CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CHRIST APOSTOLIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGE (CAUC) WEBSITE AS A PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOL

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DECLARATION

Candidates Declaration

We hereby declare that this study is entirely our work except references to other people's work which have been cited. The study has been put together to fulfill the objective and the purpose for which this work was carried out. This study was carried out under the supervision of Mr. Fortune Tella, Lecturer, Christian Service University College, Kumasi and submitted as a project report to the Department of Communication Studies, CSUC. The result for this study has not been submitted to any other university for academic purposes.

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Supervisor's Declaration

This project work was written under my supervision and the students have been consistent with their interaction with me for guidance and direction. They have my consent to present it for assessment.

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to assess the Christ Apostolic University College (CAUC), Kumasi website as a public relations tool. The CAUC website was assessed with the objective to assess the information and interactivity satisfaction provided by the CAUC website to students. The assessment was to provide evidence based information on the CAUC website as a public relations tool to address the needs of students.

In carrying out the assessment on the CAUC website, 80 questionnaires were administered personally by the researchers to gather data from students of the University for analysis. The CAUC has a total student enrolment of 626. Further, 80 respondents which represent 17.9% of the accessible population of 446 were selected for the study. Quantitative research approach was used in the data collection and analysis. The study revealed that students of CAUC are satisfied with the information needs provided by the University's website underscoring the effectiveness of the CAUC website as a public relations tool.

Notwithstanding, the researchers identified that the CAUC website is not interactive enough as about 40% of the students indicated that the website promote interactivity. This can be attributed to the fact that there are not enough interactive features on the CAUC website that ensure interactivity between students and authorities. This has created an information gap between lecturers and students of CAUC.

Moreover, the research showed that students of CAUC want other features such as interactive devices to be added to the University's website page. The study recommends based on the

research findings that more interactive features should be added to the website in addition to providing pages for student research project, job opportunities or vacancies, research activities of lecturers, examination results and lecture time table.

Again, further research is recommended in this area of study especially in the area of Internet based lecture – student interaction.

DEDICATION

We gratefully dedicate this project report to our families.

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We want to express our profound gratitude to all those support and advice helped to bring this work to completion.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Public Relations is a leadership and management function that helps achieve organizational objectives, define philosophy, and facilitates organizational change. Broom (2009) offers a more succinct definition of public relations referring to it as, "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends." (p.25). So, Black (1962) argues that the fundamental purpose of public relations is to establish a two flow of mutual understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information. Therefore the work of public relation officers in this modern era is crucial to the success of any organization, and cannot be overlooked.

In view of the role public relations plays in the established information process systems of an organization, Hollensten (2004) asserts that public relations is a marketing communication function that carries out programmes designed to earn public understanding and acceptance. Public relations practitioners have a responsibility of creating and maintaining relationships.

In order to achieve this goal, publics are provided with relevant information that satisfies their requests.

Advances in computing technology have facilitated quantum leaps in communication and communication behaviour, (Greenhow and Robelia, 2009; Kenix, 2009). These changes in communication behaviour and communication practices have profound implication for corporate communicators, especially in the area of using the website as public relations tool.

Phillips (2001) posits that the practice of public relations is one such profession that has considerably been affected by this online revolution.

This has made the use of websites to become more and more important for companies and over the last few years, the Internet has become the most popular way to communicate with stakeholders such as customers, investors, employees and traditional media (Herrero and Smith, 2010). Seitel (2001, p.298) cites British futurist, Peter Cochrane, who in 1998 predicted what the world was heading towards in the 21st century by saying, "If you are not online, you don't exist." It is therefore beyond doubt that since the last decade, the Internet has evolved faster than any other communication channel and has dynamically changed lives and professions.

Companies and organizations use the Internet to communicate about their business, respond to questions from their customers and to inform them about their products in order for them to reach their prospect clients (Coombs and Holladay, 2010).

Websites play a critical role as a primary tool for communication and responding to stakeholder groups (Taylor, Kent and White, 2001). In some cases, an area of the website is specifically designed for public relations communication and may include press releases, online press kits, and other traditional public relations tools in digital format.

The Internet

The Internet is a network of computer networks. (Dominick, 2009). It is said to have been launched into major operations in the 1950's and according to White (2004), a branch of the United States government known as the Defence Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) controlled one of the country's first wide areas packet switched networks, the ARPANET. Selected research universities, military base and government labs were allowed access to the ARPANET for services like electronic mail, file transfer etc. This marked the beginning of the Internet interactivity. The American National Science Foundation funded the creation of a new high-speed, cross country network backbone called the NSFnet. This facilitated the connectivity of networks and led to the Internet which was officially launched in 1982. CompuServe was also introduced in the 1980s which allowed members to share files and access news and events and also launched what was called true interaction. It allowed people to join any CompuServe's thousands of discussion forums with thousand of other members on subjects of the day. And in 1995, what has become social networking today was born (Digital Trends Staff, 2014).

World Wide Web

While the Internet is a network of computer networks, the World Wide Web is a network of information sources incorporating hypertext that allows the user to link one piece of information to another (Dominick, 2009).

