used to be hundred percent or the payment of the entire fee. However, due to the increased number of TCE

staff, the college does not have the capacity to continue paying all fees for all staff for further studies. A staff development policy was therefore initiated which supports Nonteaching staff of TCE with 40% of fees for further studies and 60% payment of fees for teaching staff. It was thus stated by a top administrative staff that:

The school now gives sponsorship for further studies in preferential courses and personal development. Formerly, this support used to be 100% but as time goes on, staff numbers keep increasing. They are now using 60% for teaching staff and 40% for nonteaching staff... (Sackey).

Meanwhile, sometimes, 70% or otherwise could be granted depending on the level a staff attained in the college or the length of service in TCE. This became clear as a Secretariat staff remarked as "...sometimes 70% support was given. The percentage of support also depends on the salary you take, qualification, stage in the institution and year that you joined the instituting" (Felicity). This staff development was spoken well of as it also yielded some personal benefits for the participants. A participant said: "...I have been developed personally..." (Kasuri, one of the heads of department).

Furthermore, it was revealed that, other remarkable efforts that were undertaken in the direction of staff development were skill development training programmes (Dacosta). These programmes were focused on the teaching staff developing the necessary skills needed for effective instructional functionality. It was reported as follows;

Providing staff with the needed skills to teach through programmes touching on classroom practices and student tutor relationship enhancements. This does not necessarily mean the teaching staff are not qualified. However, they still need to be empowered the more to develop the needed skills for their work. (Dacosta).

It is noteworthy from the narrative that, staff development was not intended as a means to undermine the potential experiences and knowledge the staff already have. Rather it was in response to the necessity of helping the staff to translate knowledge and experiences they have already gotten into applicable skills that can impact their work. Sackey explained: "...that is not to undermine the knowledge of staff in their area of work. It is to help them translate their knowledge and experiences into skills needed on the job...".

It thus implies that, staff development programmes are inevitable regardless of the amount of knowledge or experience a staff has attained as it will help translate such knowledge and experience into the needed skills for effective delivery on the current job. Insightfully therefore, a staff development training programme must be practical such that it helps the beneficiaries to appreciate the connection between their knowledge and their productivity on the job.

As part of staff development therefore, workshops were also organized both locally and internationally through zoom which respective staff are required

to attend. An accounting staff revealed: “Workshops were also organized locally or internationally, on zoom...” (Denyo).

After being probed on who takes the cost off internet bundles in case of online or zoom training programmes, it became clear that the cost is borne by the college. This was narrated by Denyo as “...The College takes care of your expenditure regarding internet boundless...”

Furthermore, academic performances of college students at TCE were motivated by the planning and the institution of the Principal’s Award Programme. The intention was to whip up the zeal in students to seriously endeavour for excellence in academic performance. It was narrated by a top administrative staff as follows: “Principal’s Award for students was also put in place...to help students work hard to attain academic excellence.” (Sackey).

Furthermore, administrative staff also worked hard among other things to maintain cordial relationship between stakeholders of the TCE – students, teaching and administrative staffs. It was narrated by a top administrative staff as: “We work at encouraging staff and teachers, staff empowerment, inspiring students to be up and doing”. (Dacosta). Another participant confirmed: “We worked hard to make sure there is cordial relationship between students and tutors...no one will like to come to a school where they heard that, tutors are harassing students...” (Sackey).

Another commendable effort of administrative staff towards enhancing the image of TCE was to develop a guidance and counseling unit. This was aimed at addressing peculiar issues especially among students. One of the respondents

(Jakes, a Head of Department) identified: "...another thing we have done is the development of guidance and counseling unit....".

Moreover, there was also the investment into infrastructure as well as other educational resources such as Teaching and Learning Materials. It was thus reported by a library staff that, "...the college engage in investment into infrastructure, educational resources, TLMs and others..." (Tuolong).

Another important effort administrative staff has done to enhance the image and functionality of TCE was the development of a reliable record system for the college. A secretariat staff, reported as: "What I do is going by work schedule, delivering to the task such as typing of documents, keeping of records" (Miss. Eunice). Besides, Nsanya, a postal staff reported: "Administrative staff has done documentation and developed document brand for the school..."

Similarly, the documentation process was departmentalized in order to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in the keeping of records. Nsanya, the postal staff recounted: "what we have done includes provision of postage books, incoming mails books and departmentalization of records".

Perception of what is being done to contribute to the Image of TCE

On the whole, it was revealed that, the infrastructural environment of TCE is still undergoing development. Currently, administration has invested into the building of a story building for a ladies' dormitory. In response to the question of what administrative staff is doing at the time to improve the image of TCE. Sackey reckoned: "Currently, one story building is being put up for the lady's dormitory. Also, there is provision of toilet facility". Other things being done

includes monitoring of staff performance, encouraging academic excellence and generally developing of the environment (Dacosta).

Furthermore, as revealed by Madam Kate, one of the library staff, some individual administrative staffs worked extra time to make sure their maximum efforts are contributed to the task. Some also delivered their role with strict adherence to recommended and acceptable standards so as to help achieve quality in service delivery (Kate).

The third Research Question is focused on the challenges faced by administration of TCE in enhancing its image. Major issues that emerged are:

- Presence of challenges was unanimously admitted
- Challenges Identified

Presence of challenges was unanimously admitted

By and large, the participants admitted that, many challenges were faced in their course towards enhancing the image of TCE. As Sackey kindly submitted, every human institution faces challenges. Many challenges come because humans are not equal (Sackey). The challenges were also perceived to be numerous. Tassa indicted as follows:

Yes.....so many. Some of the challenges, especially, disciplinary challenges stem from the fact that, TCE is a human institution and all of you cannot be the same. It is human to have such social challenges because all people may not accept a particular course of action and adhere to it absolutely. So you see some deviating from it. Some of

the disciplinary challenges were however, addressed by administration by implementing checks to ensure that, a good standard of discipline is maintained so as to preserve the image of the institution. (Tossa, secretariat staff).

Challenges Identified

Respondents reported several challenges that they faced in their efforts towards enhancing the image of TCE. Some of these challenges were:

Conditions of service dependent on the Government of the day and hence condition of service is only shapeable by the government in power. Thus, condition of service is policy bound and depends on the government in power. In this way, conditions of service of staff at TCE are dictated from active political sources. Dacosta thus reported: “Conditions of service are determined from the top. The condition of service is determined by the government in power. We are working hand in hand with Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) to intervene in issues...”

One other challenge I identified is residential Infrastructural shortage. The hostels have inadequate rooms to accommodate the number of students TCE should have admitted given the number of applicants realized annually. A participant who is a technical officer notified: “We have shortage in residential infrastructure, even though we are

building a story building for lady's hostel or dormitory much is required to be done...." (Duut, a technical officer).

This shortage in residential facility is a major limitation on admissions. The college could have been able to admit more than its current capacity. Over thousand applicants attempted last year. However, only nearly six hundred students were admitted. A top administrative staff remarked as: "This year, we have close to a thousand. But in actual fact, we could not take more than 600" (Sackey).

The problem of residential facility shortage when considered carefully has the potential of affecting the choice of prospective students in deciding whether TCE is appropriate. Students may not be willing to apply to a college where students are overcrowded in rooms and there are few common areas and limited open space for relaxation.

The issue on shortage of residential infrastructure was also contributed to by the limited land area available for expansion. As reported, the college has very limited land area for expansion and developmental projects (Dacosta). The land area available for TCE is small. In this regard, the only viable way to consider development is to go into the raising of multiple story structures which are also very expensive to construct.

