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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE PROGRAM

**THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION OF GOVERNMENT
COMMUNICATION AFFAIRS OFFICE FOR COUNTRY
BRANDING**

By

Abdu Yimam

**A Thesis Submitted to School of Journalism and communication of Addis
Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Masters
Degree of Public Relations and Strategic Communication**

Oct, 2018

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATION AND STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION

This is to certify that the thesis is prepared by Abdu Yimam Yesuf entitled “The Strategic Communication of Government Communication Affairs Office for Country Branding” which is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master public relation and strategic communication. It complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Abstract

Nation branding, or country branding is relatively a new public relation concept. This phenomenon has resulted generating new approaches and strategies to establish and propagate positive national brand images. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the potential practice of Government Communication Affairs Office (GCAO) for country or nation branding.

The paper also describes in detail about country branding and illustrated the branding activity and strategic communication plan for nation branding in focus. A best practice has taken from different perspectives and strategies of branding. Therefore, the paper investigates the practice and potential utilization of GCAO for branding Ethiopia via tourism, investment, export, people, and culture. It is clear that export, investments and tourism, have a direct relevance in terms of nation brand.

Ethiopia seeking a position to be an attractive investment destination and a vision of top five tourist destinations in Africa. The country has many opportunities to drive the image internationally. The sector like tourism, culture, investment, natural resources historical events, athletics and others are some of the crucial advantage of branding the country, but none of the alternatives has been implemented in a well organized and strategic way. It is almost done through instinctively and conventional way.

GCAO is highly responsible in working and coordination of nation branding in the developmental systems of government. That's why the researcher selects the office as a case study, in title, "The strategic communication of government communication affairs office for country branding". The purpose of this professional paper is to develop a case study of nations and its branding techniques as well as promoting GCAO activity in nation branding.

The research methodology is qualitative. Document analysis, focus group discussion and in-depth interview were carried out. The researcher was conducted 15 peoples for in depth interview and two groups (in aggregate 14 peoples) for focus group discussions. Websites of some organizations, documents in hard and soft copy have been analyzed. Therefore, the researchers extensively review existing literature relating to country branding and propose a conceptual framework for strategic branding for Ethiopia.

Acronyms

AA	Addis Ababa
AAU	Addis Ababa University
AU	African Union
CB	Corporate Branding
CI	Corporate Identity
ECA	Economic Commission of Africa
ENA	Ethiopian News Agency
ETO	Ethiopian Tourism Organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRC	Federal and Regional Communication
FRIB	Foreign Relation and Image Building
GCAO	Government Communication Affairs Office
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
METEC	Metals and Engineering Corporation
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PR	Public Relations
PRSA	Public Relations Society of America
PRSC	Public Relations and Strategic Communication
SCF	Strategic Communication Frame
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Branding is the idea that brands create images in the minds of observers. They do so by communicating a combination of verbal, visual, and emotional cues that encourage targeted observers to identify with the brand (Anholt, 2007). Nation branding is steadily gaining prominence, with more and more countries around the world committing resources to the development of their nation brand (Keith, 2008).

Nation branding is the branding of a country, and it can either attract or dispel tourists. Country would prosper further in the long run for it enhances not only the competitive advantage against competitors, but also improves the country's economy on the overall (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007).

Recently, country branding is increasingly becoming a hot topic as countries are competing to appeal to investors, visitors, expatriates and exports. As global forces of change composed of rapid technological changes, global competition and intergovernmental power shifts are becoming the order of the day; places are required to proactively design strategies to ensure a better economic destiny for themselves. Countries have engaged in branding themselves to set right their image in the global arena which suffers from stereotypes of some sort either from their past or the region they are found.

Accordingly, Ethiopia even though having various resources, heritages and glorious history, its recent image is suffering from the near past images of drought, famine, war and poverty that occurred in the country. In order to come out of poverty, the country needs to rebrand itself as the current negative image it has will affect the way it does business with other countries, affecting foreign direct investment coming to the country, tourist inflow, attracting capable entrepreneurs and export of products originating from the country.

Government Communication Affairs Office (GCAO) is one of the federal government organization and directly accountable to the Prime Minister. It is the mouth of the government and ensures efficient and effective flow of information between the government and the public. The office has a responsibility to create national consensus on major issues and make a meaningful contribution to build the image of the nation. Execution of government communication programs, building framework of communication partnership among the concerned governmental and non-governmental stakeholders are also done by the office.

That's why the researcher passionate to investigate and analyze nation branding implementations of GCAO. Thus, the opportunities and challenges of branding Ethiopia endeavor to reflect the country's true image and correct the misrepresented attributes. The research will be useful to the government of Ethiopia to see how it can approach the Branding Ethiopia endeavor and learn from other countries' experience cited in this research.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Ethiopia is the cradle of humankind, the place where the famous more than 3.5 million years old human remains known as "Lucy" was discovered. Teff and coffee are also originated in the country plus the home of long distance running.

The capital city Addis Ababa is also the seat of FDRE Government of Ethiopia, the African Union (AU), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Several other international organizations have also their headquarters and branch offices in the capital.

All these opportunities have a great advantage to brand the country well. GCAO's primarily responsibility is countries behave, in many ways, particularly build nations brand interims of investment potential, export opportunities, tourism potential, culture, People and international relations.

GCAO is the mouth of the federal government and the reference of communication strategy for all over the nation. The communication structure and systems of government institutions at federal and regional levels are under the umbrella of GCAO. It has a leading and facilitation role especially in big national and international events as well as crafting messages that accessible to

citizen and the outside world. It also promotes Ethiopian beauty and its diverse unique features through different mechanisms.

Ethiopia is the only African country never to have been colonized. It has its own Geez alphabet and follows the Julian calendar which consists of 13 months, 12 of 30 days and one of only 5 days (six in leap years). The Danakil Depression, a true desert which dips to 116 meter below sea level, frequently experiences temperatures greater than 50 degree centigrade.

The great rift valley of Ethiopia is the site of great paleontological discoveries including the 3.2 million year old skeleton of the famous ‘Lucy’ and the earliest stone tools. Ethiopia has registered 12 world heritage sites in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The Meskel Festival, Fiche Chamballala and Gada System also registered as intangible cultural heritages. The victory of Adwa also considered the first victory of African over a European colonial power, but it is not disclosed enough as a unique feature. Rather Ethiopia broadly known by drought, famine, civil war and conflicts. The government doesn’t have a strategy of planned, coordinated and professional nation branding activity.

Thus, the research assesses the nation branding opportunities, challenges and potential practices of GCAO, investigate what benefits country branding has brought to other countries, and assess the current level of standing of Ethiopian brand as well as its wide image attribution globally.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the research is to assess what the benefits of country branding and its opportunities unutilized and missed of GCAO to foster the positive image of Ethiopia. The research also proposes the necessary strategy to be implemented by GCAO and other stakeholders to contribute their share of country branding.

This research seeks to answer the question mainly “how GCAO implemented country branding? What could be possible advantages and challenges of branding Ethiopia? And what is the brand

level of Ethiopia in the global arena? Since, from what has been observed and from the literature survey conducted, the researcher believes that little is done to show to the world what the country has.

1.3.2 Specific Objective

The specific objectives of this paper:

- Analyze the benefit of country branding and its implementation by GCAO.
- Analyze the country branding involvement of GCAO, citizens and other stakeholders.
- Examine the opportunities, challenges and branding potential utilization of GCAO.

1.4 Research questions

The main concern of this study is to clarify the concept and implementation of country branding. First, it will be outline a detailed background of country branding, after which will focus on strategic communication and country branding strategy. By taking GCAO as a case study, the following main questions are listed.

- How is country branding implemented by GCAO, and who are the stakeholders in this practice?
- What are the opportunities and challenges of branding the country (Ethiopia)?
- What is the strategic framework of GCAO in nation branding activity?

1.5 Significance of the study

The research is expected to have several contributions. Primarily, it is believed that the study will help more Government Communication Affairs office (GCAO). It also helped to have a better clue for strategic communication and implementation of country branding through various opportunities. The study will strengthen the cooperation between GCAO with various private and public institutions for country branding. In addition to this, it is helped to understand the

direct relation between country branding with the inflow of tourists, foreign direct investment, expatriates and immigrants, and the demand for products exported from Ethiopia.

This study will contribute to better understanding and implementation of country branding in Ethiopia. Consequently, the researcher expects that it would push them to implement nation branding by taking it as one of the fundamental national development issue. National branding has direct and indirect implications on economic growth. Unbranded country has a difficult time for attracting or persuading foreign investors, tourists and others. Economic and political attention, and that image and reputation are becoming essential parts of the nation.

Moreover, the researcher believed that based on the this research paper, quite a lot of other researches on country branding, tactics and communication strategy could be conducted for the future.

1.6 Theoretical frame work

In this segment of the thesis, theoretical information regarding the notions of nation branding, branding strategy and tactics, strategic communication as well as the logo and slogans of many countries to be provided. In addition to this, an overview of public relation, strategic communication frame, corporate reputation, identity and brand explained.

The qualitative research methodology applicable in order to analyzes the collected data through in-depth interview, focus group discussion, observation and document based evidence. A tip of relevant information about GCAO has been included. Finally, conclusion and recommendations are held regarding the outcome of data analysis and based on related literature review.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The research has been done between the months of February and September of 2018. Obviously, the time taken to investigate such a new topic, about country branding, is not enough. Many government and private sectors are responsible for country branding. But, the researcher tilted towards the implementation of GCAO.

If the investigation includes several government and non government institutions as well as wider study area for an extended period of time, it could have given deeper understanding of the problem. But, because of limited resource and time constraints, this was not possible. Absence of prior research on the area (country branding) and shortage of reference materials has also been a big challenge.

1.8 Limitation of the study

As for the limitations, first, content analysis is susceptible to bias due to methods of data collection, interpretation, or analysis. The sample limitation may have also influenced the findings. The researcher was forced to look scattered information. The sources also were hard to cooperate to deliver their information and it takes long time to get their responses.

The other limitation is none of similar studies in Ethiopia conducted about country branding or branding in general. Since, lack of local research and well documented materials that could be used as a baseline for this study may have made the discussion of the results depend more on the context of the findings in other countries. May be this is the pioneer study about country branding which carried out for MA thesis.

1.9 Organization of the study

The content of this thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter presents introduction, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical frame work, scope and limitations of the study. Finally comes, organization of the study.

The second chapter, reviews of related literature, begins with the concept of branding by following the introduction. It then continues country branding with branding techniques and the modal of nation brand hexagon. In this chapter country branding techniques as well as communication strategies, public relations, the concept of corporate reputation and identity are discussed.

In the third chapter methodological aspects, procedures, techniques, data analysis and validity were elaborated. It also gives justifications for the selection of qualitative method. In this quantitative survey, in-depth interview, focus group discussion, document analysis and observations are applied.

In chapter Four the collected data are presented and analyzed. It gives some tips of information about background of the organization and presents the analysis of the qualitative data. Finally, Chapter five provides a more general conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

According to Arkenbout (2015) nation branding is a relatively new concept. It was introduced by Simon Anholt in 1996. However, before the introduction of this concept, for many years nations dealt with the positioning and promotion of their country in the international arena. In the academic field, the concept nation branding is not yet fully recognized as a debate topic. Often, nation branding is seen as pure marketing and advertising of country's goods in order to attract more tourists and investors as well as to promote exports which is beneficial for a country's economy.

The actual aim that Anholt has with the concept nation branding is highly interesting to analyze on an academic level. Additionally, various scholars studied or still study the idea of nation branding. Actually, there are many fields, such as international relations, public diplomacy and marketing, in which the concept can be, analyzed (Arkenbout, 2015).

A country's reputation determines the way people inside and outside the country feel and relate to it. In today's highly competitive marketplace, country image has become a critical success factor and yet very difficult to build and sustain. As competition becomes more intense and the marketplace more crowded, consumers, tourists, immigrants and investors tend to depend more on the country's reputation than on its actual attributes in making buying, travelling and investment decisions. Many nations the world over have now realized the significance of country branding (Odia and Isibor, 2014).

The British Industrialization in the 19 century, advances in mobility, telecommunications and finally, the internationalization of companies, have had a strong influence on current trends of international trade. Globalization, understood as a continuous process where barriers fall and

new countries appear on the stage, leads to new areas of research still under development (Odia and Isibor, 2014).

Nation branding creates a new market where the core product is the nation and the main weapon its brand. This new field of study opens a window for those developing countries which aim to clean their negative reputation and to gain a place in the global market (Martínez, 2010).