According to Seitel, (2001) the main aim of Web site is to provide information that visitors are looking for (p.384). Websites are used for various purposes by different organizations. Institutions such as schools use website for publishing research work, journals programmes, display admissions, academic information and other educational related works. According to Graphic online story published on February 10,2014 with the title "Private colleges in Ghana: The saga surrounding NAB continues", there are about forty two private universities in Ghana and out of this number, twenty-seven of them are accredited, and almost all of them have websites which they use to communicate with their publics. So Norton (1999) argues the significance of the Internet and the Web to human development and states that millions of workers, students both young and old are enjoying the unprecedented freedom and flexibility, as they read about anything they want using company resources like e-mail, network data and software companies can now create corporate relationships online instead of physically moving people or equipment in such virtual corporations.

One can say that the websites are satisfying enough because they give information about what goes on and then concerning the day to day smooth running of the various universities.

The CAUC Web site

The school's Web site was created in September, 2011. It is an active one which sends information to the various publics. It's interactive is limited as it is virtually non existing to give feedback on publications except at the "Contact us" section though the page is well organized as it hosts prominent publications published by the university.

McAllister and Taylor (2007) note that lack o interactive features that could solicit for feedback or input from key stakeholders are weaknesses limiting opportunities for public relations practitioners to collect information and monitor public opinions from individuals, as well as regional, state and federal entities.

The Web site's primary targets are students, staff and the general public. The CAUC web site is similar to most of the websites but significantly has limited colours of mainly cream background and blue banner. The texts are mainly written in black with few links that are in other colour variations. The CAUC logo, the School's name and the location is at the top of the page.

Layout

The CAUC Web site is designed in a symmetrical format similar to the design of most websites. Interestingly, there are no ads of the university about up-coming programmes and activities, except that of programmes run by the college. There are notable headings: *Home, About Us, Academics, Admissions, Students' Life, Research/Library and Contact us*. Under some of these Headings are subheadings.

For instance, under the heading, admissions there are subheadings entry requirements, *how to apply, international students, fees and scholarship*. A click on all the subheadings here

loads the required information. Notwithstanding, the subheadings under the Students Life, except accommodation, do not load any information upon a click.

White (2001) argues that the usefulness of information on a website is necessary for dialogic relationship building, because "home page often target a variety of publics and attempt to provide information of interest to each group targeted".

Links arrangement

The CAUC website is clearly and nicely categorized and easy to navigate. The links *CAUC online application, webmail, staff portal, CAC, students portal, maps and directions* are also found on the homepage.

Language

The main language used on the CAUC website is English just like the websites of other universities in the country. None of the information provided on the website has another version apart from English.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Just like other websites, especially that of other Universities, the CAUC website is supposed to be a platform that provides information and provide avenue for interaction between the University College and its various publics. On the account of some information not being available on the website although their availability have been

indicated by titles on the home page, how do students especially, and other targets of the website take the issue of information satisfaction of the college's website.

The researcher want to have better understanding of what information is published on the college website and what students and other target audience make of information published on the website.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to provide a comprehensive and evidence based information on the relevance of the Christ Apostolic University College website as a public relations tool, its interactivity and capabilities in sending and receiving information that is reliable and worth satisfying the needs of students and other stakeholders.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- To find out the nature of information satisfaction provided by the Christ Apostolic University College website to students.
- To assess how the interactive features on the website are useful in ensuring effective communication amongst students and authorities.
- To find out the information benefits that are provided by the CAUC website.

1.5 Research questions

- Does the CAUC website satisfy the information needs of students?
- What information benefits are provided by the website?
- Do interactive features on the CAUC website ensure effective communication?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study will provide the following contributions:

- Provide an understanding on the effective integration of the use of the CAUC website into the communication and information policies of CAUC.

- Provide an assessment of the CAUC website and ascertain the communication and information needs of the students of the University.

- Provide opportunity to assess which aspects of University's website needs further study to fill the information and knowledge gap.

1.7 Scope of the study

This study was conducted at Christ Apostolic University College located in Kumasi. The University is located at Kwadaso Nsuom, Kumasi and was established in 1917 by the Christ Apostolic Church as a Theology school. The university was granted accreditation on February 19th, 2010 as a private university licensed to run programmes capable of producing the human resource needed to meet the needs of the fast growing Ghanaian society. The school's Web site was created in September, 2011. They offer courses such as Diploma and post graduate certificate under faculty of education, school of business and computer science

The researchers sought to review CAUC website on information delivering and also seek for the views of the students on CAUC website communication systems as effective public relations tool.

The study began in February 2015 and was concluded within five months thus the end of the month of June 2015.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

According to Holtz (1999) the Internet has change communication forever and technology has created new channels and methods of communication to reinforce how information is disseminated in organizations. This chapter will provide a broader perspective of the use of a website as a public relations tool in order to ensure the success of institutions and enhance the work of public relations practitioners. It will throw light on some related studies that suit this current study. The chapter examined the two-way symmetrical model and the uses and gratification theories of communication to give perspective to this study.

2.1 The potential of the website as a public relations tool

The Internet has assumed great proportions of communicating information to a wider audience across the world. It is estimated that the Internet doubles in size every 11 months and the World Wide Web doubles every 53 days (Ashcroft, 2001). Dominick (2002) posits that the digital revolution has had profound impact not only on the mass media but on other institutions as well, while Kiani (1998) note that the web is now viewed as a crucial communication tool used to conduct daily business. In fact, Breittenbach & Van Doren, (1998) believe that companies without a web site are living in the past.