Furthermore, Sackey indicated that, the college was also plagued with insufficient funds for such infrastructural developments. Yoke, a technical staff confirmed: "If land area were larger, a number of single story structures could be rapidly developed to rescue the situation".

Regarding library resources, there is shortage in some of the most important TLMs. The shortage of funds and the lack of external support make it difficult for the acquisition of some of these TLMs. Tuolong, a library staff thus indicated: “One of the problems faced over the years is the shortage of Teaching and Learning Materials. The college does not have the funds to acquire all at once. Internet facility is a problem....”

Furthermore, the TCE is also facing the inadequacy and or inefficiency of internet infrastructure. Tuolong, a library staff continued: “Internet facility is a problem. The school could go weeks without internet availability”.

The school also faced a challenge regarding its environment. This was reported in terms of the availability of low class structures and dusty grounds that were not conducive for habitation and studies. Kossah, a Head of Department reported: “When I came to this institution the ground was bare dusty full of wooden structures; for example, administration”. With regards to dusty ground, Yahaya, a warehouse staff also indicated: “The dust disturbs us a lot; especially during the hamatan....”

Another challenge faced was reported in the area of postage where there are no means provided for emergency mails. Nsanya, a staff engaging in postage reported:

We have been using our own motorbike or car for postage due to unavailability of the college vehicle especially when the letter is to be urgently transmitted...but there is no compensation for that. If

there can be some compensations for that, the better but there is no compensation for it. (Nsanya, a postage staff).

Another important problem that has been faced in the efforts to shape a good image for TCE is water problem. It was thus reported by Sackey this way: “There is water problem here” the college at this level still depends on non-mechanized boreholes ...” .

Another problem is in the area of discipline. Sackey, expressed his worry this way: “... Everybody will not toe the line, young man! That is the issue. So there will be some few misbehaving or deviant students...”

Similarly, Kasuri, a female head of department reported as follows:

Some of the challenges, especially, disciplinary challenges stem from the fact that, TCE is a human institution and all of you cannot be the same. It is human to have such social challenges because all people may not accept a particular course of action and adhere to it absolutely. So you see some deviating from it (Kasuri).

On the matter of discipline, a security staff (Shaikh) said: “girls do bring strange people here which makes it dangerous...”

Research Question 4, which is the final research question, examined strategies administrative staffs of TCE consider as viable means of enhancing the institutional image of the College.

The major issues that were gleaned are:

Addressing challenges identified, and

Other Viable strategies to enhance Institutional Image of TCE

Addressing challenges identified

It was generally reported that; various strategies were being devised to address the challenges earlier identified. Some of these strategies as reported are presented as follows:

Disciplinary challenges were addressed by the introduction of checks to enable students and staff alike to conduct themselves according to the acceptable standards. It was reported regarding disciplinary issues by one of the participants as follows:

Some of the disciplinary challenges were however, addressed by administration by implementing checks to ensure that, a good standard of discipline is maintained so as to preserve the image of the institution. Strong internal controls are needed to ensure that people toe the line... (Sackey, a top administrative staff).

In order to address shortage of TLMs and other library materials needed for instructional purposes; administration resorted to the planning of periodic acquisition of some of these materials. Some of the materials were also acquired at request. This was thus reported by Tuolong: “Management had to resort to

acquisition of some of the materials periodically or annually, and at request so as to gradually fill the gap on shortage of library materials”

Other conditions of service issues were being addressed through careful and appropriate negotiations with the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). This was because the staffs are under Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) and condition of service is determined from the top. A respondent who is a senior administrative staff stated that, “Conditions of service are determined from the top. We are working hand in hand with Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) to intervene in issues...” (Dr. Dacosta).

Other issues about conditions of service are being addressed through advocacy by staff unions. Clud, one of the heads of department reminded: “We have just come back from strike. Issues are being addressed by advocacy by our unions...”

Water problems were being addressed through the provision of boreholes. It was remarked: “We provided boreholes to address the water problem. Six (6) boreholes are currently on campus. We are trying to mechanize all of them.” (Sackey).

It was also remarked that, administration is trying to get water close to toilet facilities: Sackey continued: “...We are trying to get water close to toilet facilities...”.

A number of other measures were suggested as viable means to enhance the image of TCE. Some of these means gathered from the narratives of participants were:

Provision of incentives in form of allowance for working extra hours since such incentives are not currently in place in TCE (Sackey).

Advertisement programmes on radio, Television and other social media platforms about what TCE (Dacosta).

“Because many of the qualified applicants are not given admission due to infrastructure, it is important to invest into academic and residential infrastructure or multiple campuses...” (Beauty, an accounting staff).

Intensifying counseling.

Doing interviews before admissions. Sackey stated:

Interviews have to be brought back. Because we are training professionals and in the interview some things may come up. It is not only about the as or the Bs or the good grades they bring but how much their heart is in the Job. For instance, earlier, interviews were conducted before students are admitted into the school and you will realize in some instances that some are not prepared for the field of discipline they want to enter... (Sackey, a top male administrator).

Discussion

Views expressed by respondents regarding institutional image, its meaning, what they do to contribute to the image of their institution and challenges they faced, are discussed in this section.

Institutional Image as Mental Construct

The findings suggest that, institutional image is generally the mental view of people about an institution. In other words, institutional image is the mental construct of people about the institution and its outfit. This idea of institutional image being a mental view is supported by Honover (2015) who defined institutional image as the average mental construct of the public, most especially the stakeholder groups, about an institution which is a function of perceived operational, financial and prospective advantage. Suparjo and Sunarsih (2018) resonated with Honover (2015) on the issue of institutional image being a mental view of the people. Suparjo and Sunarsih (2018) in the context of business corporations posited that, the image of a company is the whole mindset that consumers have from the corporate environment. Similarly, Martineau (2013) confirms the views of Honover (2015) and Suparjo and Sunarsih (2018) when he considers the image of an institution as the manner in which the institution appears in peoples' minds based on its functional qualities and psychological attributes formed over time. Azoury et al. (2014, p.3) also corroborated the idea of Honover (2015), Suparjo and Sunarsih (2018) and Martineau (2013) by defining image as “the mental representation of a real object that acts in that object’s place”.

It implies from the findings and scholarly point of view that, institutional image actually occurs in the minds of people. It is how people see, think and say about an educational institution. Thus, institutional image is the beliefs, ideas and impressions of an institution from a person's point of view (Azoury, et al., 2014). This indicates that institutional image originally is an individualized concept which could differ from person to person (Suparjo & Sunarsih, 2018). What one person sees, hears, thinks or says about an institution could be different from another (Azoury, et al., 2014). Considering this individualistic perspective where institutional image occurs in the individual's mind, it is worth saying that, what an individual sees, thinks or says about an institution may or may not truly reflect the reality of the institution.

In considering the findings carefully, I came to the understanding that, people could also form secondary mental constructs of an institution which is based on what others are saying about the institution. These are people who have not experienced, or visited such an institution before taking their decisions regarding the institution using their secondary perceptions formed from what they heard others say about the institution. This insight of secondary construct agrees with a study conducted by Enache (2011) which suggested public relations and social marketing as means to improve patronage of educational institution. Similarly, Tukur et al. (2019) observed that, educational institutions that did not engage in what he referred to as 'Marketing Mix' lack the market base of serious applicants. Thus, by communicating the good message about a particular college, people may decide to apply to such a college basing their decisions on the

secondary information they heard about the college without having to visit the college themselves (Pratminingsih & Soedijati, 2011).