2.2 Branding

Branding has been around for centuries as a means to distinguish the goods of one producer from those of another. In fact, the word brand is derived from the Old Norse word *brandr*, which means “to burn,” as brands were and still are the means by which owners of livestock mark their animals to identify them (Keller, 2013).

Branding is “A name, symbol, design, or some combination which identifies the product of a particular organization as having a substantial, differentiated advantage.” But this definition is attached and limited to product only which will not accommodate the branding concepts related to intangible ones like service and personality which are the main issues in branding of places or Countries. The American Association of Marketing defines a brand as: “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Kotler, 2006).

According to Keller (2013) brand names themselves come in many different forms and brand elements like logos and symbols also can be based on people, places, things, and abstract images. In creating a brand, marketers have many choices about the number and nature of the brand elements they use to identify their products.

“A brand is a mixture of attributes, tangible and intangible, symbolized in a trademark, which, if managed properly, creates value and influence”. The Dictionary of Business and Management similarly defines a brand as “a name, sign or symbol used to identify items or services of the seller(s) and to differentiate them from goods of competitors” (Keller 2013).

It is more expansively as “the intangible sum of a product’s attributes: its name, packaging, and price, its history, its reputation, and the way it’s advertised.” More recently, described a brand as a “mental box,” and indicated that “brand equity” consists of “a set of assets (liabilities) linked to a brand’s name and symbol that adds to (subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service” (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007).

According to Dinnie (2008:14) brands as clusters of functional and emotional values that promise a unique and welcome experience between a buyer and a seller. Brands of course do not exist in a vacuum, and to be successful, they must co-exist effectively with the prevailing zeitgeist. Popular culture and trends in society drive and influence strong brands. This theme is amplified and theorized by Holt, who analyses how brands become icons through creative interaction with their environment in a process that he terms ‘cultural branding, a process that he considers particularly suitable for applying to nations.

A similar culturally aware vision of brands is proposed by one of the UK’s most creative and innovative thinkers on branding, Christian Audigier suggests that a brand is ‘a cluster of strategic cultural ideas. Through the foundations of their national identity, nation brands possess far richer and deeper cultural resources than any other type of brand, be it product, service, corporate or any other brand be entity. The strategic brand management process involves the design and implementation of marketing programs and activities to build measure and manage brand equity (Dinnie, 2008).

2.3 Country (Nation) Branding

Nation branding and country branding are used interchangeably. Nation branding remains the most popular widely used followed by country branding (Szondi, 2008). Keith (2008) the concept of ‘brand’ remains invariant that is a cluster of values that enables a nation to make a promise about a unique and welcomed experience. Successful brands thrive because the people delivering the brand act in a manner that reflects the promised values. In nation branding, there would like wise be dominant values that define the behavioral characteristics of a population.

The type of constitution governing the country, religions and social mores would enable the population to appreciate the boundary points defining the cluster of values.

According to Bassey (2012) nation branding must not be confused with propaganda; it is only successful when the “brand” is lived by the citizens of that country. The freedom of the press and the efficiency of today’s communication technologies do not allow for governments and private public relations agencies to promulgate exaggeratedly positive information, especially when reality does not reflect the message accurately.

Anholt (2003) defends that, country branding occurs when the public speaks to the public, when a substantial proportion of the population of the country not just civil servants and paid figureheads gets behind the strategy and lives it out in their everyday dealing with the outside world.

Nation branding experts see a nation brand as a ‘competitive identity’ in which the cultural realities of a nation should be positioned. However, the approaches of seeing the nation as an ‘imagined community’ and the idea of invented traditions need to be considered while describing the relationship between nation branding and national identity. These perspectives emphasize that the construction of nations, national identities and the reinvention of traditions is realized by creative intellectuals, dominant groups of society and the state. This manipulative character of the construction of nations will certainly play a significant role in the construction of nation brands and nation branding of a country or place. State’s governments, private and public stakeholders will use manipulative nation branding strategies (Arkenbout, 2015).

2.3.1 Branding Techniques

The application of branding techniques to nations is a relatively new phenomenon, but one which is growing in frequency given the increasingly global competition that nations now face in both their domestic and external markets. Nations are making increasingly conscious efforts to hone their country branding in recognition of the need to fulfill three major objectives; to attract tourists, to stimulate inward investment and to boost exports. A further objective for many

nations is talent attraction, whereby countries compete to attract higher education students, and skilled workers (Keith, 2008).

According to Ibahrine (2016) nation branding through sport has become an important technique for countries to project themselves on the world stage. As “sports diplomacy” continues to gain significance, efforts to maximize the potential of sporting events and particularly sport media coverage will likely be at the center of many countries’ nation branding strategies.

Many small Gulf countries in particular have been racing to host and associate their countries’ names with globally prestigious sports events. The import of these goals means that the politics of presence or absence, as played out in the realm of sports sponsorship, have wider implications. Globally mass mediated sport is a site where nation branding efforts are both constructed and negotiated. These efforts act as important factors in associating sport, tourism and diplomacy (Ibahrine, 2016).

According to Özkan (2015) the notion of nation branding becoming prominent in the 21st century has made contributions to the competition between countries in the fields of economy, politic, society and culture. Countries building brand value will lose power in competition if they fail to build their own brand and exhibit difference while becoming an attraction center. As Anholt underlines, world is a market area and each country must compete to share trade, policy and socio-cultural events of the world. Have a brand in such a market is crucially important for countries.

Countries fail to build a brand could not draw the foreign invest and tourists, increase the exports and living standards. It is observed that the image and reputation of country manage the strategic communication process properly and take the support of foreign public opinion, have developed positively in the international environment. This positive message enhances the nation values of countries (Özkan, 2015).

Big brands and business always search new regions to produce goods more cheaply. On the other hand, underdeveloped and developing countries lean towards the foreign invest as new working opportunities will emerge and so employment will increase through the foreign investors. For big brands and producers the tax practices, transportation facilities and regulations of countries in which they make investment have great importance (Özkan, 2015).

Moreover, political and economic stability and smooth and free competition area are crucial for the foreign investors. These are among the obstacles that stop the foreign capital flow; unfair competition environment caused by changing practices according to people or terms, red-tapes, unrecorded economy, unequal and inconsistent practices. However, while the foreign investors are choosing the country for making investment, they have been influenced by the image and perception of countries in the world scene either positively or negatively (Özkan, 2015).

On the other hand, tourism as a fourth great sector of the world is an effective field to promote countries. It should be clearly said that only sea, sand and sun are not enough to draw satisfied number of tourists. Thus, countries should create a new branding strategy with different elements by using their present potential (Özkan, 2015).

In today's world, countries fiercely compete with each other for the direct foreign investment, brand export and tourism. Countries are recalled by their brands and if these brands are demanded and used by big masses so the image of these countries gains advantageous, Anholt, (2014).With the studies of nation brand, image of countries is reshaped, through this image a new identity perception is gained and reflected on overseas. This process requires a long term, determined and patient study.

In terms of practical manifestations, nation branding includes a wide variety of activities, ranging from cosmetic operations, such as the creation of national logos and slogans, to efforts to institutionalize branding within state structures by creating governmental and quasi-governmental bodies that oversee long term nation branding efforts. The most ambitious architects of nation branding envision it as a component of national policy, never as a campaign that is separate from planning, governance or economic development (Özkan, 2015).

Nation branding programs can be directed at both domestic and international audiences, and they are often funded with public money. In short, nation branding seeks to reconstitute nations both at the levels of ideology, and of praxis, where by the meaning and experiential reality of nationhood itself is transformed in ways that are yet to be fully understood (Kaneva, 2009).

As to Anolt (2013) nation branding is frequently associated with the act of creating favorable image of countries through marketing communications. The real confusion starts when people want branding to mean a technique, or set of techniques, by means of which brand image is directly built or enhanced. “Nike’s fantastic brand image is the result of fantastic branding.” It is not. Nike’s fantastic brand image is the result of fantastic products sold in fantastically large numbers. Brand building is primarily achieved through product development and marketing and has relatively little to do with branding.

If people buy a product and find it good, this will begin to create a powerful brand image for the product; the product will earn a good reputation. This reputation gradually spreads to non-users; even people who haven’t bought the product will know that it’s a good product. The reputation spreads, drives up sales, and increases the value of the corporation. It’s one of the most significant factors of business success (Anolt, 2013).

But the use of the term branding to imply a method for building brand equity is both incorrect and unjustifiable, there is simply no such method. Good products and services produced by a good corporation acquire a positive brand image, which eventually reflects on the corporation and becomes its principal asset. Similarly, good products, services, culture, tourism, investments, technology, education, businesses, people, policies, initiatives, and events produced by a good country also acquire a positive brand image, which eventually reflects on the country, and perhaps also becomes its principal asset (Anolt, 2013).

The message is clear, if a country is serious about enhancing its international image, it should concentrate on product development and marketing rather than chase after the chimera of branding. There are no short cuts, only a consistent, coordinated, and unbroken stream of useful, noticeable, world class, and above all relevant ideas, products, and policies can, gradually, enhance the reputation of the country that produces them (Anolt, 2013).

According to Bassey (2012:16) beyond its effect on production and exports, however, nation branding capitalizes on the entirety of a country's identity, which can be subdivided into the following dimensions:

- Tourism: Perception of a country's natural and manmade resources
- Governance: Perception of governing style and role in nation building
- Capital and Labor flows: General perception of the country's economic conditions, and a business' willingness to invest in the economy
- Culture and People: Represents the attractiveness of a country's media, history, language and society

2.3.2 Nation Branding Hexagon

A nation's brand values are determined by six key areas of national competence. 1- Exports, 2- Governance, 3- Investment, 4- Immigration, 5- Culture and Heritage, 6- People and Tourism. This method is Anholt's proprietary methodology and is a unique barometer of measuring a global opinion of a nation's brand value. A nation's brand is the sum of people's perceptions of a country and its people across the six areas of national assets, characteristics and competence (Anholt, 2003).

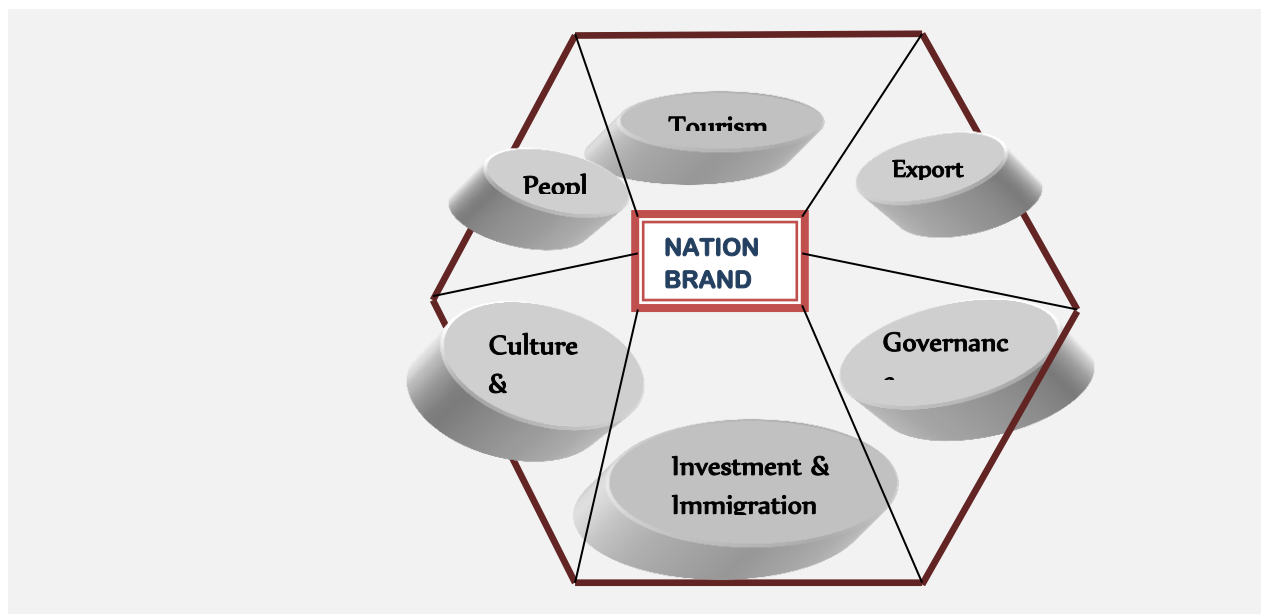


Figure 1 Nation branding hexagon (Anholt, 2003).

The Nation Brand Hexagon shows the relevant areas that constitute a strong nation brand from Anholt's point of view. According to this model, this can be accomplished by evenly communicating all areas, thus not favoring one specific field (Kilduff, 2016).