Esrock & Leichty, (2000) further point out that the web has the potential to revolutionize and reform the interaction between organizations and their publics. In effect, the web enables an organization to simultaneously tailor messages that address the concerns and

interests of a diverse set of people. Hurme (2001) thinks that it is vital that organizations rethink their public relations strategies and tactics to include their organizational website.

According to McAllister & Taylor(2007) the Internet gives public relations practitioners a unique opportunity to collect information, monitor public opinion on issues, and engage in direct dialogue with their publics on a variety of issues. This is affirmed by Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006, cited in Watson & Noble, 2007), who say "Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public on whom its success or failure depends."

2.2 Website as a public relation tool for education

In education, the importance of the Internet cannot be underestimated as Mentz and Whiteside (2003) explain that in this era of Information Technology, it has become the order of the day for the young generation to use the Internet to research schools and communicate with the school through online chat, email, etc. Further, they note that prospective international students research, and virtually visit universities far away from their homes, many enjoy the comfort of searching online, using the online application system to acquire in-depth information as well as communicate with schools, (Kang & Norton, 2006; Mentz &Whiteside, 2003)

According to Kang and Norton, 2006; & Liu (2007) the Web as a media technology may provide universities with an effective strategy for recruitment efforts within a limited financial resource.

Mentz & Whiteside (2003); Chapin & Fitzgerald (2002) explain the immense opportunities that the Web presents to public relations practitioners in institutions such as universities. They state that a web site provides among other things the general information about missions of the institution, goal statements, policies and services. They point out that home pages for departments expand information about academic majors and promote university recruitment while professors and students use the web pages to enrich the instructional process. They emphasis that university web sites enhance the reputation of the schools and communicate with international students and their parents across the nations. Kim et al. (2003) agree and argue that a corporation's Web site appearance, structure, and maintenance status all influence the consumer's perception of both the transaction experience and corporate image.

2.3 Public relations and corporate website

Previous works have shown the importance of the Internet and of corporate websites as tools for public relations (Hill & White, 2000; Kent, Taylor & White, 2003; White & Raman, 1999) and also the growing importance of corporate websites for communicating organizational responsibilities (Esrock & Leichy, 1998, 2000).

Galloway (2005)points out that although corporate websites, chat-rooms, email customer response facilities and electronic news release distribution are now viewed as standard aspects of public relations practice while Van der Merwe, Pitt & Abratt, (2005) say that the terrain of public relations practice is also shifting with new media bringing about substantial increases in stakeholder strength through facilitating communication within stakeholder groups and between different stakeholder groups. For stakeholders, web site

objectives include providing publics with a means through which organizations can be viewed and better understood. (Kent et al. 2003). This enhances the image of the organization as Kim et al. (2003) note that a corporation's web site appearance, structure, and maintenance status all influence the consumer's perception of both the transaction experience and corporate image.

In research on public relations and the Internet, the possibility of interactivity between the public and the organization is an issue of relevance of the possibilities that exist. Interactivity is one of the main characteristics of the Internet and has been the subject of considerable number of studies in the field of communication (Downes & McMillan, 2000; Ha & James 1998; Rafael 1988; Schultz 2000). With regards to the degree of interactivity that organizational websites have, several authors in public relations have identified two basic approaches-the dissemination of information and the generation of relationship between the different publics and the organization In the first approach, the level of interactivity is low and the use of the Internet is unidirectional, with the essential objective of diffusing information and trying to influence the image of the company that the various publics have.

In the second approach, the degree of interactivity is high and the Internet is used to make bidirectional communication easier and to establish and build relationships by allowing dialogue and interaction between the organization and its different kinds of publics.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The researchers used the theories Two-way-symmetric communication model and Uses and Gratifications theories.

2.2.1Two-way-symetrical model

Seitel (2007) states that the two-way-symmetric theory propounded by Grunig & Hunt advocates free and equal information flow between an organization and its publics, based on mutual understanding. He notes that this approach is more balanced – symmetrical – with the public relations communicator serving as a mediator between the organization and the publics.

Grunig (1989) identified the two-way symmetrical model as a way of practicing public relations through "using bargaining, negotiating, and strategies of conflict resolution to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of both the organization and its publics". Thus, Grunig regards the two-way symmetrical model as excellent public relations. Hassink, Bollen & Steggink (2007) cite several studies where symmetrical two-way communications is considered to be an important element in excellent corporate communication.

Public Relations researchers and commentators since the articulation of Grunig's model have either supported or challenged his symmetrical model on the basis of ethics and effectiveness.

First, the two-way-symmetric model makes organizational public relations more ethical

Lindeborg (1994) argues that two-way symmetrical public relations "serve as a mechanism by which organizations and publics interact to manage interdependence and conflict for the benefit of all". This means that everyone involved in the process is equal. All are needed to achieve goals. As Hurme (2001) puts it, organizations that rely on relationships with their public to achieve their goals need to solicit, consider and adjust to stakeholder communications in their public relations strategies or may cause damage to their clients/employers.

Contrary to this model, the other three models, press agentry / publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical, tend to be less ethical. As Grunig & Hunt (1984) proposed, the press agentry / publicity model is dominated by one-way, persuasive communication aimed at manipulating audience attitudes and behaviors, while the public information practitioner provides accurate information about an organization to the public but does not volunteer negative information. These two models establish communication as one-directional from organization to public.