On the contrary, such decisions taken based on secondary constructs could be misleading since the finding establishes that, individualized mental constructs may not be the truth (Kumar & Gunaseelan, 2016). It is therefore worth stating that, for any individual to take the right decision regarding an institution, the image of the institution expressed by another individual may need to be taken through a rationalization process before it is accepted (Renihan & Renihan). LaMarco (2018) studied falsified advertisement implications and agreed with this idea of first rationalizing the advertisement information. This rationalization process, which Azoury et al. (2014) refer to as 'evaluating the organization', transfers the mental construct of the one expressing it into the mind of the listener in a modified way. The rationalization process should employ series of verifications, including the consideration of the views of several individuals on the image of such an institution so as to make the right judgment (Renihan & Renihan). In simple terms, the findings establish that, taking decisions about an institution based on somebody else's mental construct about the institution could be misleading, and such a problem could be solved through the process of rationalizing the persons view about the institution with several others before making a conclusion.

I was also motivated to look into whether or not such mental construct could be collective or communal. It was very interesting to understand that, the image of an educational institution may be collective. This is where many people think the

same way about the institution. Suparjo and Sunarsih (2018) agrees with this collectiveness of institutional image when he described institutional image as a collection of beliefs, ideas and impressions people have about the institution. Honover (2015) also agrees with the collectivity of institutional image as he describes institutional image as the average mental construct of the public, most especially the stakeholder groups, about an institution which is a function of perceived operational, financial and prospective advantage. This context indicates a collective mindset of a group of people about the said institution. This collective idea of institutional image also confirmed the idea of Usuh et al. (2019) who portrayed that, an institutional image could be communal where people in a particular community have similar perceptions about the said institution. Findings imply that, although Institutional Image is primarily an individual's conception, it is possible that a group of people living in a particular society or community can have same perception about an educational institution. Such a mental construct is no more individual but communal, societal or collective.

Institutional Goodness and Institutional Popularity

Two main aspects of institutional image were established from the findings. These were institutional goodness/quality and institutional popularity. Respondents mostly saw the goodness of an educational institution as a potential in such an institution that is revealed in the impact the institution is able to make in the lives of its students. In other words, the goodness of any educational institution reflects in the quality of graduates it produces. Dang and Hathaway (2015), though from a business context, agrees to the fact that, institutional

goodness is attributable to the product of the said institution. Dang and Hathaway (2015) stated that, consumers regard the image of the product brand or the corporation as indicative of the quality of the products or services they provide.

A quality/good organization produces good brands or products (Dang & Hathaway, 2015). The products of an educational institution are the graduates it produces (Ghana Education Service, 2018). The quality of the graduates of an educational institution is indicative of the goodness of such an educational institution (Karacabey et al., 2016; Pelissari & Gonzalez, 2018). Products of such an institution are assessable in terms of their contribution to the job market over time (Azoury, et al., 2014). A good educational institution must have the requisite systems that make it able to equip its students to become effective and can deliver on the Job as expected (Suparjo & Sunarsih, 2018). This implies that, good educational institutions must be perceived beyond the grades its students are able to make. This suggests that, educational institutions must be industrial oriented such that, the particular industry that employs graduate from the institution are able to establish a long standing construct about the graduates from such an institution that, its products are very effective on the job.

It was also generally perceived that, the popularity and goodness of any educational institution are mutually inclusive. Popularity of any educational institution can come about as a result of how good or quality such institution is. Popularity and goodness of an institution cannot be separated in practice. Thus, administrative staff works through being good in order to become popular (Sharifiatashgah & Aghaz, 2015). This mutuality portrayed between the goodness

and the popularity of an educational institution is also similar to the contention of Honover (2015) in his review study on best practices in improving reputation and brand recognition in higher education that, institutional image is a fusion of being good and being popular. Thus, institutional quality correlates with brand awareness. Institutional popularity could not be totally separable from institutional quality (Karacabey et al., 2016).

The second Research Question considered how administrative staffs of TCE perceive their roles in enhancing the institutional image. Findings revealed that, Administrative Staff perceived their role as one of the most important to the formation of the image of TCE. Similarly, Ahmed (2020) revealed the importance of administrative roles to the growth of organizations. Usoh et al. (2019) also recognized the importance of administrative role of principals in enhancing performance of educational institutions.

The roles administrative staff played to enhance the image of TCE

One of the important things administrative staffs have done is working to maintain cordial relationship between stakeholders of the TCE. Similarly, Kurt and Kalman (2019) in their study to developing a valid and reliable measurement tool to determine school image in Southeastern Turkey suggested appropriate regulation of interactions between stakeholders such as school worker-parent relationships as a means to help enhance the image of the colleges. In the same way, Tangonyire (2021) discovered that, schools and their leaderships function

effectively through the creation and influencing of relationships. Tangonyire (2021) thus wrote:

The heart of leadership lies in creating and influencing relationships that build trust. When people build mutual trust, you can share leadership responsibilities in the school based on their talents, expertise and experiences. ...It is about being able to get the various stakeholders to build a strong school family. That is how I transformed people from being opposers to supporters. (Tangonyire, 2021)

In creating and improving healthy relationships between stakeholders, administrative staff serves as intermediary between various stakeholders of the college ensuring and influencing relationships towards appropriate goals of the college. Such stakeholders are transformed from opposing the goals and aims of the school into supporters of such goals through facilitating trust and healthy family lifestyle among the stakeholders (Tangonyire, 2021). In influencing relationships, administrative staff ensures interactions between the stakeholders are focused on achieving a reputable image of the college (Aghaz, 2015). Usoh, et al. (2019) agreed with the idea of promoting stakeholder relationships as a means of enhancing school image when they suggested that, promoting a positive image for school, as a market-oriented activity, requires the principal to exercise highly developed public relation skills. They need to have more interaction with the external community to promote the school, attract students as well as retain them (Usoh wt al, 2019). Besides, Kwa (2017) emphasized trust, co-operation and

mutual respect among stakeholders, which he noted shapes people's perception about the institution and creates a very favourable or conducive social climate for learning to take place effectively.

In order to enhance the process of growth of TCE, some individual administrative staffs worked extra time to make sure their maximum efforts are contributed to the task. Some also deliver their role with strict adherence to recommended and acceptable standards so as to help achieve quality in service delivery. In the same way, Lachowska, Alexandre and Stephen (2022), examined administrative reports in the Michigan state University and revealed that, as part of their contributions to enhance their institutions' progress, administrators claimed they worked extra hours than they are paid for. Besides, Lachowska, et al. (2022), explored the efforts of administrators in investing more and more time in their administrative demands than they are paid for as a means to enhance the image of their institution. Meanwhile, Card, et al. (2013), working on workplace heterogeneity and the rise of West German wage inequality posited that, wages for staff must be based strictly on the number of hours they worked. Jardim et al. (2021) also examined the issue of wages and supported the position of Card et. al. (2013) on the issue of paying according to the number of hours worked. This is a vivid justification of the suggestion given that, administrative staff who worked for extra hours must be paid accordingly as a means to motivate them to put in their best for the enhancement of the image of TCE. From a careful consideration of the finding regarding wage or compensation based on the number of hours worked, and its positionality within scholarly context, another important insight of

the advantage of paying employees based on the number of working hours arises. When people are paid based on the number of hours they work instead of monthly salary, it promotes fairer system as people are paid amounts equivalent to the efforts they contribute to the work. Different individuals with different capacities to work longer hours are differentiated and employees become free to work at their own pace and abilities (Lachowska, et al. 2022).