According to Martínez (2010) the current partner of Anholt in the elaboration of the Nations Brand Index, summarizes what represents each of the channels of natural communications presented in the hexagon.

Exports	Determines the public's image of products and services from each country and the extent to which consumers proactively seek or avoid products from each country-of-origin.
Governance	Measures public opinion regarding the level of national government competency and fairness and describes individuals' beliefs about each country's government, as well as its perceived commitment to global issues such as democracy, justice, poverty and the environment.
Investment & Immigration	Determines the power to attract people to live, work or study in each country and reveals how people perceive a country's economic and social situation.
Culture & Heritage	Reveals global perceptions of each nation's heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture, including film, music, art, sport and literature.
People	Measures the population's reputation for competence, education, openness and friendliness and other qualities, as well as perceived levels of potential hostility and discrimination
Tourism	Captures the level of interest in visiting a country and the draw of natural and man-made tourist attractions.

Table 1 - Channels of natural communication (Martínez, 2010).

2.4 How to Brand countries?

The task of branding countries is not easy the process of developing a country brand often takes 10 to 20 years. According to an article published on The Economist, there are two ways in which a country can improve its image quickly, luck and innovation (Martínez, 2010).

The concept of luck is based on successful cases related to the media. Such is the case of the film Crocodile Dundee, which switched American perceptions of Australia, or “The Lord of the Rings” which served to showcase the spectacular landscapes of New Zealand. On the other hand, innovation meaning new, brands, products, music, art, politicians even new public administrations (Martínez, 2010).

According to Ralph and Liz (2006:132) are Wally Olins, a British branding expert, who provides the following seven step plan to brand a country:

- Set up a working party with representatives of government, industry, the arts, education and the media to start the program.
- Find out how the nation is perceived both by its own people and by nations abroad through qualitative and quantitative research.
- Develop a process of consultation with opinion leaders to look at national strengths and weaknesses, and compare them with the results of the internal and external studies.
- Create the central idea on which the strategy is based with professional advisors. This needs to be a powerful, simple idea that captures the unique qualities of the nation and can be used as a base from which the entire program can be developed.
- Develop ways of articulating the central idea visually, including logos.
- Look at how the messages required for tourism, inward investment and export can be coordinated and modulated so that they are appropriate for each audience.
- Create a liaison system through the working party to launch and sustain the program in government activities and to encourage supportive action from appropriate organizations in commerce, industry, arts, media, and so on.

According to Arkenbout (2015) every nation in the world has the creation of a nation branding strategy on its wish list. Two nation branding experts gave their recommendations on how to realize a strong nation brand and nation brand strategy.

The first nation branding expert is Filipe Torres. He clarifies that there are certain aspects necessary to create a strong nation brand strategy. First of all, nation branding strategy should lead to an economic value asset in means of economic growth for the country. A country could have a strong nation branding strategy, but if it is still corrupt and its citizens are living in poverty, it does not make any sense (Arkenbout, 2015).

Secondly, a nation branding strategy actually needs three strategies for tourism, trade and talent. Thirdly, these strategies should be on a short term basis which means five years. A nation branding strategy with mission, vision and goals over thirty years away will not be realistic (Arkenbout, 2015).

2.5 Baste practices and countries' branding experience

Spain has engaged in country branding to bring itself out of the shattered image imposed upon it by the dictatorial regime of General Franco. By engaging in country branding effort, Spain was able to reach to the level of a well-developed nation from its previous quagmire situation. In its nation branding effort, Spain has rebuilt the city of Bilbao, managed to successfully host one World Cup tournament and Barcelona Olympic which has in return helped to enhance its brand image and of course its economic benefit. Spain's GDP grew by 23.3% during the period of 1991-2000. This growth was more than 5% ahead of France and 4% more than the Euro-zone average (Gilmore, 2002).

As to New Zealand with its 100% Pure New Zealand slogan, it managed to increase its tourist influx by as high as 53% while its wine exports have become seven times higher (Dong-Hun, 2010). At this point it is worth to invite the readers of this proposal to successful Branding of Dubai which has brought tremendous change in positioning of Dubai from a simple fishing village to a world trading hub. Balakrishnan (2008) states that the no direct tax policy of Dubai is

believed to have encouraged investment, its skies are open to any airline which has increased transit traffic (Balakrishnan, 2008).

In fact, America is the most powerful public domain brand which was nurtured and supported by the Hollywood movies of two-hour cinema which consumers around the world happily paid to the Brand America commercials mixed with entertainment (Anholt, 2003). In the African continent too, even though it is premature to conclude, the Country Branding effort of South Africa could be taken as one of the successful ones as it has got a positive remark from FIFA and celebrities who have attended the 19th world cup.

Caldwell and Freire (2004) have pointed out that many countries such as Australia, Croatia, Greece, Malaysia, and Spain (to mention the few) has adopted the country/destination brand building concept. Countries use slogans/ tag lines to highlight their differentiating feature and attract their target group.

Currently, it is becoming a common practice among countries of the world to engage in the country branding effort. This effort is witnessed both in the developed and least developed countries. Germany established a Public-Private Partnership committee to make a fresh and exciting outlook of the country under the slogan “Germany: Land of Ideas” to overcome its tarnished image due its role in the World War II (Lee Dong-Hun, 2010).

Even African countries such as South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria have established nation branding offices and it is high time for Ethiopia to evaluate its potential benefits. In country branding practice, as there are many countries with success stories, there are also some failures. For example, Kenya has started country branding in 2007 but it was interrupted, allegedly for lack of fund and for lack of a supporting champion in the government though it has restarted again. Thus it is important to engage in the task of country branding after making a thorough analysis of the requirements and after getting the commitment of the key stakeholders (such as the Government) to be involved (Caldwell and Freire, 2004).

The new nation brand dual octagon developed by Samsung economic research institute and presidential council on nation branding both of which are South Korean institutions deals with both aspects whereby the substance aspect is measured statistically while the image is measured by surveys. The octagon in refers to the eight categories of economy, science & technology, hard infrastructure, institution, heritage, modern culture, citizenry, and celebrity (Lee Dong- Hun, 2010).

2.5.1 Country's logo

Logo is truly a visual element, it constitutes as one of the most important parts of the country's visual identity, it helps to make a distinction between the brands and it gives information to the consumer. Table 2, shows that country logos usually have the country name included and some other graphics that range from something abstract, the flag, water, sun, scenery, flowers, animals, something special and the heart (Vary, 2010).

Countrylogos relatedto	Country
Nature – Water	Argentina, Aruba, Ecuador, Greece, The British Virgin Islands (waves)
Nature – Sun	Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Maldives, Spain (the Míro sun), Trinidad & Tobago, Zambia, Oman
Nature – Landscape	Bosnia Herzegovina, Chile (mountain), Dominica, Gibraltar, Iceland, Lebanon, Namibia (desert), Nepal (mountain – Mount Everest), Norway, Pakistan, Polska, Romania, San Marino (mountains), Tanzania (mountain, seacoast, animals), Zimbabwe (waterfall)
Nature – Animal	Australia (kangaroo), Barbados (fish), Belize (tucan bird), Botswana (zebra), Cayman Islands (turtle), China (horse), North Cyprus (turtle) Hong Kong (dragon), Indonesia (bird), Papua New Guinea (bird), Peru (bird), Guyane (tucan bird), Honduras (butterfly, turtle, fish), Sloakia (butterfly), Suriname (butterfly), Tasmania
Nature – Plant	Albania (poppy), Antigua & Barbuda (palm tree), Armenia (flower), Bulgaria (rose), Canada (maple leaf), Costa Rica (flower), England (rose), Holland (tulip), Ireland (trefoil), Malaysia (flower), Montenegro (branch), New Zealand (fern), Paraguay (flower) Scotland (bur), Slovenia (flower), Sri Lanka (flower in hand), St. Kitts (national flower, the Poinciana), Tahiti (Tiare flower), Turkey (flower)

Flag	Austria (stamp), Cuba, Czech Republic, East-Timor, France, Great-Britain, Indonesia, Kenya, Monaco, Niger, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, Sweden
Country Name	Croatia, India, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Qatar, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turks & Caicos
Unique Characteristics	Abu Dhabi, Belgium (atomium), Bermuda (shorts), France (woman), Haiti (transporter woman), Jordan (motive), Latvia (dancing, singing people), Liechtenstein (crown), Macau (building), Mongolia (iurta), Morocco (building), Nicaragua (building), Puerto Rico (building), Solomon Islands (statues), Vanuatu (statue), Vietnam (miracle lamp), Wales (dragon)

Table 2-Country logo (Vary, 2010).

2.5.2 Country slogans

Almost every country has a slogan that contains the outmost important information. In the modern world a good country slogan rarely needs to be a political propaganda statement. Creating a tagline or slogan for a country is always very difficult if experts want to come up with something unique about the land and not make up a slogan that could be fitted to a dozen other countries, such as “The land of contrasts” or “Discover” (Vary, 2010).

Country slogans related to	Country
Geographical position and features	Andorra – The Pyrenean Country Nigeria – the heart of Africa
Weather	Ethiopia – 13 months of sunshine (now it’s changed by – Land of Origins) Spain. Everything Under the Sun
Nature	Montenegro – wild beauty Uruguay Natural. Switzerland – get natural
Water	Nicaragua – a water paradise
Royalty	Brunei – the Kingdom of unexpected treasures The Ancient Kingdom of Tonga
Treasures	Bhutan – Land of the thunder dragon Cambodia – a world of treasures

Culture	Republic of Macedonia – Cradle of culture, land of nature Visit Kosovo – history in the making
Food	Costa Rica – No artificial ingredients India – We add spice to your life
Discovery	Canada – keep exploring Kenya – experience a different safari every day
People	Aruba – One happy island Hungary – Talent for Entertaining

Table 3-Country slogan (Vary, 2010).

2.6 Public Relations and Branding

In one of the earliest such attempts, the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education in the United States (founded in 1956 and currently known as the Institute for Public Relations) sponsored a study in 1975 that sought the opinions of 65 leaders of public relations in the US and also analyzed 472 different definitions of the term (Sriramesh and Verčič, 2009).

According to Alison (2004) the 1978 World Assembly of Public Relations Associations in Mexico agreed that, “Public relations is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders and implementing planned programs of action which will serve both the organization’s and the public interest”.

Public relations involve the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between a company and its target audience. The aim of public relations is to influence and in some cases, change people’s knowledge and feelings regarding a company and its offerings, including its identity and image (Okonkwo 2007).

The major missions of the public relations departments are to create and place news worthy information in the news media to attract attention to the product, to publicize specific products and to maintain relations. In order to fulfill their missions, PR professionals use several tools. The essential tool is news. PR professionals create or find favorable news about the company or its products, to attract attention. Different events are also organized by the PR firms to attract

positive attention to their client company. PR absolutely builds strong brands, but it is a long process to build a brand and also strong brands need PR to stay strong. PR has an important role in both building and maintaining brands (Kotler et al. 2005).

In public relations literature, J.E.Grunig (1992) used two worldviews, symmetrical and asymmetrical, to explain the logic behind the choice of public relations strategies and processes by organizations. Direction describes the content to which the model is one way or two-way. One-way communication disseminates information, it is a monologue. Two-way communication exchanges information, it is a dialogue. Purpose describes whether the model is asymmetrical or symmetrical. Asymmetrical communication is imbalanced, information leaves from the organization and reach to the public. However symmetrical communication is balanced and it adjust the relationship between the organization and public.

2.7 Media Relations

There is near unanimity among authors of public relations literature that the media and public relations have a symbiotic, sometimes contentious, relationship. Most public relations practitioners would agree that media relations account for a significant portion of their public relations efforts because they wish to use the media for publicity purposes. However, public relations professionals also serve the media by providing them with information subsidies (Verčič, 2009).

A Media relation forms a major part of public relations in certain areas, but it can be seen that other techniques are also used to supplement and support media activity. It is far better to be proactive in company policy and provide the media with positive stories to cover. It also allows organizations to set their own agenda and look ahead in a strategic way, rather than simply reacting to journalists' negative queries if they think they can uncover some wrongdoing (Alison, 2004).

Mass media have a powerful influence on organizational activities in general and public relations in particular. The television coverage of the opening ceremony of the Seoul Olympics by the British Broadcasting Corporation, the United States' National Broadcasting Corporation, and

Australia's TEN networks and concluded that a large majority of developing countries received no mention at all during these telecasts, whereas a few developed countries received very positive and extended coverage (Alison, 2004).