Grunig & Hunt (1984) emphasize that by promoting bonds of mutual trust between the organization and its publics by empowering them to shape and collaborate on organizational goals through feedback, the organization-public relationship is strengthened.

Kiani (1998) reveals the significance of the web to enhancing the two-way-symmetrical model when he stated that the web has made available a shift from one-way to two-way information flows between producers and consumers, from the conventional "one-to-many" communication model to the "many-to-many" model. Again, he states that the basis for the powerful opportunities provided in an interactive medium, as opposed to a one-way medium, is the potential to provide mutual communication.(Kiani, 1998)

The public relations practitioners need to break away from the more traditional 'information dissemination' and 'two-way asymmetrical' models of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) where the objective was to disseminate controlled organisational messages or to indulge in discussion that was more persuasive in nature and increasingly adopt the 'two-way symmetric' model that emphasizes the importance of balanced engagement to build long lasting relationships with the target publics.

Second, the two-way symmetrical model makes organizations more effective.

From a directional perspective, two-way symmetrical model allows for the exchange of information – information flows freely between systems, such as organizations, publics, managements, and employees (Lindeborg 1994). Grunig presents some reasons why a two-way symmetrical relationship is best including (1) there are no clear boundaries between organizations and other systems due to free flow of information; (2) conflicts will be resolved through negotiation and communication due to thoughts of cooperation and mutual benefits; and (3) the input of all people, including employees, is valued as cited in Lindeborg (1994).

On the contrary, asymmetrical communication "leaves the organization as is and tries to change the public" (Grunig, 1992). It can be generalized then that organizations will become much more effective through two-way symmetrical public relations than through one-way communication or asymmetrical positions. In relation to applying this model to Internet communication, Kent &Taylor, (1998) state that organizations should design Web sites to facilitate real dialogue between the organization and its stakeholders. Moreover, utilizing the interactive capabilities of a web page has been noted as a key to getting users to not only visit a site but also return. Watson et al (1998) the strength of a web site lies in its ability to interact with visitors on the first visit and thereafter.

Breitenbach & Van Doren (1998) advise PR practitioners that Web site must provide users with a forum that supports two-way communication; there should be places where users can make requests and get immediate results. Kim et al. (2003) believe that web sites have the capacity to improve communication amongst the organization, its leadership, and other publics, including providing for customer service communication and feedback (such as emails).

Kent (1998) maintains that the availability of a dialogic or feedback loop in organizational Web sites may be the single most important reason that a Web site exists. Dialogic communication is the process of open and negotiated dialogue and is characterized by give and take of all parties involved. Maintaining an effective dialogic loop means more than just having an email address for a Webmaster and a place for visitors to leave "comments"

on a Web site. In contrast, this requires open channels of communication and a commitment by organizations to value the ideas of publics.

Gordon & MacIntosh (2000) as referenced in Ascroft & Hoey, (2001), describe the potential benefits of this interactive medium:

"The fact the Internet is an interactive medium is the key to the use public relation professionals can make of it. It gives [PR professionals] the chance to engage with audiences in ways previously unknown. Traditional top down one-way communication enables broad, but shallow, relationships with large numbers of people. Networking events, conferences and briefing meetings allow rich relationships with small numbers of people. The potential of the internet is to enable rich relationships with broad numbers and to target audiences at low marginal cost."

The arguments espoused show how public relations practitioners can maximize the potential of the website as a public relations tool by giving bases for what the study should focus on.

The principles of this communication model would help the researchers research into the communication mode the Christ Apostolic University College presents and how it is enhancing public relations practice.

2.2.2 Uses and Gratification Theory

The researchers adopted the users and gratification theory for this study. According to O'Donohoe, (1994) uses and gratification theory espouses gratifications and benefits that

attract and hold audiences to various media types and content that satisfy their social and psychological needs.

The basic assumptions of the approach, McQuail (2005) are as follows:

- Media and content choice is generally rational and directed towards certain specific goals and satisfactions

- Audience members are conscious of the media-related needs which arise in personal (individual) and social (shared) circumstances and can voice these in terms of motivations.

- Personal utility is a more significant determinant of audience formation than aesthetic or cultural factors.

- All or most of the relevant factors for audience formation (motives, perceived or obtained satisfactions, media choices, background variables) can, in principle be measured

In line with these assumptions, the process of media selection was described by Katz et al. (1974, as cited in McQuail, 2005, p425) as being concerned with:

- The social and psychological origins of

- Needs which generate

- Expectations of

- The mass media or other sources which lead to

- Different exposure (or engaging in other activities), resulting in

- Need gratification and

- Other consequences.

The academic literature indicates a range of challenges ahead for public relations practitioners. They may need to design virtual experiences that stimulate feelings as connectedness, involvement, appreciation and meaningfulness (Galloway 2005). O'Donohoe (1994)posits that the uses and gratification theory is a study of gratifications or benefits that attract and hold audiences to various types of media and the types of content that satisfy their social and psychological needs.