Challenges Faced by Administration in Enhancing Institutional Image

The third Research Question addresses the challenges faced by administration in enhancing institutional image of TCE. It was established that, many challenges were faced in the course of efforts made towards enhancing the image of TCE. First of all, challenges of the learning environment including limited land area and dusty environment were found. It is an indisputable fact that, academic performance and outcomes is connected to the nature of learning environment and the available useful facilities. Various experiential studies such as Mudassir and Norsuhaily (2015) have established that learning environment is a critical necessity for student's academic achievement. The educational process of development occurs in physical, social, cultural and psychological environment which implies that a proper and adequate infrastructure is very necessary for a fruitful learning (Mudassir and Norsuhaily, 2015).

Moreover, Nathanielm (2014), Mudassir and Norsuhaily (2015) and Tukur et al. (2019) have also established that, school environment is a critical necessity for students' academic achievement which implies that a proper and adequate environment is very much necessary for a fruitful learning. This scholarly position

suggests the gravity of the environmental condition of TCE as participants complained vehemently on the dusty and uncondusive nature of the college environment. As Tukur et al. (2019) indicated, over 96.3% of their study respondents rated environment as the first and most essential factor they will consider if selecting a school. Abbott (2014) confirmed that, the school/learning environment is an essential element for teaching and learning to take place effectively. Ihekoronye (2020) also confirmed that, school environment in which teaching and learning take place is an important factor that cannot be ignored in enhancing the image of educational institutions. Ihekoronye (2020) examined school environment among 700 students and discovered that conducive school environment has positive effect on performance as well as the mental construct of students about their institution.

Similarly, Odeh et al. (2015) established in Nigeria that, physical conduciveness of the school environment is critical in influencing students' academic performance. This presupposes that, if the educational environment of TCE is not conducive, it could deter many of their potential applicants from applying to TCE, who may otherwise consider TCE as a first choice of college if TCE environment is better. This brings to bare the importance of roles that could lead to the improvement of the TCE environment.

Besides, findings also suggest that, the effort of administrative staff in improving the physical and social aspects of school environment helps to enhance the image of educational institutions. Nathaniel (2014) suggested that, the environment of an educational institution is critical in determining its image.

Tukur et al, (2019) agreed with Nathaniel (2014) and suggested that, physical environment of educational institutions, including buildings and physical beauty accounted for 4 times a determinant of enrolment to the school compared to school fees or price. Generally, findings of this current study revealed that, the infrastructural environment of TCE is still undergoing development as means of improving the image of the college. Currently, administration has invested into the building of a story building for a ladies' dormitory. This is a step in a right direction. However, funding was noted as a great limitation.

The findings showed that water problem was another challenge that must be addressed in an educational institution with all seriousness. Water is one of the exceptional commodities noted to have sustained life. The International Centre for Disease Control (2020) enunciated that, water source is not a secondary requirement for school facilities but one of the core requirements for accrediting schools. The Centre for Disease Control (2020) identified that, in the tertiary educational institutions, availability of drinking water is the best remedy for the overconsumption of sugar sweetened beverages and its attendant health implications for the students. Furthermore, water helps to maintain hydration and blood circulation which sustains the teaching and learning process in the school domain (Mensah, 2022). This insight is in consistence with the school standards set by the Ghana Education Service (GES) which considered potable water supply as one of the main requirements of a school environment (GES, 2018). In congruence with these, the World Vision International (2020), in their report on the 'WASH UP' programme aimed to reach 50,000 students in Zimbabwe

revealed the health essentials of water in the school setting for frequent washing to prevent sicknesses transmittable through dirty hands (World Vision International, 2020).

Similarly, the United Nations International Children Education Fund - UNICEF (2012) earlier spearheaded the Wash in Schools programme aimed at raising more clean hands and to lessen sickness. On the contrary, many schools in Ghana are challenged with water problems just like TCE (Starfm, 2022). The Koforidua Secondary Technical School was plagued with water scarcity which forced students to use learning hours to roam for water (Starfm, 2022). Water problem is a major challenge of many educational institutions found in the northern belt of the country Ghana (Joyfm, 2021). Unbelievably, 1 in 5 children suffer water vulnerability in Ghana (UNICEF, 2022). In Tanzania, Kimaro (2020), who conducted a cross-sectional study to investigated the role of learning environment on students' academic performance, established that, water problem is a great disservice to effective learning in Tanzania.

The findings also gave an insightful measure to address the water problem in institutions. Where pipe borne water installation is difficult, an alternative could be boreholes (Kimaro, 2020). Yet, mechanization of such boreholes are necessary for their proper functionality (UNICEF, 2022). Mechanized boreholes could serve as a suitable substitute for pipe borne water to effectively supply people with the needed water (Joyfm, 2021).

Chapter Summary

Findings presented in this chapter reveal that, institutional image is primarily a mental view of the people; this can be individualistic or collective societal view about an institution. This view may be true or false. This view about the institution may be about the goodness or the popularity of the institution.

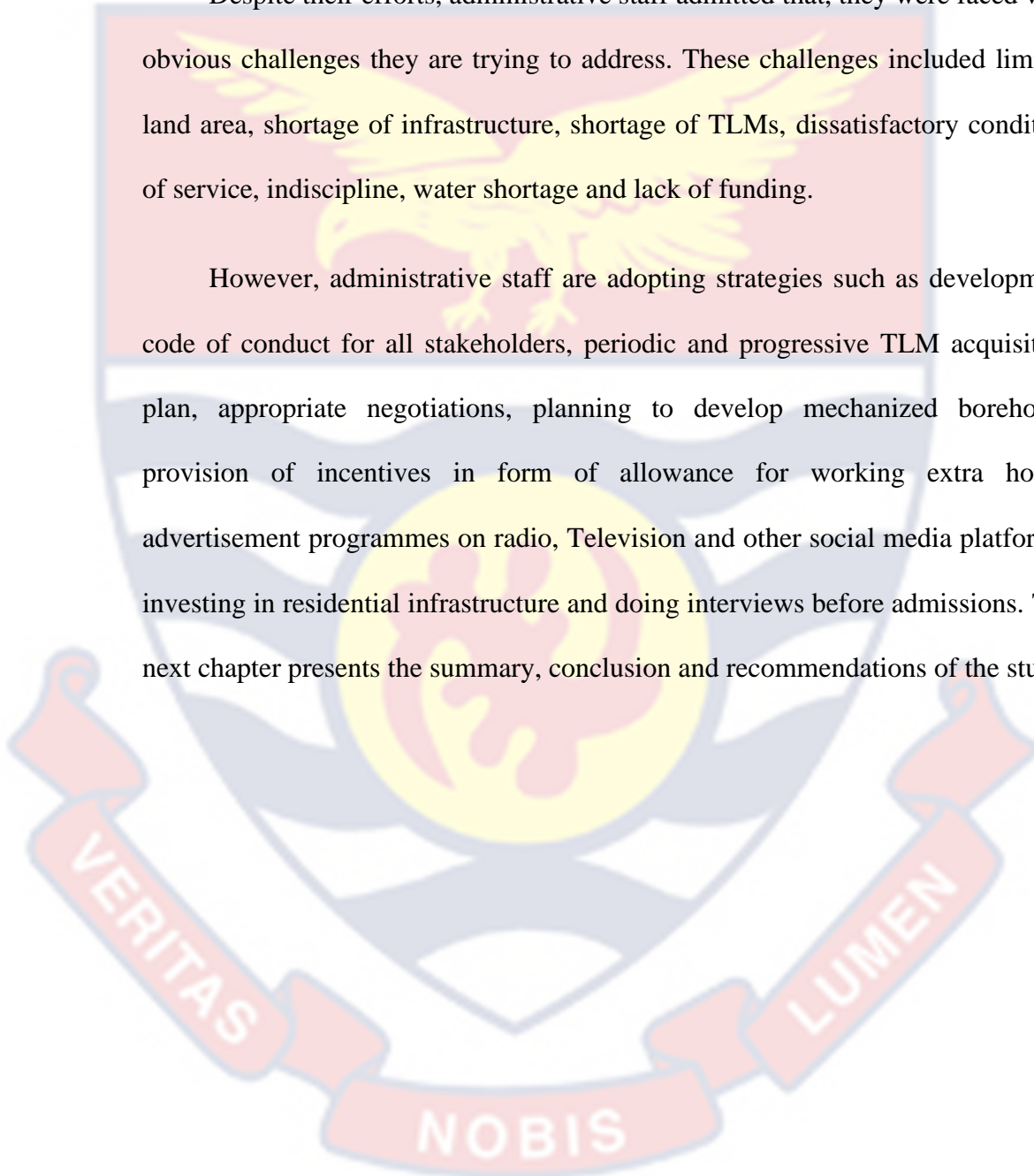
Goodness is how effective the institution impacted its product while popularity concerns how the institution is well-known. For a good institution to be well-known, advertisement plays an important role in connecting the institution with the potential students, donor and funding agencies. It was interesting to find out that, TCE was perceived to be a good institution because the graduates of TCE were known to have delivered efficiently and effectively in the teaching field. They are also able to progress in their professional ladder to higher heights. TCE was also perceived by administrative staff to be popular because it is well-known and has been one of the long standing institutions in the Northern sector of the country, Ghana.