According to Alison (2004) the true purpose of press relations is to enhance the reputation of an organization and its products, and to influence and inform the target audience. While it is largely of a tactical nature in practice, good media relations can contribute to longer term strategic objectives, such as;

- Improving company or brand image
- Higher and better media profile
- Changing the attitudes of target audiences
- Improving relationships with the community
- Increasing market share
- Influencing government policy at local, national or international level
- Improving communications with investors and their advisers

2.8 Strategic Communications

Communication is the lifeblood of all organizations. It is the medium through which companies large and small access the vital resources they need in order to operate. It is through communication that organizations acquire the primary resources they need (such as capital, labor, and raw materials) and build up valuable stocks of secondary resources (such as legitimacy and reputation) that enable them to operate (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007).

2.8.1 Strategic Communication Frame

According to Van Ruler (2016) requirements for a good strategy development model for public relations and communication management are as follows:

1. Clear vision on communications and its added value to the mission of the organization
2. Focus on internal and external context as building blocks for constructing ambitions
3. No smart objectives but inspiring ambitions based on clear choices
4. Explicit accountability that suits the ambition

5. Clear choices in every building block, as hypotheses for the future
6. Compact to fit on one page
7. Adjustable at any time to respond to situational dynamics

This model consists of eight interdependent building blocks which demonstrate how developing a strategy is like working on a jigsaw puzzle. Choices made in one building block are consistent with choices made in other blocks (Van Ruler, 2016).

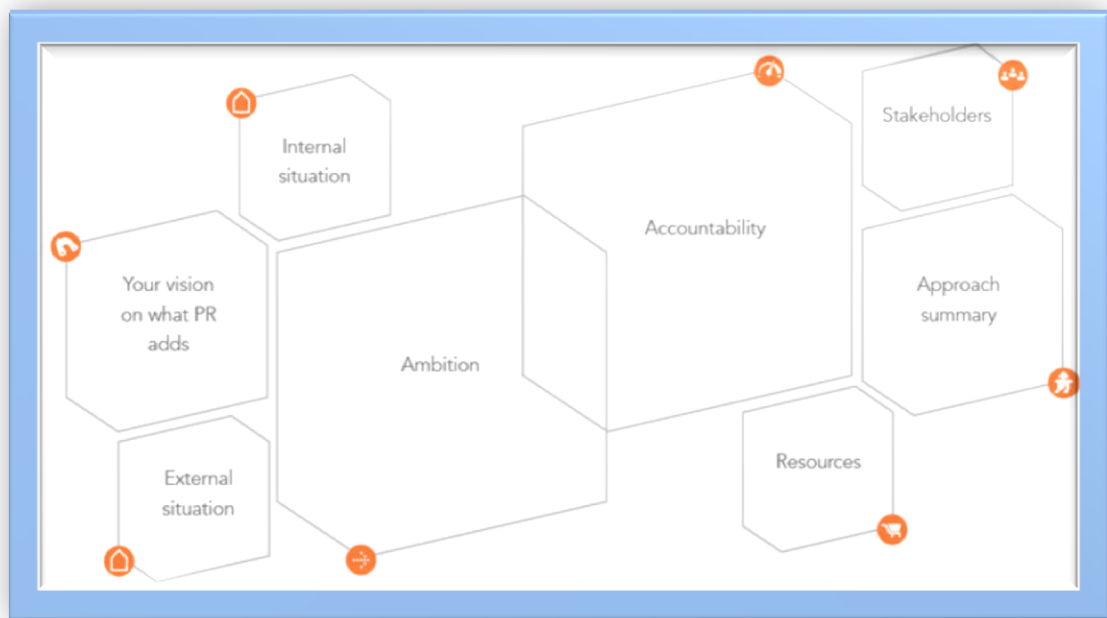


Figure 2- Strategic Communication Frame (Van Ruler, 2016).

2.9 Nation Branding Strategy

The formation of a nation branding strategy it is important that collaboration exists between the public and private sector. Both parties bring unique contributions to the nation branding strategy formulation. However, for every country and situation it is different how the collaboration between the two parties takes place and who contributes what to the nation branding strategy. This depends on the goals and objectives of the nation branding activities and the specific characteristics of the country (Akker, 2011).

However, important contributors to the nation branding strategy should be the government and the stakeholders of the nation brand. Some authors argue that the nation branding strategy formation should be led and executed by government agencies, because they have the authority to convince all the stakeholders to participate in the formation and to make sure that they execute the results of the nation branding strategy. Nation branding agency should be developed in which the government is responsible for the nation branding strategy creation and operation process, although the people who are responsible for this should also have some independence from governmental policies, to secure continuity in the nation branding activities (Akker, 2011).

Therefore, the nation branding agency should have operational autonomy and its access to information and expertise should be independent from both the government and the private sector. In this way the agency can be specific and consistent in their policy instruments to be able to create a nation branding strategy which can be operated with a long-term commitment (Akker, 2011).

Anholt (2003) also shows the necessity of a brand strategy to integrate the various messages sent through various elements influencing the country brand message. As shown in Fig. 3 in the nation brand hexagon, the messages sent by the people, the culture as in films, sport and literature, the brands of export products, the policies and the investment shall be harmonized and aligned with the brand strategy.

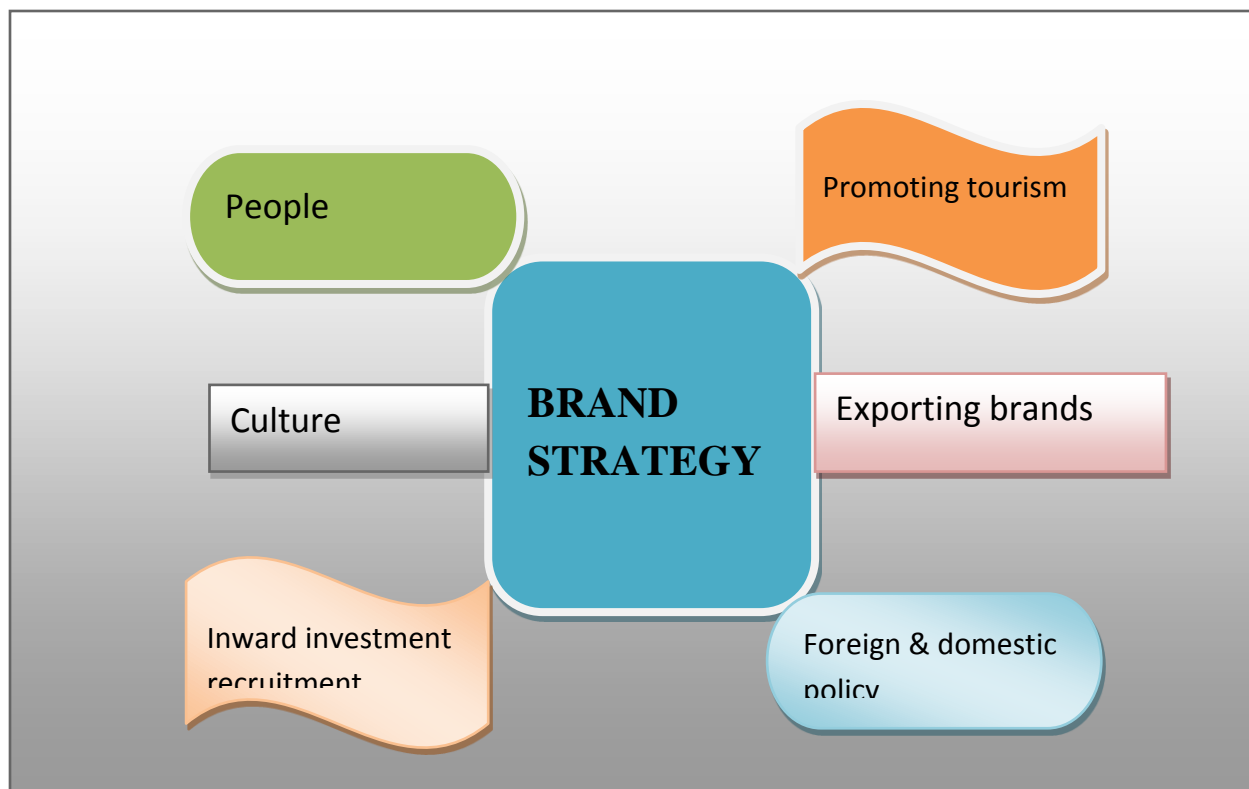


Fig.3 - The nation brand hexagon (Anholt, 2003).

2.10 Corporate Reputation, Identity and Brand

2.10.1 Corporate Reputation

The concept of corporate reputation has gained attention recently because it captures the effects that brands and images have on the overall evaluations which stakeholders make of companies. Brand and image attributes are more or less appreciated by stakeholders. Organizations with particular brands and image attributes therefore develop greater or lesser reputations. Reputation can therefore serve a useful function by gauging the overall estimation in which the organization is held by its constituents and so measure the effectiveness of the organization's communications with those stakeholders (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007).

The popularity of the concept of corporate reputation owes much to the publication in 1982 by Fortune magazine of its first list of America's Most Admired Companies, a rating of the largest companies in the US that was developed from a quantitative opinion survey of top industry executives and analysts. The attention it received ensured that it would become an annual event

and it has since been widely imitated in other countries and regions. Corporate reputation as a multi-stakeholder social construction that resulted from strategic communications created by an organization and refracted by the media and by analysts (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007).

2.10.2 Corporate Identity

According to Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) Corporate Identity (CI) is the reality and uniqueness of an organization, which is integrally related to its external and internal image and reputation through corporate communication. Corporate identity is an area dominated by multiple identity categorizations.

CI that builds on strategic choices is corporate expression, which consists of the decisions concerning visual identity, the brand promise, brand personality and brand communication. This brand expression overlaps with corporate branding decisions and will be discussed as part of corporate branding (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007).

2.10.3 Corporate Branding

According to Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) the corporate brand is increasingly being used to cast a favorable halo over everything the organization does or says and capitalize on its reputation. A corporate brand will create a sense of internal coherence and will simplify internal cooperation. A nation brand concerns the country's image, reputation and positioning, a role quite similar to that of corporate branding.

A corporate brand is therefore challenged as never before to develop a coherent communication system. Various trends are making corporate brands more relevant around the world, and so are encouraging the visible push towards more integrative communication (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007).

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

The methodology used in this research is qualitative method. The chosen research methodology is of qualitative nature because the nature of the research problem does not have a single objective reality and the research process is context bound and involves personal views.

Qualitative research encompasses a variety of methods that can be applied in a flexible manner, to enable respondents to reflect upon and express their views or to observe their behavior. It seeks to encapsulate the behavior, experiences and feelings of respondents in their own terms and context (Malhotra & Birks 2003).

The research topic deals with the “The strategic communication of GCAO for country branding”. The data collection rely on document, focus group discussion and in depth interviews. Thus, it is found feasible and suitable to use qualitative methodology.

3.1 Qualitative Method

Qualitative research is more appropriate to examining words and ideas rather than counting numbers. As a research strategy, qualitative research methods are used to understand and explain social phenomena in their natural setting (Stone et al. 1999). It is characterized by an emphasis on describing, understanding and explaining complex phenomena on studying.

The research is based on a case study, in title “the strategic communication of GCAO for country branding. It deals with exploring and understanding the branding program and strategic implementation undertaken by other nations benefit to the Ethiopian case.

From the literature review it was also observed that the research approach employed in many of the studies involved about country branding. The data collection mechanism involves in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions. It also involves secondary data from GCAO and other organizations.

3.2 Data Gathering and Sampling

The study is concerned with the strategic communication of government communication affairs office for country branding. Based on relevant literature review as a frame of reference about branding and strategic communication, the selected data have been thematically analyzed. Therefore, data were collected from focus group discussion, in depth interview and secondary sources.

The population taken for sampling is based on the purpose of the research topic. Thus, the sampling frame was focus on GCAO and PR practitioner from some selected government institutions. Obviously, country branding is a joint effort of all government and non government institutions or the whole citizen. But, due to time limitation and resource constraints the sample selection could be framed.

The educational background of samples is taken to be at least having first degree and at least 10 years' experience associated with PR and country branding. Deacon et al. (1999) what is common to all qualitative sampling procedures, is that selection of sample units is deliberately shaped by research issue. Thus, the sampling selection was done based on the purpose of the study.

According to Alvi (2016) Purposive sampling can be very useful for situations where need to reach a targeted sample quickly and where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern. The goal or purpose for selecting such sampling method is to have those that will yield the most relevant and an adequate data to the research work. Therefore, the researcher used focus group discussions, observation, interviews and documents as instruments of data gathering which are found to be relevant to the case study approach.