McQuail, Blumler & Brown, (1972) explain that audience could utilize the media to gratify a number of needs: diversion (escape and entertainment); personal relationship needs (social interaction); personal identity needs (character identification and value reinforcement); and surveillance needs (information accumulation). Abercrombie, (1996) acknowledges that the uses and gratifications approach accommodated an understanding of audience members as active agents within a social network rather than fragmented individuals within a monolithic mass. Furthermore, the model acknowledges media content and how attitude change extends to include the audience's knowledge, behaviour, beliefs and value systems.

According to Holtz, (2002) the consumers in the information age are more aware and demanding, therefore, their satisfaction has become the key to organisational success. So Day (1997) & Huizingh, (2002) posit that a Web site works because the people it serves like it. Thus, research is needed to explore Web site's 'likeability' factors, so that marketers can understand how those factors can be controlled and their effectiveness monitored.

The basic assumptions of the uses and gratification theory were used by the researchers for this study to assess the satisfaction of students of CAUC of the content of the school's website which involves information, features and page design.

2.3 Related Studies

A study conducted by Chung, Lee & Humphrey (2010) explored the extent to which universities utilize the benefits of the web to reach one of their major public relations goals to increase international student recruitment . The study compared the content of the websites of the US, the UK, and South Korean universities in terms of information quality and system quality. A total of 261 websites were analysed based on their contents in the study. Most of the three countries' universities use their websites as an effective tool to utilize various public relations performances such as information providers. But, they are not effectively using the web to connect with their publics in terms of two-way communication and interactivities.

In a study by Jaka Lindic (2006) on how corporations use the Internet for public relations, it was revealed in the findings that all the 50 analysed corporations had a web site. Most of them (38) used more than one technology. Lindic (2006) further explains in her study that companies using more than two technologies usually use different technologies to support PR with different groups. But there seem to be some rules. Typically job seekers are supported with a web site describing corporation's policies towards its employees and the listing of job opportunities. Most of these web sites also offer a web form where a candidate can post his or her resume and apply for a job. Some corporations, e.g. Siemens and Deutsche Telekom, use technology to form and strengthen relationships with suppliers.

The corporations under study primarily use the web site and the e-mail as communication tools. The analysis also showed a very poor usage of the wide spectrum of opportunities. Strategic use of the internet has clearly empowered and enhanced the role of public relations practitioners

In another study conducted by Adugu, Boareasa-Fofie & Desmond, (2013) which assessed the Christian Service College website as a public relations tool, the researchers found out that majority of the student respondents (59.4%) expressed their satisfaction with information needs or requirement. The study revealed that the University College is making good use of the web site as an effective tool in ensuring good relationship with students as respondents stated that the school's website is an effective tool in enhancing the relationship between students and the University College, and enhances their campus experience with 91.1% and 81.2% respectively.

A research done by Deepti & Bhargava, (2010) on the use of the Internet in public relations and its impact on the practice explored the trends in the application of various Internet tools in the public relations practice of New Zealand and the impact these have on certain key aspects of the practice such as skills, encroachment, gender balance and ethics. The researcher collected data from one hundred and thirty three (133) survey respondents and ten (10) participants interviewed. The findings revealed that there are considerable online tools in the New Zealand public relations practice that enhance the work of the public relations practitioner.

The above studies helped the researchers to properly assess the Christ Apostolic University College website as a public relations tool as they have evaluated how previous studies were carried out and findings that came out.

The study revealed the impact that the CAUC website is having on the students in terms of information needs and how communication and content on the website can be improved to the benefit of the students and the authorities CAUC.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A scientific study should have a defined methodology of data collection. This chapter outlines the methodology that will be used in the collection of quantitative data. The study makes use of the quantitative approach to data collection. According to Aliaga & Gunderson, (2000) quantitative research explains phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics). Further, Shao (1999) posits that quantitative research uses mathematical measures and statistical techniques to determine relationships and differences among large samples of target population. This chapter covers the study population, sample size, sample method, research design, data collection method, data collection plan, data analysis plan and ethical considerations.

3.2 Study population

The students of Christ Apostolic University College form the study population for this study. Students Admission statistics was obtained from the Registrar's office for the 2014/2015 academic year and it is tabulated below.

Table 3.1 Registration statistics of students for 2014 – 2015 academic year.

Programme	Level	Total	Total number	percentage
Business Administration	100	100	306	48.9%
	200	88		
	300	68		
	400	50		
Theology	100	82	158	25.2%
	200	20		
	300	19		
	400	37		
Accounting, information, systems	100	15	52	8.3%
	200	36		
	300	1		
	400	0		
Communication and design	100	5	110	17.6%
	200	100		
	300	5		
Grand total		**626**	**626**	**100%**

Students admission statistics obtained from Mr. John Amankwah Kelly, Assistant Registrar CAUC

3.3 Accessible population

The accessible population for the study is the total number of students in levels 100 and 200 for the various programmes run by the University. From the data obtained from the Christ Apostolic University College, the total enrolment of levels 100 and 200 students for all the programmes, is 446 out of a total of 626 students. Levels 100 and 200 students were selected as the accessible population for the study based on the fact that the programmes Accounting, Information Systems and Communication Design do not have enrolment for level 400. Again, only one student was pursuing Accounting, Information Systems at level 300. The researchers believe that using students admitted to levels 100 and 200 would allow for fair representation of students across the various programmes run by the University College.