Moreover, the administrative staff of TCE also perceived their roles in enhancing the image of TCE as the most important and is at the heart of the development of the college. They claimed that, the very existence of TCE depends on them. Meanwhile, they expressed displeasure as they felt that their roles are usually not given the due recognition and remuneration. Over the years, administrative staff performed several roles to bring the TCE to its current state. These roles include staff development and sponsorship, improving stakeholder relationships, development of reliable documentation and records system,

investing in the building of the first story building of the school which is girls dormitory and working extra-time, just to mention a few.

Despite their efforts, administrative staff admitted that, they were faced with obvious challenges they are trying to address. These challenges included limited land area, shortage of infrastructure, shortage of TLMs, dissatisfactory condition of service, indiscipline, water shortage and lack of funding.

However, administrative staff are adopting strategies such as development code of conduct for all stakeholders, periodic and progressive TLM acquisition plan, appropriate negotiations, planning to develop mechanized boreholes, provision of incentives in form of allowance for working extra hours, advertisement programmes on radio, Television and other social media platforms, investing in residential infrastructure and doing interviews before admissions. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study used the collective case study design to examine the perspectives of administrative staff in shaping the institutional image of TCE by specifically investigating the perceptions of administrative staff of TCE of institutional image, identifying what they have done to construct the institutional image of TCE, finding out the challenges staff face in constructing the institutional image of TCE, and finding out how these challenges can be addressed so as to improve the II of TCE. To gather enough information, thirty (30) administrative staff were selected and successfully engaged in an in-depth interview on the issue. The views and thoughts shared were processed through a rigorous and a progressive analytical process to uncover and to consolidate the salient and most important insights.

Summary of the Study

Perception of Administrative Staff about Institutional Image

It was found that, Institutional Image was generally a mental view of people about an institution. It may be an individualistic belief or a communal perception about the institution which can be real or superficial. The mental view that constitute institutional image could be about how good the institution is or how popular the institution is. Institutional goodness is seen as the strength of the

institution to effectively and positively prepare its students for the future. This is beyond the grades that the students achieve while in school. Thus a good institution is concerned about building the capacity of its graduates to be effective on the job – industrial mindedness which increases productivity and ensures societal acceptability. Institutional popularity on the other hand was seen in terms of how well-known the institution is. For a school to be considered popular, people must be proud about it and must be willing to recommend it to others. The popularity and goodness of any educational institution are mutually inclusive or inseparable because institutional goodness leads to institutional popularity. TCE was perceived to be a good and popular institution because it effectively trains its products to deliver on the job. Graduates from TCE were perceived not to only achieve good grades, to be able to further their education to attain higher heights within few years after their completion.

Perception of the Role of Administrative Staff in Contributing to Institutional Image

Administrative Staff perceived their roles as very important to the formation of the image of TCE. Administrative roles were portrayed to be in the very heart of the college. Administrative staff of TCE have worked diligently over the years developing good records systems and keeping good records. Administrative staff developed professional development programmes, fostering excellence through institution of awards programme, changing of school from girl's school to mix school, developing skill development training programmes for staff, undertaking guidance and counseling, investment into infrastructure as well as other

educational resources such as Teaching and Learning Materials. Some administrative staffs also worked extra time to make sure their maximum efforts are contributed to the task and ensuring quality in service delivery.

Challenges faced

Administrative staff of TCE were faced with several challenges in the performance of their roles. Some of these challenges are poor conditions of service; limited land area, residential Infrastructural shortage which placed limitation on admissions, insufficient funds, shortage of library materials lack of external support, internet infrastructural challenge, shortage of means for postage and dusty environment.

Viable strategies adopted to address the challenges

Many strategies were being adopted by administrative staff to address the challenges and to enhance the image of TCE. This includes introduction of code of conducts for both students and staff, planning of periodic acquisition of TLMs, appropriate negotiations and provision of boreholes. Other viable areas that needs urgent attention were the provision of incentives in form of allowance for working extra hours since such incentives are not currently in place in TCE, advertisement programmes on radio, Television and other social media platforms about what TCE, investing in academic and residential infrastructure, intensifying counseling and doing interviews before admissions.

Conclusion

After exploring all dimensions of the research questions, it became clear that, administrative staff understood institutional image as a mental construct of the people about the quality and how the institution is well-known. They saw their roles to be important; and are aware of some of the important challenges that must be addressed in order to improve the image of TCE. Findings show that, if limited land-space, infrastructural shortage and shortage of TLMs are not addressed, it would be very difficult to expand admission to meet the increasing demands for college education. There was a water problem that needs urgent address since it is a necessity for survival, which if not addressed, will deter students from patronizing the TCE. The overarching insights revealed that, TCE would find it difficult competing for the market share of students during this era of educational revolution if efforts are not consciously put in place in the area of infrastructure, water, quality assurance, technology and finance to enhance the image and capacity of the college to meet the growing demand. A combination of efforts from college staff and policy making bodies is needed to adequately address problems of colleges and thereby enhancing the image of the colleges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are relevant:

1. Regarding the third objective on challenges faced by administrative staff, since there was no means available purposely for emergency mails, staff responsible for postage should design a vivid proposal stating the relevance of acquiring a motorbike for emergency mails and present this

proposal to top management for consideration and implementation. Such a proposal should also state the need to compensate postage staff who sacrificed their personal vehicle to deliver on emergency postage issues as long as the vehicle for emergency postage is not acquired.