3.2.1 Focus group discussion

The focus group discussions are one of the most commonly used in qualitative research techniques. They allow forming groups of people and sharing their views under the guidance of the researcher. According to Lindlof (1995) focus group interview offers a methodological response to those problems which researchers face in conducting individual interviews. Unlike

interviews conducted with individual interviewee focus groups create settings in which diverse perceptions and ideas on particular topics can surface.

Therefore, the GCAO communicator who are working in organizations specifically communication and image building department were the target of the researcher for focus group discussion. Those focus groups are helped to get wider reflections for the practice of country branding and strategic communication in the office. Since, groups were sampled and selected based on their working area.

The operation of focus groups is deceptively simple. A sample 6 to 12 persons who are demographically homogeneous or who have certain experiences in common, is selected to meet at a neutral site to discuss subjects of interest to the researcher (Lindlof, 1995). Thus, for this research purpose two groups were formed which have 8 and 6 participants.

3.2.2 Interview

Interviews are useful learning mechanisms about individual perspectives. Interviewees are also effective for getting people to talk about their personal feelings, opinions, and experiences. It is known that those who are afraid to talk in front of people about a topic would explain if they get chance of talking in front of one person or the researcher. This technique was selected mainly because of its strength in providing detailed background about the reasons why respondents give specific answers (Wimmer& Dominick, 2006).

According to Ghauri (1995) the data obtained through interview is of questionable reliability since, again, the subjectivity is implicit both in the responses of the interviewed, as in the interpretation of the interviewer. Taking into consideration this fact, the researcher combines face to face in-depth interviews with the collecting of secondary data to improve the reliability and validity of the research.

Therefore, the researcher totally conducted 15 PR professionals from different government institutions. The seven PR people were selected from GCAO, and then six peoples are from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ethiopian National Museum and Ethiopian Investment Commission.

The rest were selected from Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MOCT) and Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO). The sample selection is based on significance of the study.

3.3 Data analysis and validity

The data analysis technique employed involved organizing the details about the case, categorizing the data into meaningful themes, looking for and identifying patterns. This was followed by making thematic analysis and finally reaching at conclusions and recommendations.

The research design for this thesis work is exclusively qualitative. Both the interview and focus group discussion were recorded through note taking and audio. Finally, both materials were transcribed and categorized according to their subject area. That is, branding implementation, branding opportunity and challenges. Therefore, the result was finally discussed along with the data found through document analysis.

The primary data is obtained from the person's interview and group discussions. This data helps the researcher to know and understand the strategic communication and implementation of GCAO for country branding. The strategic implantations, cooperation with stake holders, tools for communication and branding opportunity were mentioned by those participants.

Secondary data is collected from the secondary sources. These sources support and strengthen the research with summation with the primary sources. Though primary sources have higher credibility secondary sources also have their own help in conducting a research. Though, books, organization strategic plans, internet, website, reports, and other unpublished papers are used to secure secondary data for this research.

According to Bond (2003) there are two main dimensions of validity that internal and external. Internal validity is concerned with the degree of certainty that observed effects in an experiment are actually the result of the experimental treatment or condition, rather than intervening, extraneous or confounding variables. Internal validity is enhanced by increasing the control of these other variables.

External validity is concerned with the degree to which research findings can be applied to the real world, beyond the controlled setting of the research. Attempts to increase internal validity are likely to reduce external validity as the study is conducted in a manner that is increasingly unlike the real world (Bond, 2003).

Therefore, the interview questions had been shown the researcher and were improved as per their comments to enhance the validity of the instrument. The interview questions had been shown to the study leader. Besides the results of the interview were given, the group discussion and the available document related to branding can be the assertion of thesis validity.

Besides the different instruments used (interviews focus group discussions) and the results from different individuals interviewed maintain and enhance the reliability of the research. Furthermore, the interviewed individuals and the focus groups are well orientated persons with a lot of knowledge in their working field.

Concerning to ethical consideration, participants were fully informed regarding the objectives of the study, while they were reassured that their answers were treated as confidential and used only for academic purposes and only for particular research. However, qualitative research is not allowing the measurement of the examined problems and in some cases participants may refused to speak against their organizations.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The research was conducted by following the qualitative methodology as presented in chapter three. The research results mainly pertinent to the following research questions:-

- How is country branding implemented by GCAO, and who are the stakeholders in this practice?
- What are the opportunities and challenges of branding the country (Ethiopia)?
- How is the strategic framework of GCAO in nation branding activity?

The interview was targeted to GCAO who have been involved in the activities directly related to public relations and image building of the country. The PR and communication professionals from ministry of foreign affairs, Ethiopian National Museum, Ethiopian investment commission, MOCT and ETO have been involved in the interview.

Thus, the request for interview was sent to 18 peoples and 15 were willing to give the interview which made a response rate of 83%. Only three interviewees were not willing to give the interview. One has given excuses and the rest gave an appointment as far as 3 months which obviously is out of the research period. Out of 15 interviewed only three responded via email, the remaining 12 were interviewed face to face. Their working experiences in the field of PR and communication range from 10 – 20 years. The age group of the respondents also ranges from 28-50 years and 70% are male while 30% are female.

The interview questions were placed in a way that will give a natural flow to the respondents rather than following the sequence of the research propositions. The results reported here are the

ones which are found most important and relevant to the study. Therefore, some irrelevant answers have been omitted.

Two focus groups were held discussion. Focus Group Discussion one (FGD1) is composed of young and well experienced communication professionals. In this group, two persons are learning MA in the field of Public Relations and Strategic Communication (PRSC) at Addis Ababa University. The others educational background also BA and MA.

The other focus group, Focus Group Discussion two (FGD2) is mainly composed of senior and joiner foreign relation experts and an academic level of mainly master degree in the field of social science.

In both groups (FGD1 & FGD2), the discussions were fierce and intensity at first. But, as the discussions proceed, participants became more relaxed and the debates and discussions heated up reaching at conclusions for some questions while going with more doubts and questions for the others. The age groups for both focus groups are 26-48. The FGD1 and FGD2 have 8 and 6 participants; from all the participants only 3 are female while 11 are male.

Members of FGD1 are practitioners are working in the Federal and Regional Communication (FRC) department of GCAO, while FGD2 are working Foreign Relation and Image Building (FRIB) department. On the group discussion some of the individuals were given a diverse statements and comments. Since, to keep the confidential identity of sources, code has been assigned to each individual. In the group each individuals were assigned by the letters (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and I).

4.2 Background of the Organization

Government communication affairs office was established in 2008 (2001 E.C), by proclamation no of 158/2008. It is one of the federal government institutions and directly accountable to the Prime Minister. Its vision is aspires to see a society whose citizens have access to accurate and timely information that helps them to actively participate in nation building transparent and

responsive government and Ethiopia's image built favorably (Retrieved March 21, 2018, from <http://www.gcao.gov.et/>).

The office provides quality leadership in all government communication system and ensures the efficient and effective flow of information between the government and the public. It creates consensus on major national issues and make a meaningful contribution to build the image of the nation.

It also worked for assist the international community, with a view to develop their goodwill towards Ethiopia. The office understands the historical heritages and cultural values of the country as well as the new reality emerging from the ongoing changes (Retrieved March 21, 2018, from <http://www.gcao.gov.et/>).

Vision

Government Communication Affairs Office aspires to see a society whose citizens have access to accurate and timely information that helps them to actively participate in nation building transparent and responsive government and Ethiopia's image built favorably (Retrieved March 21, 2018, from <http://www.gcao.gov.et/>).

Mission

To provide leadership in government information communication system, ensure efficient and effective flow of information between the government and the public as well as within government organs, create consensus on major national issues and make a meaningful contribution to build the image of the nation (Retrieved March 21, 2018, from <http://www.gcao.gov.et/>).

Objectives

The objectives of the office shall be to play a leading role in the government information and communication systems. Assist the international community, with a view to develop its goodwill towards the country, to properly understand the historical heritages and cultural values of the country as well as the new reality emerging from the ongoing changes is one of the listed objectives (Retrieved March 21, 2018, from <http://www.gcao.gov.et/>).

4.3 Answering the Research Questions

1 *How is country branding implemented by GCAO, and who are the stakeholders in this practice?*

Many responded that country branding will be useful to the country's economic benefit and they cited increased tourist inflow and increased foreign investment as examples of benefits to the country. The respondents recognized the positive impact that country branding could bring and negative image associations and subsequent stereotypes could negatively affect.

According to Silva (2015) nation branding strategy should lead to an economic value asset in means of economic growth for the country. A country could have a strong nation branding strategy, but if it is still corrupt and its citizens are living in poverty, it does not make any sense.

Since, country branding effort cannot be wildly thrown and introduced to Ethiopia. All respondents agreed that country branding should be done by the involvement of all citizens, government, NGOs, private and public enterprises, media etc. Thus, it is not only the duty and responsibility of GCAO.

Most respondents assured that the branding activity of GCAO is not supported by strategic communication plan. However, on the occasions of the international meeting which takes place in the country, designing activities of country branding have takes place. But, it is not planned and well organized, rather it is arbitrary and urgency. One respondent from GCAO have responded that

“The office is in the process of creating national brand name that represents the country. However, the Ethiopia national brand name can't easily determine due to the diversity of culture, religion, language, multiple identities etc. Therefore, it needs an extensive research and consensuses at national level. The discussion was done with stakeholders about the significance of branding. We are agreed to implement country branding in strategic and organized way for the next. Generally, branding in Ethiopia has not yet been implemented based on plan and

strategic way. Since, it was almost done through instinctively and conventional way” he added (Personal interview, April 19, 2018).

However, FGD1 (B) commented that the office were some of the efforts to improve the image of the country though different mechanism. The office tried to deliver diverse information about Ethiopia through CD, Brochure and Bulletin mainly on the occasion of international meeting which held in AA. It also works to promote Ethiopian products on foreign and local exhibitions, tends to make efforts that higher officials, delegates and foreign journalists to visit certain development areas of the country (Focus group discussion, April 21, 2018).

On the other hand, FGD1 (A) believed that GCAO didn't start implementation of country branding in professional way. It doesn't have a well-planned operating system of implementation nation branding, and it doesn't have enough staff and trained manpower. He concluded that GCAO could be a focal point for that while the other thought of a public private partnership (Focus group discussion, April 21, 2018). The other respondent said that, country branding should be led by an organization free from government bureaucracy. Since, it is not the duty of GCAO or other government institutions (Personal interview, August 9, 2018).

Many interviewees and the focus group discussion believed that “the concept as well as implementation of country branding is new, it is not familiar to the many of the GCAO employees and other stakeholders”. According to FGD1 (A) this year for more than 250 GCAO employees has given short term training about the concept and implementation of nation branding. Various workshops and discussion have been done (Focus group discussion, April 21, 2018).

All participants of FGD2 agreed that nation branding need country representative logo and slogan with deep research. Then, it must be supported by strategic communication plan and media campaign. Since, without these priorities GCAO not being done country branding (Focus group discussion, April 24, 2018).

According to the five years communication plan of GCAO (2009) that adopted from Growth and Transformation Plan two (GTP2), for the coming five years country brand name development

program and creating national brand representative (logo and slogan) will undertake. Then the following outcomes are expected to realize:

- ▶ Distorted views of the international community about Ethiopia will be changed
- ▶ National brand of Ethiopia will be realized
- ▶ Strengthened people to people relation and created national consensus on major issues of the country
- ▶ Shared branding practice and experience of other countries
- ▶ Established integrated and organized system of country branding with stakeholders

As one respondent replied from GCAO, the office is implementing country branding in a strategic way, especially on the occasion of AU meeting and other big event which held in Addis Ababa. GCAO promoted Ethiopia through various communication tools and strategies, he added. For this research purpose he gave a detailed description of the office branding activity at the 26th AU summit (personal interview, April 15, 2018).

No	Items	Distribution Copy	Contents
1	VCD in title “ the other face of Ethiopia”	200	Development
2	Year book in title “Ethiopia”	200	An overview of GTP2
3	Banner	100	Variety message
	Billboard	50	Variety message
4	A bag made of cotton a color print both sides called “Ethiopia”.	200	
5	Brochure	300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development - Investment - Peace and security - Tourism

Table 4- Average distributives of items at 26th AU summit (personal interview)

Some of the respondents agreed that country branding should be done by the involvement of all citizens. But it is important to engage in the task of country branding after making analysis of the requirements and after getting the commitment of the key stakeholders like GCAO to be involved. The other believed that GCAO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry Of Culture and Tourism, Tourism Organization and Ethiopian Airline are the main stakeholders in this practice.