3.4 Research design

Research design deals with a logical problem and not logistical problem (Yin, 1989). Descriptive research design has been adopted for this study. This research design describes characteristics of a group in a given situation and gives some understanding of the nature of the problem. It usually asks the question what? and who uses what, when, where, why, how (Marsh, 1982). To effect, it establishes the causal relationship between variables as it seeks to give better understanding of the phenomenon – that is, Christ Apostolic website as Public Relations tool.

3.5 Research method

This study used the quantitative research approach. Marsh (1982) argues that quantitative surveys can provide information and explanations that are adequate at the level of meaning. This research approach helped this study to find information and explain the use of CAUC web site as a public relations tool.

3.6 Sampling technique

The Sampling method uses the probability sampling technique. Probability sampling is a sampling process that utilizes some form of random selection. In probability sampling, each unit is drawn with known probability (Yamane, 1967) or has a nonzero chance of being selected in the sample (Raj, 1972). Considering the population obtained, the researchers settled on both systematic random and stratified sapling techniques to arrive at the data quantitatively. Salant (1994) posits that simple random sampling, systematic sampling, and stratified sampling fall into the category of simple sampling techniques. Complex sampling techniques are used, only in the presence of large experimental data sets; when efficiency is required; and, while making precise estimates about relatively small groups, within large population.

Stratified sampling: The researchers, in the process of arriving at the sample size, divided the accessible population into strata using the stratified sampling process. The stratified sampling process ensures all inclusiveness, giving the researchers a tool to deal with the inherent biases and challenges associated with systematic random sampling and sample

size (Cochran, 1963; Trochim). The stratification was done on the four programmes run by the University College.

The Systematic Random sampling technique is a systematic sample with a random start. With this sampling technique, the nth element in the total list is chosen and every nth element thereafter (Cochran 1963; Yamane, 1967). The systematic pattern follows once the starting point is determined.

The study focused on respondents selected from levels 100 and 200 of all the four programmes run by the University based on the statistics records obtained from the University's registry. The data obtained on Accounting Information System and Communication/Design, levels 300 and 400, does not support inclusiveness. The statistics obtained for both programmes at both levels are 1, 0, and 5, 0 respectively.

The information obtained quantitatively from the respondents gave credible outcome of the study as the sample size was a fair representation of students' enrolment. Again, level 100 students used the web site as a resource for information in choosing preferred programmes and other information needs about the school, programmes and admission.

The number of questionnaires administered to the students of the various programmes was considered based on their representation in the accessible population. A total number of 35 questionnaires were administered to Business Administration students because of its representation which is 42.6% of the accessible population and was shared between levels 100 and 200 students. Also, 17 questionnaires representing 22.9% were administered to

Theology students and shared between the selected levels; while 10 questionnaires were

issued to Accounting Information System and 18 (23.6%) questionnaires were administered

to Communication and Design to be completed.

For the purposes of this study, the sampling interval was arrived at by dividing the sample

size by the total number of questionnaire.

Sample interval = sampling size ÷total number of questionnaire

Table 3.2 shows the calculation of the sample interval for the department and levels to be

considered.

PROGRAMME	LEVEL	SAMPLING FRACTION	SAMPLING INTERVAL
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	100	100/20	5
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	200	88/15	6
THEOLOGY	100	82/13	6
THEOLOGY	200	20/4	5
ACCOUNTING, INFORMATION, SYSTEMS	100	15/3	5
ACCOUNTING, INFORMATION, SYSTEMS	200	36/7	5

COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN	100	5/2	2
COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN	200	100/16	6

3.7 Sample size

The confidence level and confidence interval for the study was 95% and 9.9 respectively for the accessible population of 446. The sample size for the study will be 80 which is 17.9% of the accessible population.

3.8 Data collection method

In order to ensure that the study was done within the limited time and have 100% return of the questionnaires administered, the 80 questionnaires were administered to the respondents who were not allowed to take them away to be completed but completed filling the questionnaires and collected them at the same time. The questions were designed in both open and closed ended question format.

3.9 Data collection instrument

Administered questionnaires would be coded to simplify the analysis process. A Likert scale is used in the data collection. This scale consist of a number of statement to express either favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the given object to with the respondent is asked to react (Kathari, 2003).

The data analysis software- statistical package for Social Services (SPSS) was used to input data collected on a computer. The SPSS was used to generate tables, graphs charts etc to help with the analysis of the data.

3.10 Ethical consideration

The researchers formally negotiated access to have the respondents given questionnaires to be completed. Respondents were assured of confidentiality of information given after the purpose of study explained to them.

Since plagiarism is an offense in the university, the researchers did not perpetuate it and did acknowledge all the sources of information used.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the data analysis and presentation of results based on the research questions for the study. The study was conducted to gather information to the following research question:

- Does the CAUC website satisfy student information needs?

- How interactive is the CAUC website to the students?

- Do interactive features on the CAUC website ensure effective communication?

The chapter looks at the demographics of the respondents before delving into the issues about the use of the Christ Apostolic University College website as a public relation tool. The researchers used the Descriptive research design for this study and came up with descriptive statistics such as tables and pie charts using the computer programme, Statistical Package for Social Sciences in the analysis of the data. The researchers had a 100% return rate of 80 questionnaires administered but 97.5% response rate as two questionnaires were returned not filled.