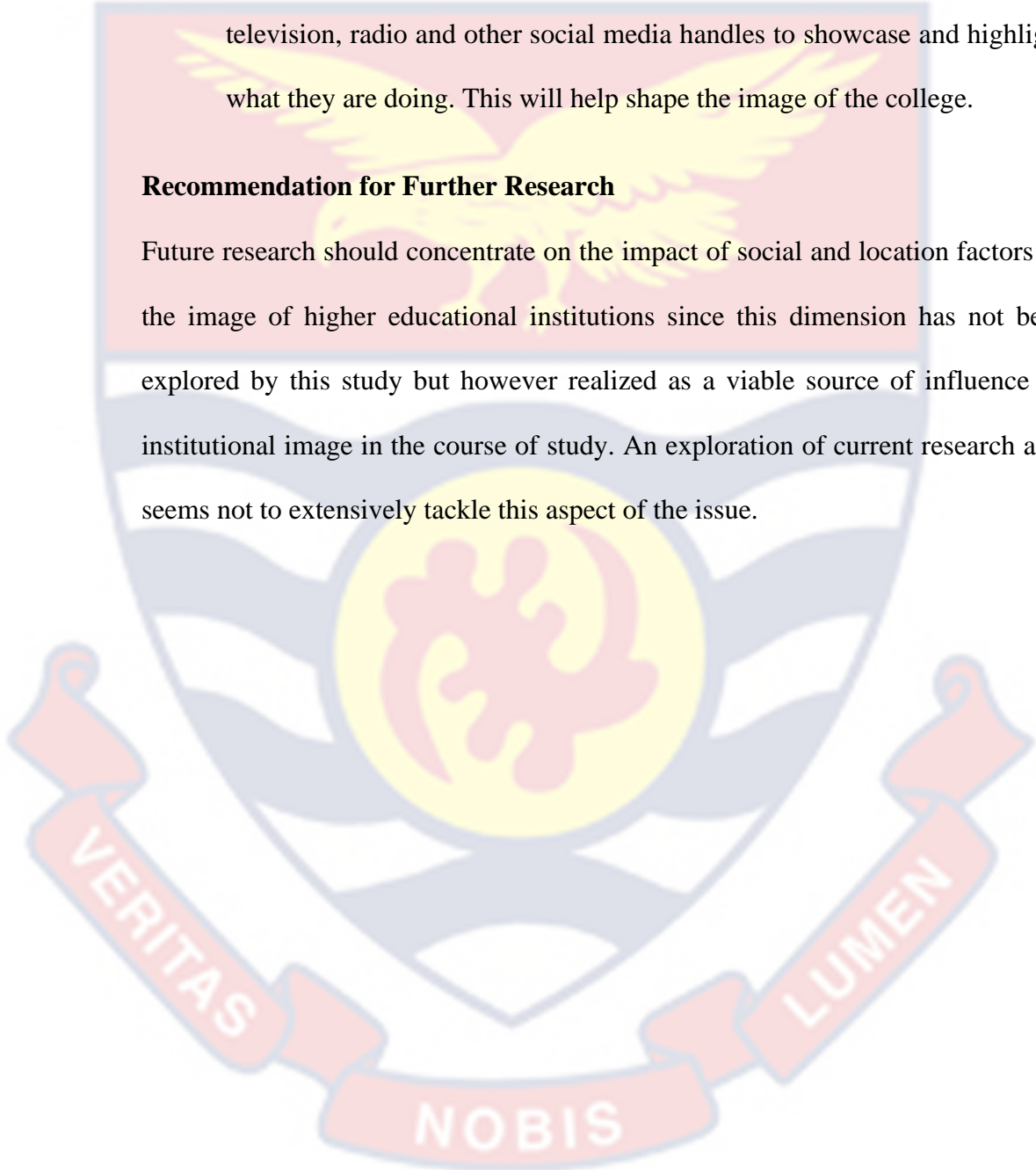
2. With regards to participants' perception of their roles (second objective), since many administrative staff were willing to work extra hours yet there is no policy offering any motivation or compensation to that effect; management, headed by the Principal should consider coming out with a policy framework or document that provides among other things, motivation package for staff who work extra hours. Such a leadership style of giving incentives to those working extra hours could motivate them to contribute significantly to the development of TCE.
3. Because many of the qualified applicants were not given admission due to infrastructure, and the fact that there was limited land space for development (which are part of the challenges –objective 3), Administrative Staff of TCE should consider discussing and designing a complete infrastructural development plan for the college (TCE). This plan should be done in collaboration with expert planners in the land sector (such as estate developers, surveyors and architects) or the Metropolitan planning department, in order to think about ways to maximize the space available through the putting up of high rise structures.

4. The challenge of limited land space could also be tackled by TCE management develop multiple campuses policy helping to create multiple campuses through the acquisition of land elsewhere so as to subdivide the student population and be able to admit more students.
5. The challenge of water as discovered in the study to have been a major challenge and should be addressed by top management by visiting the Ghana water company to discuss the issue. To make it official, a proposal should be developed and presented to the Ghana water company in Tamale and a collaborative approach taken to see how pipe borne water can be provided in the college (TCE).
6. Notwithstanding that, another viable means (objective 4) the non-mechanized boreholes problem could be addressed is for TCE management to write proposals to private companies who deal in mechanization of boreholes so that they can come and undertake the mechanization process and the cost defrayed on an agreeable plan annually.
7. Given the important role interviews before admissions was perceived to play during the time it was practiced; by helping identify people who are really poise for the course, it is therefore suggested that, top management of TCE in collaboration with education experts should conduct interviews with applicants before they are admitted. This will help reduce deviance and also addressing the problem of indiscipline as vehemently expressed.

8. Due to the absence of advertisement in the role of administrative staff towards enhancing the image of TCE, administrative staff should also consider undertaking advertisement of TCE on platforms such as television, radio and other social media handles to showcase and highlight what they are doing. This will help shape the image of the college.

Recommendation for Further Research

Future research should concentrate on the impact of social and location factors on the image of higher educational institutions since this dimension has not been explored by this study but however realized as a viable source of influence on institutional image in the course of study. An exploration of current research also seems not to extensively tackle this aspect of the issue.