The government should spearhead the project but definitely it should include all stakeholders as mentioned above, one of the respondents from national museum replied. The other respondent who had an experience of tourist guide before and now a communicator said that, it should be led by an organization free from government bureaucracy (personal interview, September 22, 2018).

Many have the opinion that all the above mentioned institutions are included branding image building in their annual working plan and their mission as well. But the institutions working performance is up and down, even if do not have strong collaborative relationship with each other.

According to Akker (2011) nation branding agency should be developed in which the government is responsible for the nation branding strategy creation and operation process, although the people who are responsible for this should also have some independence from governmental policies, to secure continuity in the nation branding activities. Therefore, the nation branding agency should have operational autonomy and its access to information and expertise should be independent from both the government and the private sector.

Some respondents and members of FGD have asserted GCAO shall be the prior stakeholder, because it will be needed in facilitating good policies and also create a better face for the international community.

One respondent from GCAO remarked that, the office is working jointly with many stakeholders especially on the occasion of international event (like the AU meeting) which held in Addis Ababa. It has been working in collaboration with several institutions and it will continue to intensify its activities, he added (personal interview, April 15, 2018).

According to Akker (2011) it is essential that there is a consistent vision and motivation among the stakeholders to create a successful brand. This can be very hard to reach through the highly diverse interests of the stakeholders.

The respondent from MOCT and ETO are believed that their own institutions are done better for country branding. The new tourism brand has launched, and new strategies have been devised to raise the countries competitiveness in the global tourism market by migrating from traditional methods of tourist marketing to modern ones. They are worked together on building up the attraction capacity and convenience of existing tourist attraction sites (personal interview, September 6, 2018).

The entire respondent and focus group discussion have agreed that country branding should be done with the participation of all stakeholders of government body, NGOs, private and public enterprises, media and all the people of Ethiopia as well. Many of the respondents has emphasized that branding should be done with harmonized and integrated manner.

2 What are the opportunities and challenges for branding Ethiopia?

The results from interviewees and focus group discussion pointed out few of the opportunities and potentials of branding Ethiopia. All they agreed that the diverse culture of the people as well as diverse landscape of highlands and lowlands of Ethiopia a great potential for branding. Additionally Ethiopia is land of ancient churches, obelisks, mosques and mysteries as well as the symbol of independence for many African countries, since never colonized. The availability of AU head quarter, many embassies and international organizations are also opportunities for branding the country.

Even though all interviewees and focus groups agree on the fact that Ethiopia's image is not fairly represented in the global arena, they don't unanimously agree on the gravity of the causes for the negative image the country.

Therefore, poverty, drought and famine, ethnic and regional conflicts as well as a long year negative image of the countries are stressed by the respondent as challenges of branding. Many have the opinion that the current image of Ethiopia is affected by the negative stereotype from

the past like civil war and drought, while currently by ethnic conflict and political unrest. One respondent from FGD2 (A) also remarked the following:

“Ethiopian history is not well promoted to the outside world. Ethiopia is the cradle of human kind, Long history before Columbus discovered America and she had its own culture and ancient history. But all the images of Ethiopia so far had shown to the world negatively. Ethiopia’s image in the world is distorted and negatively portrayed as it is affected by stereotypical information such as the famine from the past” (Focus group discussion, April 24, 2018).

While, some give much weight for the consecutive draught and famine which happened in the past and which they believed has significantly reduced the country’s image. They argued that its associated amplifications by aid agencies played a vital role apart from the image created by the drought and famine. Others give greater emphasis for the internal politics which capitalizes on each small problem at home to use it for political gains. However, the results of the research supported that aid agencies are negatively affecting the image of the country which deters investment, export and tourism as stated (Anholt, 2003).

The opportunities

It is evident that Ethiopia is different from many other countries in its language, religion, calendar, time count and culture. Since, from the respondent and focus group discussions diverse opinions of country branding was raised. The religious and cultural heritages along with the ancient rituals and celebrations and the accommodative culture in the country are the ones frequently raised. The sector such as investment, export and tourism also mentioned as branding opportunities.

According to Anholt (2014) in today’s world, countries fiercely compete with each other for the direct foreign investment, brand export and tourism. A nation’s brand value is determined by Exports, Governance, Investment and Immigration, Culture and Heritage, People and Tourism. Countries are recalled by their brands and if these brands are demanded and used by big masses so the image of these countries gains advantageous.

Therefore, diversity, landscape, tourist attractions and the efforts to come out of poverty and the values that Ethiopia advocates shall be the appealing aspects as stated by the respondents. The facts already known about Ethiopian coffee and other export products need to be branded and presented in a more contemporary way.

Tourism

Here many interviewees and group discussion participants were mentioned Ethiopia has the necessary historical and archeological heritages. The natural gifts and traditions of Ethiopia including the historical sites, churches, enjoyable food, beautiful people, diverse ethnic groups, waterfalls, lakes, comfortable weather and etc are tourism potential branding. Whereas some people said that the new leisure activities that can attract tourists like night club dances, cheap spa, massages, and international standard hotels are branding alternatives.

Ethiopia is the cradle of humankind and the place where the famous more than 3.5 million years old human remains known as "Lucy" was discovered. Ethiopia is the only African nation never to be colonized by European forces in its entire history. The Battle of Adwa is the first victory of African over European colonial power. The amazing and astonishing rock hewn churches of Lalibela were created and the all the year sunny and comfortable climate in many parts of the country (ETO, 2015). One respondent from MOCT said:

“I believe that Ethiopia has a lot to offer great historical and cultural attractions. But we have not promoted these well. Now the government is working to launch air travelers before traveling to other destinations, people can spend a day or more in Addis or visit other cities in Ethiopia. The social and economic conditions in Ethiopia are also very promising. People are excited and united to transform the situation. Then, it is a very good time for tourists to come and see Ethiopia.

He added that Addis Ababa is the third diplomatic city in the world and it is a set of many regional and international organizations such as the AU, ECA and over a hundred embassies. This is one of the best potential branding opportunity for promoting Ethiopian to the outside world” (personal interview, September 6, 2018).

One interviewee's from MOCT replied that Ethiopia has multi alternative for branding in tourism. Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is on its way to become a new potential hotspot destination for tourists. In collaboration with federal and regional communication office, MOCT has worked on building up the attraction capacity and convenience of existing tourist attraction sites. Tourism brand strategies have been devised to raise the countries competitiveness in the global tourism market by migrating from traditional methods of tourist marketing to modern ones.

He added that the new Ethiopia tourism brand name (tagline) can be competent in tourism market globally. Because, the brand (Land of Origin) representing so many unique historical, cultural, social and natural beauty (personal interview, September 6, 2018). According to his explanation the new tourism brand tagline contains the following variety of views.

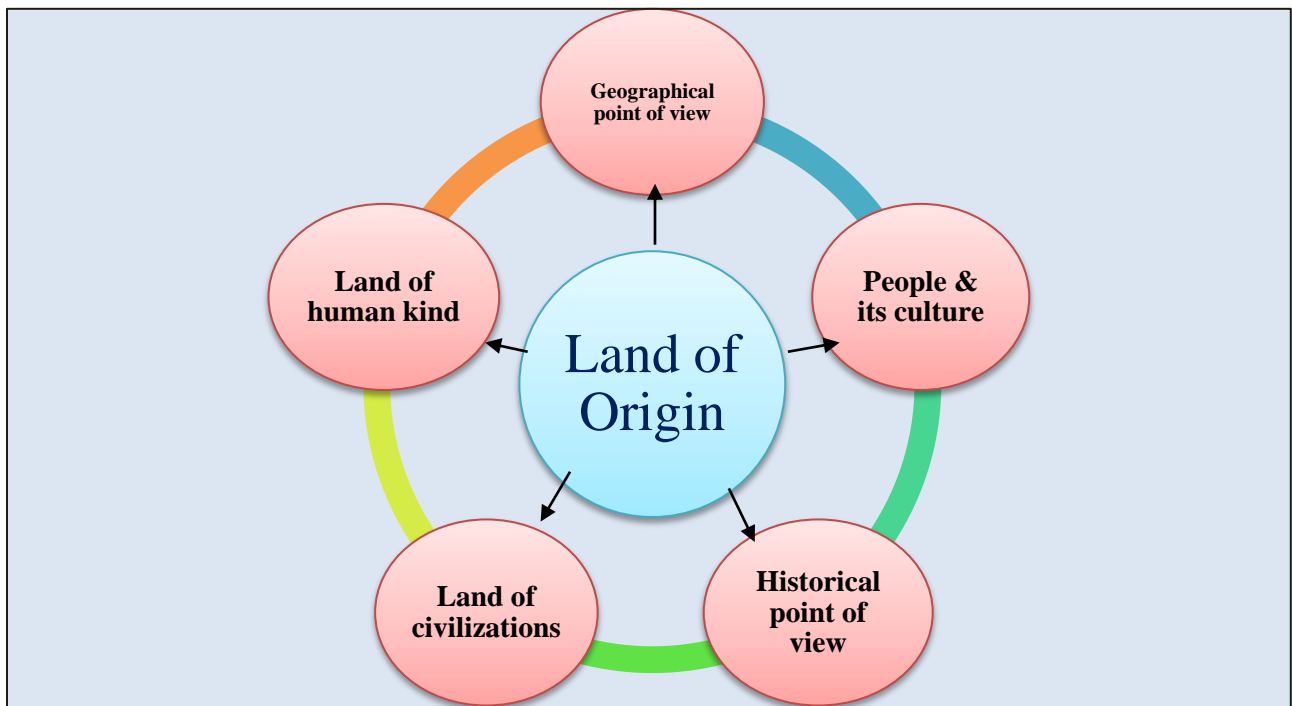


Figure 4- The new tourism brand perspectives (personal interview)

In conclusion the respondents and FGD's agreed, in Ethiopia the branding opportunity in the sector of tourism is very vast, but the potential of tourism is perceived to be minimal. Since, GCAO didn't use properly and effectively tourism as a potential of country branding.

Investment

Foreign investors are choosing the country for making investment by the image and perception of countries in the world scene either positively or negatively (Anolt, 2013). Since, majority of the respondent and the focus group discussion results indicated that, several factors work in Ethiopia's favor as an emerging destination for investment.

These include the existence of a one stop service for new investment approvals, a large domestic market of over 100 million people, a liberalized economy, a strong growth record in recent years, peace keeping mission, high employer satisfaction with labor and the prevalence of peace and stability are a great opportunity for investors.

As one respondent replied that “industrial parks are helped a country to be benefited economically, socially and politically. It also gives different job opportunity as well as encourages foreign direct investment. However, GCAO and other stakeholders didn't work jointly with investment commission to utilize this as a branding opportunity of Ethiopia (personal interview, August 14, 2018).

However, the commission serves as a one stop shop for issuing investment licenses and investment facilitations. The new market oriented economic policy embraces wide reforms which include foreign private investments. Consequently, the private sector is encouraged to invest in most areas of the economy (Retrieved May 2, 2018, from <http://www.investethiopia.org>).

Export

All agreed that Ethiopia's main exports of live animals and meat products, oilseeds, fruits vegetable, pulse, cut flowers etc. Coffee, flowers and best long distance runners are the positive images of Ethiopia. It exported in the form of raw or semi processed commodities such as coffee, hides and skins, oil seeds and pulses. The country offers a wide range of processed and semi processed hides and skins to the world market. Obviously, the export power of Ethiopia is tilted to agricultural products and its revenue in the sector is Very low. One respondent confirmed that:

“Ethiopian Diasporas lived in many countries of the world generate more than \$ 6 billion remittance per year. However, the country’s export revenue is not more than \$ 4 billion per year. This indicated that the country’s export product is very low. Since, there are no more alternatives of branding Ethiopia especially in export sector.

He added that the export (Made in Ethiopia) products are very limited and minimal. Export can meet the parallel between actual commercial brands with country brand. If a country that is something contribute to the international community create images in the minds of observers. Export can meet the parallel between actual commercial brands with country brand. If a country that is something contribute to the international community create images in the minds of observers” (Personal interview, April 6, 2018).

However, FDG2 (B) and (H) argue Ethiopia with lots of coffee export competition from different countries in the world. On the other hand, the branding exercise to secure intellectual property right for the Ethiopian coffee its brand names of Walega, Harar, Yirgachefe , Sidama and others based on their place of origin, it is maybe useful to categorize the product origin and quality, while it might go against branding Ethiopia.