4.1 Demographics of respondents

4.1.1 Gender

The respondents comprised male and female students of the Christ Apostolic University College, CAUC. The researchers found it necessary to find out which gender dominated the respondents for this research.

Table 4.1.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender

Categories		Frequency	Percent%
	Male	43	55.1
	Female	35	44.9
	Total	78	100.0

From table 4.1, 55.13 percent representing more than half of the respondents were males. This result indicates that the respondents for this study are dominated by males. However, the gender outcome is not key to the study as the focus was on describing students' assessment of the CAUC website.

4.2 Age

According to Lyons (2004) the Internet usage is popular among the young adults. Knowledge about age groups and internet behavior could help in the development of content of a website.

Table 4.2 *Age Distribution of Respondents*

Categories		Frequency	Percent%
	18-21	12	15.4
	22-25	40	51.3
	26-30	23	29.5
	31 or above	3	3.8
	Total	78	100.0

Table 4.2 shows that students between the ages of 18 to 25, representing about two-thirds of the respondents form majority of the population who visit the CAUC website. This would help researchers and CAUC authorities to know about the responses of the young people in levels 100 and 200 to key questions in the research.

4.3 Academic level

The study found it important to gather information about the academic level of the respondents. It would help to know the number of students in an academic level and their responses to key questions.

Table 4.3 Academic Level

categories		Frequency	Percent%
	100	29	37.2
	200	49	62.8
	Total	78	100.0

Majority of respondents 62.8 percent constituting more than half of the population were in level 200 while 37.2 percent of the respondents were in level 100. The figures obtained are the true reflection of the enrolment representation of the school as level 200 has total enrolment of 244 representing more than one-third of the total enrolment at Christ Apostolic University College.

4.4 Responses to frequency of visits to website

According to Breitenbach & Van Doren (1998) Watson et al. (1998) the success in the electronic marketplace is due in part to understanding how to attract and lure potential customers into repeatedly visiting a company's web site. This situation creates an opportunity for the public relations practitioner to engage clients on regular bases.

Esrock & Leichty, 2000; Kent & Taylor 1998, argue that organizations' strength in the web space is to facilitate real dialogue between the organization and its stakeholders. The researchers thus assessed the frequency of visits to the websites by students to find out if majority of students visit the website occasionally or regularly.

Table 4.4 Response of visits to website

Website Visit		Frequency	Percent%
	Daily	15	19.2
	Weekly	34	43.6
	Monthly	21	26.9
	Yearly	7	9.0
	Other	1	1.3
	Total	78	100.0

Respondents' response to frequency of visits to CAUC website shows that majority, representing 43.59% of the students visit the website weekly; 26.92% visit the school's website monthly; and 19.23 percent visit the CAUC website daily.

4.5 Responses to time spent on website

Gordon & MacIntosh (2000), as referenced in Ashcroft & Hoey (2001) note that one of the main benefits of a website is the fact that the Internet is an interactive medium that the public relations officer can chance to engage audiences in ways previously unknown. How long a customer stays on a website offers the PR officer an opportunity to engage them.

Table 4.5 Time spent on website

Category	Frequency	Percent%
less than 30 minutes	37	47.4
between 30 minutes and 60 minutes	35	44.9
between 1 hour and 1 hour 30 minutes	5	6.4
between 1 hour and 2 hours	1	1.3
Total	78	100.0

Majority of the respondents (47.4 %) representing almost half spend the shortest time on the CAUC website with less than 30 minutes. One respondent representing 1.3% spends the longest time on the CAUC website spending between 1 and 2 hours.

4.6 Responses to finding information needed on website

According to Watson et al. (1998) a web site can be very attractive to existing customers by directly meeting information needs. Hallahan (2001) points out that if a customer of an organizations' website finds trouble locating desired information, it could become problematic for the organization.

Table 4.6 Finding needed information on the website

Responses		Frequency	Percent%
	Yes	46	59.0
	No	32	41.0
	Total	78	100.0

Majority, representing more than half of the respondents answered that they do find the information they need on the website. The result is similar to the responses of a similar research conducted at Christian Service University College which showed 59.4% of the respondents answered "Yes" to finding information they need on the CSUC website (Adugu, Boareasa-Fofie & Desmond 2013).

4.7 Responses to pages respondents find engaging in content and design

Ashcroft & Hoey (2001); Breitenbach & Van Doren, (1998) argue that web sites should provide dynamic, engaging, value-adding experiences for users; they should never be repositories for passive, static marketing information. The study therefore sought to find out which pages of the CAUC website respondents find engaging in content and design.

Table 4.7 Pages of Website Engaging in Content and Design

Categories	Frequency	Percent%
About us	18	23.1
Academics	24	30.8
Students	27	34.6
Admissions	9	11.5
Total	78	100.0

Table 4.7 of the response as to which page of the website the respondents find design and content engaging shows that majority of students find the "Students" page engaging with 30.8 % showing approval for "Academics" page. Respondents representing 11.5% of the said the Admissions page was engaging in content and design. In other words about one-third of the students find the "Students" page of the CAUC website engaging.

4.8 Responses to accuracy of website information

According to Helitzer (2001) all information contained in a Web site must be brief, timely, accurate, updated often, contain strong graphic design, and offer click-through links. Ashcroft & Hoey (1998) add that it leads to user satisfaction, assuming the information ultimately obtained is complete, accurate and relevant. In other words, accuracy of information provided at the website is important to visitors. The study sought to find out about the accuracy of information on the CAUC website.