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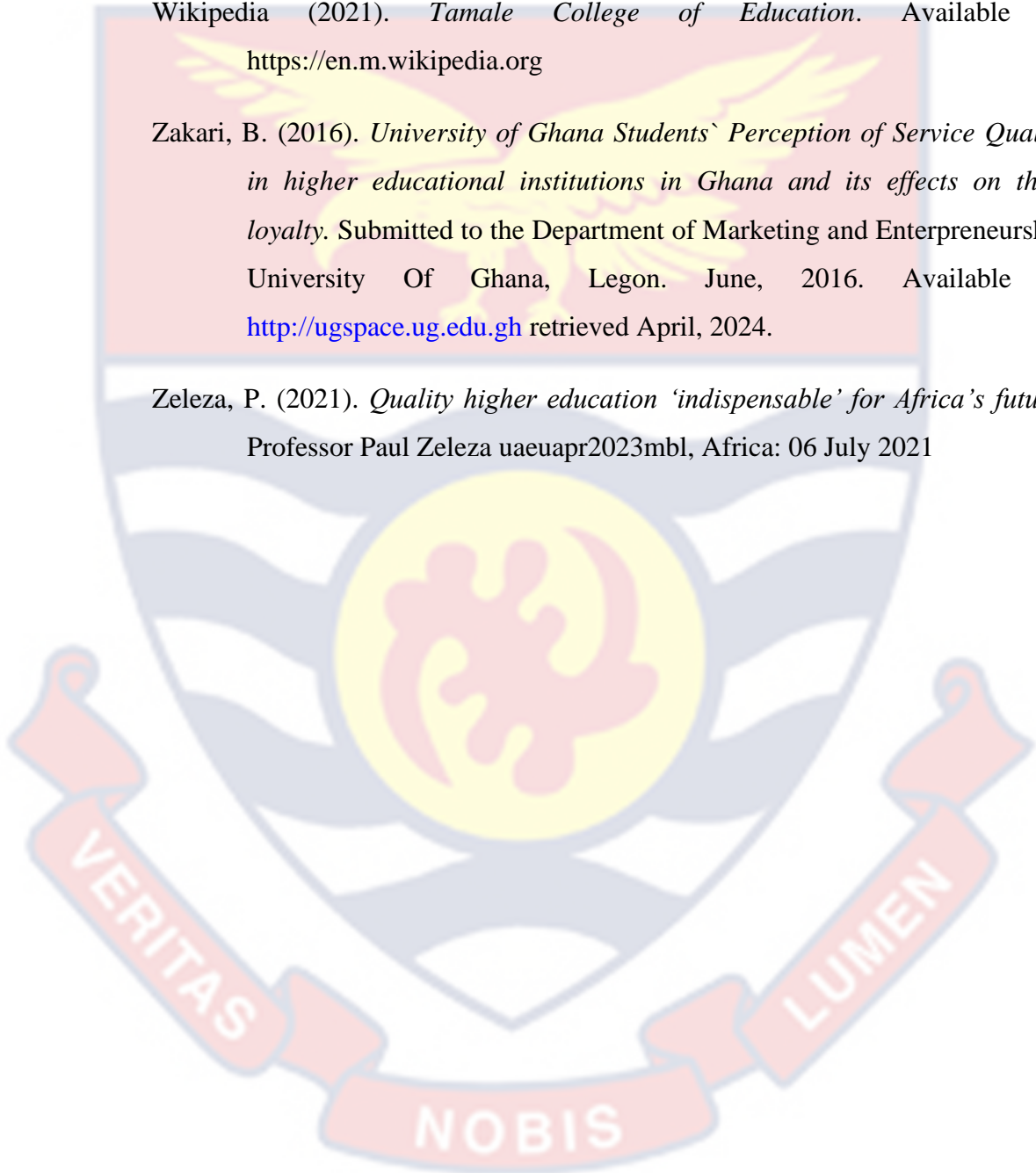
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APPENDIX A:

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Dr. Saunders Memorial Basic 'B'
Post Office Box 275
Kintampo North
Bono East Region
inusahkasim547@gmail.com
0545193130/0509600353
9th March, 2022.

THE CHAIRMAN
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
CAPE COAST

Dear Sir,

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

I am **Inusah Kasim**, an MPhil student pursuing Administration in Higher Education with registration number: **EO/EAT/20/0004** writing under the subject matter.

I would be glad if you could please grant me ethical clearance to facilitate my data collection in my research with the topic: **Enhancing Institutional Image: The Perspectives of Administrative Staff of Tamale College of Education (TCE)**.

Attached are copies of my supervisor's consent letter, cover letter from the Department (IEPA), Research proposal, and informed consent form, Research Instrument, my Supervisor's Abridged CV and my CV for your reference.

I count on your usual cooperation.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



INUSAH KASIM

EO/EAT/20/0004

APPENDIX B:

RE: REQUEST FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE – INUSAH KASIM

GEORGE K.T. ODURO (PhD -CANTAB)

PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

School of Educational development and Outreach (SEDO)

University of Cape Coast

Cape Coast

Ghana

11th April, 2022

The Chairman
Institutional Review Board
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast

Dear Sir,

RE: REQUEST FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE – INUSAH KASIM

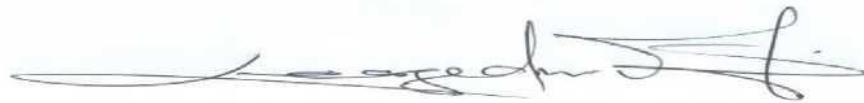
I refer to my earlier letter dated 2nd March 2022 on the subject matter above and the IRB's suggested corrections on the proposal which was communicated to the student per an e-mail dated 4th April, 2022.

I certify that the student (Mr. Inusah Kasim) has addressed the issues raised by the IRB on his proposal titled 'Enhancing Institutional Image: The Perspectives of Administrative Staff of Tamale College of Education (TCE).

I should therefore be grateful if an ethical clearance would be granted him to facilitate his field work.

Counting on your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely,



Prof. George K.T. Oduro

(Principal Supervisor)

Mobile: 0249731782

Email: goduro@ucc.edu.gh

Cc. Fr. (Dr.) Raymond Chegedua Tangonyire

Co-Supervisor

APPENDIX C:

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



United Nations
Educational, Scientific
and Cultural
Organization

Institute for Educational Planning
and Administration at University of
Cape Coast, Ghana. UNESCO
Category II Centre of Excellence.

Our Ref.: IEPA-UNESCO /1.2/VOL.
1/0098

26th January, 2022.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The bearer of this letter **Mr. Inusah Kasim (EO/EAT/20/0004)** is an M.Phil. student studying at the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) at the University of Cape Coast.

He requires some information from you/your outfit for the purpose of writing his thesis titled:

“Enhancing Institutional Image: The Perspectives of Administrative Staff of Tamale College of Education (TCE)” **as a requirement for his M.Phil. Programme.**

Kindly give the necessary assistance that Mr. Kasim requires to enable him gather the information he needs.

While anticipating your co-operation, we thank you for any help that you may be able to give him.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francis Ansah".

Dr. Francis Ansah

HEAD, ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

FOR: DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL (ACADEMIC PROGS. & PROFESSIONAL
DEV'T)

cc: Head, Administration, IEPA

Telephone: + 233 (0) 332 130 571 + 233 (0) 207 728 812 Fax:+ 233 (0) 332 130 588

Website: www.iepa.ucc.edu.gh Email:

Postal Address: University of Cape Coast,
Cape Coast- Ghana GPS: CC-145-8669

**APPENDIX D:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

INUSAH KASIM

**MPHIL (TOP UP) ADMINISTRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL
PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION**

I am a final year student of the University of Cape Coast conducting a study on the Perspectives of Administrative Staff of Tamale College of Education on how Institutional Image can be enhanced. You are humbly invited to participation in a 20 minute interview regarding the research which will be audio recorded for transcription. Other administrative staff of your institution is also taking part in this interview. You are being invited to take part in this interview because I feel that your experience as an administrative staff of a higher educational institution, can contribute richly towards how the Image of Higher institutions can be enhanced. The study is for academic purpose and every information provided would be used for the intended purpose only.

If you do not wish to answer any of the questions posed during the interview, you may say so and we will move on to the next question. The interview will take place in your office or a place of convenience selected by you. No one else but the interviewer will be present with you during the interview. The information recorded is considered confidential, and no one else except the interviewer will have access to the information documented during your interview. I will protect

information about you to the best of my ability. You will not be named in any reports that would be written with the outcomes of the interview.

This study holds much benefits to your outfit as it will help add to your efforts towards improving the image of your institution. Besides, the study will help to advance knowledge on how to enhance the image of higher educational institutions so as to improve quality education that appeal to national and international standards.

However, this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study without penalty. However, your participation is highly and humbly desired. I am very grateful for your audience.

If you agree to take part in the study, sign in the space provided

For more information on this research, you may contact:

The researcher on 0545193130

My supervisors: 1) Professor George Oduro: 0249731782

2) Rev. Dr. Raymond Tangonyire: 0204691535

Moreover, this research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of University of Cape Coast (UCCIRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you can contact the Administrator at the IRB Office between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:30 p.m. through the phone lines 0558093143/0508878309 or email address: irb@ucc.edu.gh.