People and Culture

It is known that Ethiopia is the second populous country in Africa, next to Nigeria. Therefore, most of the respondents assured that Ethiopia have a huge potential for labor intensive activities. The people of Ethiopia are very friendly, warm and obedience. They are polite and peaceful emanating from their attachment to religion which made them God loving and God fearing people. Therefore, this behavior of the citizens of the country becomes somehow branding opportunity of the country. While one person from (FGD2) (B) claimed that “most Ethiopians as racist, irrational, arrogant and narrow minded” (Focus group discussion, April 24, 2018).

Majority of interviewees and FGD have agreed that Ethiopia used to be the icon during the formation of the OAU since it is never colonized. Many Africans also feel that they should be

thanked for promoting Ethiopian flag as a symbol of black freedom all over the world. The present Ethiopia is also widely known by a hub for regional and international meetings. Then it can be a great potential of branding.

According to GCAO (unpublished) Ethiopia is one of the most popular countries in athletics, so it can be the best alternative for nation branding. Ethiopia's diverse nations, nationalities and peoples have adorable cultural sports. Of which wrestling, judo, arrow, horse riding and hockey are the major ones. The country is strongly associated with long distance running after Abebe Bikila won gold medal on the historic Olympic marathon which is the first in Africa. Football is also the other favorite sport in the country.

Running in Ethiopia is an emerging and significant travel sector for tourism. Runners train in, Meskel Square in Addis Ababa, Entoto Hills and Solulta around Addis, and the town of Bekoji. The small town of Bekoji is the origin of many long distance champions. Ethiopia has produced many long distance running champions, including Haile Gebrselassie, Kenenissa Bekele, Tirunesh Dibaba, Mesert Defar. It is thought that the reason that so many top long distance runners originate from Ethiopia could be the combined factors of perfect body shape for the sport and places of high altitude (ETO, 2015).

Therefore, respondents have cited whereby Ethiopia have positive images of people mainly associated with the long distance runners such as Abebe Bikila, Haile Gebrselassie, Kenenissa Bekele, Tirunesh Dibaba, Mesert Defar, etc. Ibahrine (2016) nation branding through sport has become an important technique for countries to project themselves on the world stage. As "sports diplomacy" continues to gain significance, efforts to maximize the potential of sporting events and particularly sport media coverage will likely be at the center of many countries nation branding strategies.

The unique feature of Ethiopian cultures is that it is diversity. Each ethnic group has its own culture manifested in its diet, way of living, celebrations, dressing and dances. The religious and cultural heritages along with the ancient rituals and celebrations and the accommodative culture in the country are the ones frequently raised by respondents and focus group participants.

Many raised the following as aspects on which the future image of Ethiopia shall be founded, the historical heritages, the colorful festivities, the diversity of people like, language, traditional clothes, diets, music and dances. They think it would be fruitful to start the branding effort bit by bit but in integrated manner and start from educating the citizens and giving continuous training to employees of GCAO and other stakeholders. Because, branding Ethiopia would give the country a better influence or power internationally to engage in attracting investments, promoting tourism and exports of products made in Ethiopia.

Challenges

The result of both FGD indicated that challenges for branding Ethiopia are lack of expertise in branding and marketing of this sort, limited range of resources and poverty. Branding have given less time by the media and get much smaller attention by the main actor like GCAO, the tourism sector, investment commission and export. On the other hand, political instability and conflict are branding challenges in the country.

As one very critical respondent have stated the primary obstacle to investment in Ethiopia is shortage of foreign currency as well as the monetary policy of the government that restricts access to hard currency and limits the repatriation of profits in hard currency. There is a huge disconnection between the government interest, plan and the delivery system on the ground like bureaucracy, service experience and corruption (personal interview, May, 2018).

All respondents strongly complained about the low level of internet connectivity and speed combined with its high service fee and the frequent power failure, it is not clear how the country could be able to attract investment. The closed door of PR people and higher government officials to foreign media is another problem for branding Ethiopia. The western Medias are also criticized as being pro negative information to get viewers or listeners attention and for their political reasons.

According to GCAO (2009) some western and local private media are fostering negative campaigns about Ethiopia. In addition to this the growing popularity of social media can be taken

as a challenge. Because, through this medium negative and biased information about Ethiopia have been easily spread.

One respondent replied that “many citizens’ doesn’t have all rounded knowledge and information’s about Ethiopia. The accessibility of information about the country is also very narrow and restricted. On the other hand conservative peoples are additional challenges to the Ethiopian case of country branding (personal interview, August 14, 2018).

Therefore, many respondents are agreed, in the past Ethiopia’s brand is overemphasized to convey a negative image. Even though, the current image of the country mainly associated with political instability, ethnic or regional conflict, poverty, draught and famine. So, to change this negative stereotype, it needs a harmonized rebranding campaign.

3 How is the strategic framework of GCAO in nation branding activity?

The branding strategy of GCAO shall be in harmony with the plan of the country Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). That's why the bureau has been launched its own five years communication plan. However, the plan is less detailed about the strategic framework of country branding, and it is mentioned only four points to be accomplished regarding nation branding. According to GCAO (2009) the plan has listed the following points for branding activity:

1. Promoted the rapid growth and sustainable economic development of the country in various ways
2. Worked to acknowledge the social success and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) performance score of Ethiopia
3. Promoted widely the peace keeping role and contribution of Ethiopia in Africa as well as the world
4. Introduced the people and government involvement for green economic development and food security program

Many agreed that the current brand of Ethiopia did not arise within one or two years. In a like manner, working to rebrand the Ethiopian image shall take longer time. The role of GCAO in branding work is irreplaceable as many FGD participants and interviewees response. It shall be run by strategic communication plan to use the branding potential of tourism, investment, export,

people and diversity of the culture. Since, people and stakeholders are the major component to realize the strategy of branding.

The influence of the individual citizens is well acknowledged by the respondents. Some said that though they acknowledge that individuals have a role to play for nation branding. The government should provide the opportunity for citizens who are popular in the field of sports, music, and the arts, to become an ambassador by promoting Ethiopia. Ethiopia is reach by many legendary athletes and have positive images mainly associated with long distance. However, the government is not using this opportunity properly.

Majority of the respondent and discussion group participants agreed that, the citizens in Diaspora and in the country shall work as the promoter of the country brand being guided by GCAO reminding them consistently in a quality way free from propaganda and in a realistic way. To realize this, working proactively is a requirement many asserted. The Ethiopians who are going out of the country shall be given some sort of training since they affect the country image. The mouse of the government (GCAO) shall give interviews to prominent media in the country and give public lectures in the universities. Since, the people living in that country will have bits of positive information about the country which will have an impact on the brand of Ethiopia.

4.4 Thematic Results

None of the people interviewed has doubted the benefits that branding a country will bring economic benefits to the country. Respondents assured that the branding activity of GCAO is not supported by strategic communication plan. Since, it is almost done through instinctively and conventional way. Because, the concept as well as implementation of country branding is new, it is not familiar to many of government communication affairs employees. Almost all respondents and focus group participants have agreed that as the branding activity of GCAO must be supported by strategic communication plan and media campaign.

The entire respondent and focus group discussion have agreed that country branding should be done with the participation of all stakeholders of government body, NGOs, private and public enterprises, media and all the people of Ethiopia as well. Many of the respondents has emphasized that branding should be done with harmonized and integrated manner. Strong

opinion was raised from many. That is, every citizen affects the country brand either positively or negatively. It is no doubt that Ethiopia has the necessary resource base both human and physical to improve its image and set it right.

Many believed that Ethiopia has the necessary conditions to serve in branding the country. Ethiopia is well known in the world and known mainly for its ancient history and independence (not colonized), origin of mankind, successful long distance runners including marathon, etc. Therefore, many has pointed out that the religious and cultural festivities which are deeply rooted to old testament traditions are one of the images to be portrayed to show to the world that Ethiopia is a country of culture and ancient history.

On the other side, the current infrastructural development in roads, bridges, hotels and the consecutive double digit economic growth of the country are some of the points perceived by many respondents to show that there is a potential for any investor. The new Ethiopia tourism brand name (land of origin) can be competent in tourism market globally. The respondent suggested that, in addition to tourism brand creating country representative logo and slogan is very important.

The outside worlds either do not know a country named Ethiopia or if they knew the image of emaciated pictures of poverty, famine, drought, political instability and conflict. So, to change this negative stereotype, it needs a harmonized rebranding campaign. The low level of internet connectivity and speed combined with its high service fee and the frequent power failure taken as a challenge. The western Medias pro negative information also a big challenge for branding Ethiopia.

Almost all respondents and focus group participants have agreed that as a citizen of Ethiopia, their individual perception and action has an influence in the brand of the nation. Ethiopians travelling abroad used to be given orientation and training on how to maintain and improve the country's image. The individual behaviors have a very strong impact in wielding the image of Ethiopia.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

From the collected data, it is concluded that country branding has a positive and significant role to play for the socio-economic benefit of any country as long as it is done in a strategic, proper and integrated manner. Many of the respondents have emphasized that branding should be done with harmonized and integrated manner. Thus, respondents agreed that country branding should be done by the involvement of all citizens, government, NGOs, private and public institutions, media, etc.

Many of the respondents has emphasized the harmonized and integrated branding should be conducted which if not done in such manner will result in confusion and may not bring in the desired result. Hence, the government, the citizenry, the investors and everyone concerned shall do the branding task harmoniously and in integrated manner. The impact of the citizens is quite well acknowledged by both groups.

All respondents agreed the citizens in Diaspora and in the country shall work as the promoter of the country brand being guided by GCAO and MOFA. This idea is also supported by the Ethiopian government. Since, the newly elected Prime Minister D.r. Abiy on his vow said,

“Every Ethiopian who goes abroad is it for work or studies, travels around carrying Ethiopia with them. That is why it is said, “you can take an Ethiopian out of Ethiopia but you cannot take Ethiopia out of the heart of an Ethiopian.” Because of your hard work, your excellence, and your country’s deeply ingrained sense of decency that would follow you wherever you go, you are ambassadors of Ethiopia and its core values.

Since, the FDRE government will continue with unreserved efforts to facilitate your active participation in your country’s affairs and its transformation in any way you can” (D.r. Abiy, 2018).

From this illustration the researcher understand that the new initiative's of the government, just to mobilize each Ethiopian Diasporas for nation branding activity or a role to play as ambassadors of Ethiopia. Since, currently many Diasporas are doing their best of supporting the government and the country as well.

Many of the interviewees and the focus group discussion believed that “the concept as well as implementation of country branding is new, not familiar to the many of the GCAO employees. Therefore, GCAO has not yet been implemented based on plan and strategic way. Since, it is almost done through instinctively and conventional way. In harmony to the literature (Akker, 2011) government is the leader of the nation branding strategy, and acts as a brand champion. In Addition, the nation branding activities should be combined with innovation and the overall strategy of the country.

The resources and competitive advantage upon which branding of Ethiopia could be based are vast irrigable land, pleasant weather, large population and cheap labor force, friendly and beautiful people, cultural and historical values and festivities. The heritages component, shall deal with the recording and production of religious and cultural festivities and documentaries to be shown in international Medias to show their tourism appeal.

Various films and literature based on the cultural heritages, mystiques and glorious history of Ethiopia shall be produced and distributed to the world in different foreign languages. Therefore, GCAO must take the lion's share of the success of the project. On the other hand, government authorities shall also be encouraged to give interviews to prominent local and international media and also give public lectures in universities and colleges on a subject of interest to the audience.

It needs to identify the national identities (logo and slogans) that exactly represent Ethiopia that engaged all stakeholders. And the nation branding strategy of GCAO shall be harmonized with the overall country strategy and it needs a consistent and quality communication to reveal to all local end external target groups. On the occasion of AU and other international meeting, GCAO must prepare an organized and well structured real message communicated through appropriate delivery mechanism.

The branding strategy of GCAO shall be in harmony with the plan of the country. The components, like Tourism, Investment, Export, people and culture in which the branding Ethiopia is to be based. The office should use these opportunities effectively, because each component's have a competitive advantage of nation branding. Thus, the Heritages component, it shall deal with the recording and production of religious and cultural festivities and documentaries to be shown in international Medias to show their tourism appeal.

Various films and literature based on the cultural heritages, mystiques and glorious history of Ethiopia shall be produced and distributed to the world in international languages. Attachment of the local media with some international Medias will also bring popular. The state monopoly of television shall be lifted and allow other private television stations to be opened. A periodical sport tournament of some sort like the current great run Ethiopia (ታላቁ ሩጫ) will also add to the color.

People are the major component to realize the strategy. Currently, the human resource in Ethiopia is fit mainly for labor intensive industries, even though few sectors such as science, technology and innovations are also quite fit and competitive by the international standards. But, the strategy should focus on to change this feature within a few years period to educated people.

Thus, it has to encourage the realization of special technology training centers to appeal to technology companies to invest in Ethiopia. Encouraging education centers to teach international languages proficiently is very important to create a cosmopolitan city hospitable to foreign investors and visitors as communication is at its foundation.

The brand should be led with the harmony of key stakeholders of government institutions such as (GCAO, Ethiopian investment commission, MOCT, MOFA, ETO), public and private institutions. Since, Branding Ethiopia shall be done in a public private partnership project mobilizing every citizen and communicating the changes in a quality and consistent manner. The support from a responsible government is found to be crucial in crafting the strategy, providing policy support and the necessary budget but without the political interference and bureaucracy.

To do country branding consistently a frequent change in government seems prohibitive of the branding effort as the government policy support plays the key role. Thus as all the discussions, interviews and literatures support, it is time to go for establishing a joint venture of government, public and private partnership for branding Ethiopia.

This time Ethiopia is believed to be ascertained democracy, equality among nations, peace and stability after long years of tyrannical government. The age of guns has gone, belligerent parties are agreed to work together for the peace and development of the country. This comes after the sworn of Prime Minister D.r. Abiy. He is confirmed that, “I call on us all to forgive each other from our hearts, to close the chapters from yesterday, and to the forge ahead to next bright future through national consensus”.

It is hoped that this generation along with the next generation will assure Ethiopia’s renaissance, restore it to its ancient glorious position and assure its legitimate and rightful position in the globalized world with increasing connectivity. Hence, by using knowledgeable team of professionals lived in or outside the country, it can relieve Ethiopia from poverty and realize country branding.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommended points are categorized in to the following three levels, that is overall strategic, tactical and operational levels.

Overall Strategic

- ▶ The branding implementation of GCAO is almost done through instinctively and conventional way. But, GCAO should start an integrated, professional, planed and organized system of country branding jointly with stakeholders,
- ▶ Branding Ethiopia shall be done in away free from political interferences,
- ▶ Crafting sound policies, strategies and providing dependable infrastructural support to attract investors, visitors, entrepreneurial new residents, celebrities, and encouraging exports are the major support activities required from the government,
- ▶ The government, the citizenry, the investors and everyone concerned shall do the branding task harmoniously and in integrated manner,
- ▶ GCAO must mobilize the whole private sector with its potential of effectiveness and efficiency while securing the support of the different government organs,
- ▶ In tourism, export, investment sector as well as people's culture and history should identify for the best potential branding,
- ▶ Government should take a leading role by convincing all citizens to be roll as ambassadors of their country,
- ▶ Government should work with Ethiopian Athletes to be actively involved in the process of country branding,

- ▶ Crafting sound policies, strategies and providing dependable infrastructural support to attract investors, visitors, entrepreneurial new residents, celebrities, and encouraging exports are the major support activities required from the government.

Tactical

- ▶ Based on extensive research with consensus manner, it should be create national brand like tourism brand,
- ▶ Addis Ababa is the head quarter of several international organizations including AU and the 3rd diplomatic center in the world; therefore, this opportunity must be used as a collaborator for Ethiopian promotional plate form,
- ▶ For the development of country branding in Ethiopia it is advisable that to use the Grunig two- way symmetrical model of PR,
- ▶ Extensive research and awareness creations on the issue of branding should be continued, Especially, the GCAO, communication and image building department employees must get better training for branding and strategic implementations,
- ▶ The government must create national consensus to minimize or eliminate the religious, ethnic, regional and rivalry bloody conflicts in the country.

Operational

- ▶ Promoting Ethiopia through foreign international Medias and sharing the branding practice of other countries,
- ▶ The cultural heritages, mystiques and glorious history of Ethiopia shall be produced and distributed to the world in different foreign languages. Since, GCAO must take this responsibility,

- ▶ Government authorities shall also be encouraged to give interviews to prominent local and international media and also give public lectures in universities and colleges,
- ▶ Government should work for the expansion of Ethiopian contribution globally, like peace keeping and the products that contributed to the world (coffee and teff),
- ▶ Government should work the export product to be improved in kind and quality,
- ▶ GCAO must prepare an organized and well-structured real message communicated through appropriate delivery mechanism,
- ▶ The GCAO employees and other stakeholders who are mostly involved in nation branding and image building shall be given some sort of skill training.
- ▶ The Ethiopians who are going out of the country also shall be given some sort of training and detail information about the unique future as well as potentials of the country. Since they have a chance to communicate face to face and promote the country image.
- ▶ The government must resolve the problem of low level of internet connectivity and speed combined with its high service fee and the frequent power failure

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የመንግስት ኮሚንዩኬሽን ጉዳዮች ፅህፈት ቤት (2010) ገጽታን በመገንባት ተወዳዳሪማንነትን ማስተዋወቅና የሚዲያ ሚና፤ ያልታተመ።

የመንግስት ኮሚንዩኬሽን ጉዳዮች ፅህፈት ቤት (2009) የአምስትዓመታት የውጤት ተኮርስርዓት ዕቅድ፤ ያልታተመ።

Appendix 1- Interview questions for PR peoples

Addis Ababa University

School of Journalism and Communication

Department of Public Relation and Strategic Communication

Key informant Interview Questions:

The main reasons for these interview questions are to collect in-depth information's from PR professionals to asses "The Strategic Communication of Government Communication Affairs Office for Country Branding". The data will be applied for the research leading to master's thesis requirement in master of Public Relation and Strategic Communication. The information you will provide in this interview will be kept confidential and will be utilized only for the purpose of the study; your authentic response is highly valuable for the achievement of the objective of this research.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

1. Would you tell me please your name and your position in your organization?
2. What do you understand about the concept of country branding in general?
3. What do you think the significance and the role of Country Branding?
4. What do you think the role of GCAO in branding Ethiopia?
5. Who are the stakeholders and the main actors of country branding? And who shall handle the task?
6. Does Ethiopia have the necessary assets to be one of the best tourist destinations in the world?
7. What are the opportunities and challenges of branding Ethiopia?
8. In what way could the Citizens involved in nation branding? And what shall be done to make them play a positive role?
9. What do you think Ethiopia's image in the world? Is it positive or negative?
10. What strategies should follow and shall be done by GCAO and other stakeholders in branding Ethiopia?
11. Do you believe that both local and international media can affect the brand of a Country?

Appendix 2 – List of major discussion questions for FGD's, and pulmonary questions was raised on the discussion.

1. What do you understand about the concept of country branding in general?
2. What do you think the significance and the role of country branding?
3. What do you think the role of GCAO in branding Ethiopia?
4. Who are the stakeholders and the main actors of country branding?
5. In what way could the Citizens involved in nation branding? And what shall be done to make them play a positive role?
6. What are the uniquely differentiating and appealing aspects of Ethiopia that need to be told/shown to the world?
7. What do you think Ethiopia's image in the world?
8. What strategies should follow and shall be done by GCAO and other stakeholders in branding Ethiopia?
9. What are the opportunities and challenges for branding Ethiopia?
10. What role the media had played in influencing the image of Ethiopia? And how could the media been influenced to help in branding the country properly?

Appendix 3 - ለህዝብ ግንኙነት ባለሙያዎች የቀረቡ የአማርኛ ቅጅ ጥያቄዎች

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

በጋዜጠኝነትና ኮሙንኬሽን ትምህርት ቤት የህዝብ ግንኙነትና ስትራቴጂክ ኮሙንኬሽን ድጋግ ስርዓት

ከዚህ በታች የተዘረዘሩት ጥያቄዎች “የመንግስት ኮሙንኬሽን ሁዳዮች ፅህፈት ቤት አገሪቷን ብራንድ ለማድረግ የሚከተለው የኮሙንኬሽን ስትራቴጂ ምን ይመስላል” በሚል ርዕስ ለሚሰራው ጥናት ለህዝብ ግንኙነት ባለሙያዎች የቀረቡ ናቸው። ከዚህ መጠይቅ የሚገኘው ግብአት ከላይ ለተጠቀሰው ጥናት ግብአትነት ብቻ የሚውል ሲሆን የምጥሰጠኝ ምላሽ ሚስጥርነቱ የተጠበቀ ነው። በመሆኑም ለጥያቄዎቹ ምላሽ በመስጠት ለምታደርጉልኝ ትብብር በቅድሚያ ላመሰግን እወዳለሁ።

1. ስመዎንና በተቋመዎ ውስጥ ያለዎትን ሃላፊነት ቢገልጹልኝ?
2. አጠቃላይ አገርን ብራንድ ስለማድረግ ያለዎትን ግንዛቤ ቢገልጹ?
3. አገርን ብራንድ ማድረግ ምን አይነት ጠቀሜታ አለው ብለው ያስባሉ?
4. አገርን ብራንድ በማድረግ ዙሪያ የመንግስት ኮሙንኬሽን ጉዳዮች ፅህፈት ቤት ሚና ምን ይመስላል?
5. አገርን ብራንድ በማድረግ ዙሪያ ባለድርሻ አካላት የሚባሉት እነማን ናቸው? በዋነኝነት ማን ሃላፊነቱን ወስዶ ቢሰራ ይሻላል ይላሉ?
6. ኢትዮጵያን ከአለማችን የቱሪስት መዳረሻ አገራት መካከል አንዷ ሊያደርጓት የሚችሉ ሃብቶች አሏት ወይ?
7. ኢትዮጵያን ብራንድ በማድረግ ዙሪያ ያሉ ፈተናዎችና መልካም ኢጋጣሚዎችን ቢገልጹ?
8. አገርን ብራንድ በማድረግ ዙሪያ የዜጎች ተሳትፎ በምን መልኩ መሆን አለበት ይላሉ ? የጎላ ሚና እንድናራቸውስ ምን መደረግ አለበደ ብለው ያምናሉ?
9. ኢትዮጵያ በአለም አቀፍ ደረጃ ያላይ ገፅታ ምን ይመስላል? ጥሩ ወይስ መጥፎ ገፅታ አላት?
10. ኢትዮጵያን ብራንድ በማድረግ ስኬታማ ለመሆን የመንግስት ኮሙንኬሽን ጉዳዮች ፅህፈት ቤትና ሌሎችም ባለድርሻ አካላት ምን አይነት ዘገዎችን ቢከተሉ ወይም ቢተገብሩ ይሻላል?
11. አገርን ብራንድ በማድረግ ሂደት የአገር ውስጥና የውጭ ሚዲያዎች ሚና አላቸው ብለው ያምናሉ?

Appendix 4 – ለቡድን ውይይት የቀረቡ የአማርኛ ቅጅ ጥያቄዎች። በውይይቱ ሂደት ተጨማሪ ጥያቄዎችም ተነስተው እንደነበር ታሳቢ ይደረግ።

1. አጠቃላይ አገርን ብራንድ ስለማድረግ ያለዎትን ግንዛቤ ቢገልጹ?
2. አገርን ብራንድ ማድረግ ምን አይነት ጠቀሜታ አለው ብለው ያስባሉ?
3. አገርን ብራንድ በማድረግ ዙሪያ የመንግስት ኮሙንኬሽን ጉዳዮች ፅህፈት ቤት ሚና ምን ይመስላል?
4. አገርን ብራንድ በማድረግ ዙሪያ ባለድርሻ አካላት የሚባሉት እነማን ናቸው?
5. አገርን ብራንድ በማድረግ ዙሪያ የዜጎች ተሳትፎ በምን መልኩ መሆን አለበት ይላሉ ? የጎላ ሚና እንድናራቸውስ ምን መደረግ አለበደ ብለው ያምናሉ?
6. ኢትዮጵያን በዓለም ላይ ልዩ ሊያደርጓት ትችላሉ ብለው የሚጠቅሷቸው ነገሮች ምን ምን ናቸው?
7. ኢትዮጵያ በዓለም ላይ የምትታወቅበት ገፅታ ምን ይመስላል?
8. ኢትዮጵያን ብራንድ በማድረግ ስኬታማ ለመሆን የመንግስት ኮሙንኬሽን ጉዳዮች ፅህፈት ቤትና ሌሎችም ባለድርሻ አካላት ምን አይነት ዘገዎችን ቢከተሉ ወይም ቢተገብሩ ይሻላል?
9. ኢትዮጵያን ብራንድ በማድረግ ዙሪያ ያሉ ፈተናዎችና መልካም ኢጋጣሚዎችን ቢገልጹ?
10. የኢትዮጵያን ገፅታ ግንባታ ስራ በማከናወን ሂደት ሚዲያ ምን አይነት ሚና አለው ብለው ያስባሉ? አገርን ብራንድ በማድረግ ሂደት የሚዲያውን አስተዋጾ እንደት ያዩታል?