APPENDIX E:

TAMALE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

In case of reply, the number and date of this letter should be quoted



P. O. BOX 1 E/R
TAMALE
GHANA

Our Ref: **GTEC/NR/TACE/EP.142/05**

Digital Address: **NS-025-3200**
Tel: **+233 (0)37 2021687**

Your Ref:

Date: **April 19, 2022**

Mr. Inusah Kasim
Dr. Saunders Memorial Basic B.
P. O. Box 275
Kintampo North-BE/R

Dear Sir,

RE:APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO TAKE DATA IN YOUR INSTITUTION

Your letter dated **22nd March, 2022** on the above subject refers.

I wish to inform you that approval has been given for you to carry out your study in Tamale College of Education.

I hope you will ensure that the research conforms to the ethical standards of the College.

Yours faithfully,

.....
Alhaji Sulemana Iddrisu (PhD)
Principal

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW GUIDE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Introduction

My name is **Inusah Kasim**. I am a final year student of the above mentioned institution. I am conducting this study on the topic, “**Enhancing Institutional Image: the Perspectives of Administrative Staff of Tamale College of Education (TCE)**”

This study holds much benefits to your outfit as it will help add to your efforts towards improving the image of your institution. The study is for academic purposes and every information provided would be kept confidential and used for the intended purposes only. I would therefore, be very grateful if you could respond to the questions included in this instrument to the best of your knowledge. Your volitional participation will be highly cherished or appreciated. However, in the course of the study, you can opt out of the study at any time if you do not feel comfortable continuing with your participation. I am very grateful for your audience.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. Age:
Below 20 []
21-30[]
31-40[]
41-50[]

51-60. []

2. Gender

Male []

Female. []

3. Type of Staff.....

4. Qualification

Certificate []

Diploma []

Bachelors []

Masters []

Doctoral []

Professorial. []

5. Length of Service (in years)

1-5 []

6-10 []

11-15 []

16-20 []

Above 20. []

6. Religion

Christian []

Muslim []

Traditionalist []

Others (Specify).....

7. Marital Status

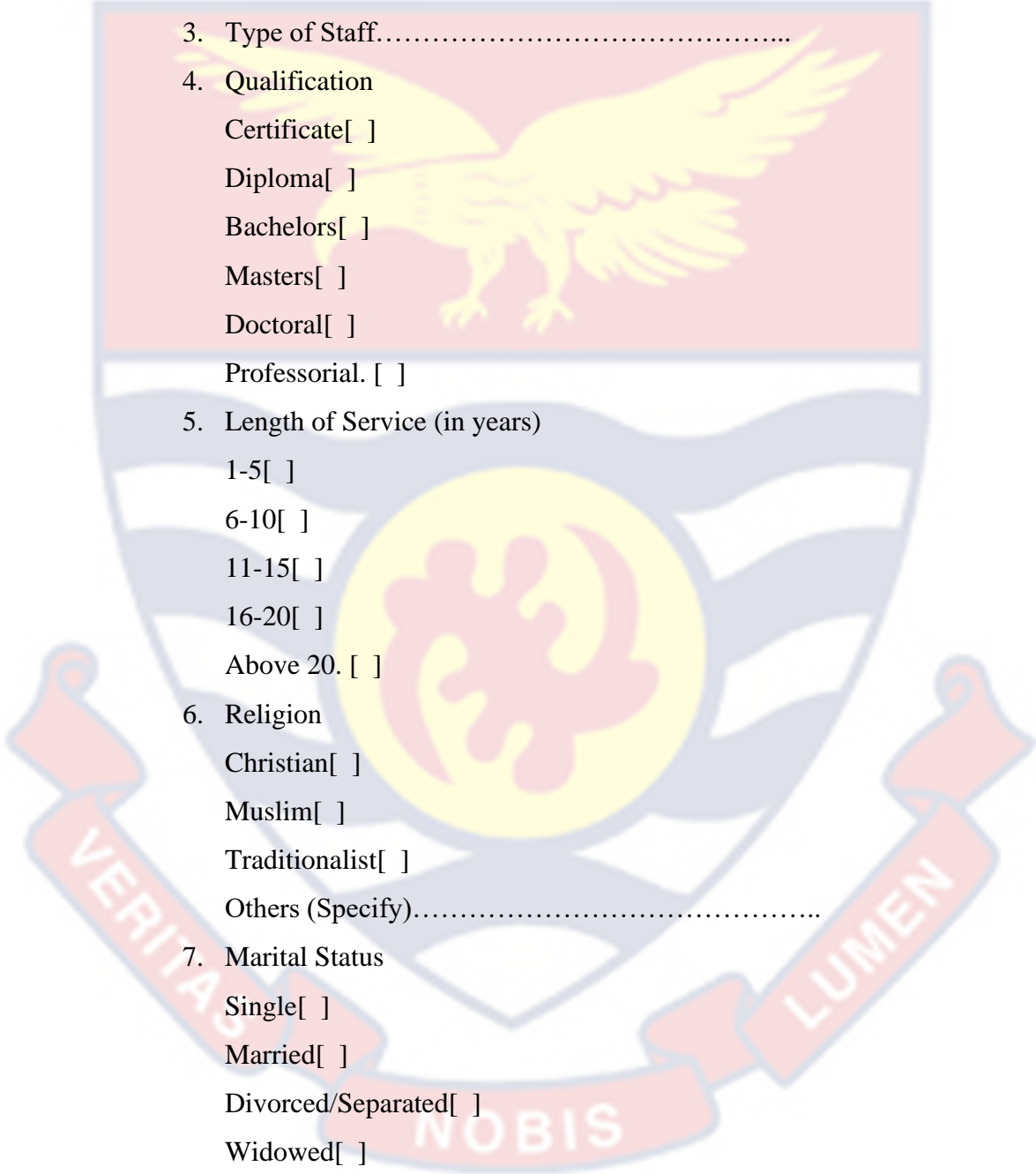
Single []

Married []

Divorced/Separated []

Widowed []

Cohabitation. []



SECTION B: PERCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF TCE OF
INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE

Interview Questions

Field Notes

8. Many people want to attend good educational institutions. Please what is your perception about a good institution? Or what will you describe as a good educational institution?

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9. Please will you describe TCE as a good institution? If yes, Why? If no, why?

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10. Please if we say an educational institution is popular, what does it mean to you? Or what will you describe as a popular institution?

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11. Please do you perceive TCE as a popular institution? If yes, why? If no, why?

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12. One issue of controversy is whether or not an institutional image implies an institution is good or popular. Please what is your view on what institutional image connotes.

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13. Please what other views or perceptions do you have to share regarding what institutional image really is?

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SECTION D: CHALLENGES ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF FACE IN
ENHANCING THE INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE OF TCE

Interview Questions

Field Notes

17. Could there be some challenges that staff (administrative staff?) face in their efforts to enhance the institutional image of TCE?

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18. Please what are some of the challenges confronting administrative staff in their quest to improve the image of TCE?

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SECTION E: HOW CHALLENGES CAN BE ADDRESSED SO AS TO IMPROVE THE II OF TCE_____

Interview Questions

Field Notes

19. Please are there strategies being put in place to address the challenges identified?

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20. Please what are some of these strategies being put in place to address the challenges?

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21. What other strategies do you consider as viable means of enhancing the institutional image of the College?

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