Table 4.8 responses on website information accuracy

Categories		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Agree	11	14.1
	Agree	43	55.1
	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	21	26.9
	Disagree	3	3.8
	Total	78	100.0

Table 4.8 above shows that majority of the respondents with a cumulative percent of 69.2 indicated that the information on the CAUC website is accurate whereas 3.8% of the respondents disagreed that information on the website are accurate. Based on assertion by majority of students, the website is beneficial in the provision of accurate information. With this approval coming from the students, CAUC authorities appear to be fulfilling a good cause.

4.9 Responses to how current information on the website is.

According to Hallahan (2001) successful Web sites are those to which people return frequently, in turn placing a high importance on the addition of new content and frequent updates to permanent content. Thus, updating website content to be abreast of time gets people to return to the site frequently. Based on how current website information is can influence the number of visitors to CAUC website frequently.

Table 4.9 Responses to how current the information on the website is.

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	7	9.0
Agree	24	30.8
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	25	32.1
Disagree	21	26.9
Strongly Disagree	1	1.3
Total	78	100.0

Majority of respondents 32.1% representing about one-third of the responses could not determine whether information carried on CAUC website is current or not. Respondents of 39.7% representing more than one-third of the respondents indicated that the information on the CAUC website is current whereas 28.2% of the respondents stating that the information on the website is not current.

4.10 Responses to CAUC website satisfying information needs of students.

The study sought to find out how the CAUC website satisfies the information needs of students. As Watson et al. (1998) put it, a web site can be very attractive to existing customers by directly meeting information needs. An organization meeting the information needs of existing and prospective customers would give reason to why people should visit the website regularly. It was important to assess whether CAUC website is able to satisfy the information needs of students.

Table 4.10 Responses to CAUC Website satisfies information needs students.

Categories		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Agree	3	3.8
	Agree	33	42.3
	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	28	35.9
	Disagree	13	16.7
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.3
	Total	78	100.0

Table 4.10 shows that majority of respondents representing more than two-fifth of the responses agree that the school's website satisfies their information needs with 18% showing disapproval.

4.11 Responses to difficulty in website navigation

According to, Hallahan, (2001) assert that ease of navigation is important and that users should be allowed to move easily from page to page, aided by navigational devices such as navigation bars and icons, color and typographic coding, backlinks to tops of documents and main pages and simplified main menus. The study assesses whether the navigational devices on the CAUC website aid visitors to easily navigate pages on the website.

Table 4.11 Website navigation

	Categories	Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Agree	5	6.4
	Agree	17	21.8
	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	26	33.3
	Disagree	27	34.6
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.6
	Total	78	100.0

Majority of the respondents representing more than one-third indicated that it is not difficult to navigate the website. Nonetheless, 29.5 % agree that navigating the CAUC website is difficult.

4.12 Finding information quickly on the website

According to Hallahan (2001) Ashcroft & Hoey (2001); Kent (1998) posit that it is important that the site allows for quick selections of desired items and timely decisions, avoiding items that require excessive loading time, long scrolls of text, or huge menus of choices. Hallahan (2001) again maintains that regardless of how interesting or pertinent a Web site's content might be to prospective users, the information's utility will be diminished if the content cannot be accessed quickly, easily, and in a way that is subjectively pleasing.

Table 4.12 Responses to finding information quickly on the website

Categories		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Agree	5	6.4
	Agree	29	37.2
	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	33	42.3
	Disagree	11	14.1
	Total	78	100.0

From Table 4.12, majority of students 42.3% representing about two-fifth of the respondents stated that they neither agree nor disagree that the information on the website can quickly be accessed on the CAUC website. A cumulative of 43.6% of the respondents agree that information is quickly found on CAUC's website while 14.1% f the respondents disagree that they can quickly find what they need on the University's website.

4.13 Responses to the CAUC website attractiveness

In order to get people visit a website page, it is important to build website pages that are attractive and engaging in the perspective of the target audience. This could allow audience to frequent the website page, not when they think they need something that can possibly be found on the page. According Kim et al. (2003), a corporation's web site appearance, structure, and maintenance status all influence the consumer's perception of both the transaction experience and corporate image. This study deemed it necessary to find out whether the students of CAUC find the school's website attractive.

Table 4.13 Responses to website attractiveness

Categories		Frequency	Percent
		1	1.3
	Strongly Agree	10	12.8
	Agree	50	64.1
	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	11	14.1
	Disagree	6	7.7
	Total	78	100.0

Table 4.13 shows that majority of respondents collated, with cumulative of 78.2% representing about fourth-fifth of the responses noted with approval that CAUC website is attractive. 7.7% of the respondents disagreed. From the analysis t is clear that the sample gathered show that CAUC website is attractive.

4.14 Responses to Facebook and Twitter interactivity features on CAUC website.

According to Van der Merwe, Pitt & Abratt, (2005) the terrain of public relations practice is shifting with new media bringing about substantial increases in stakeholder strength through facilitating communication within stakeholder groups and between different stakeholder groups. The researchers found it necessary to find whether facebook and twitter ensure interactivity between CAUC authorities and students.

Table 4.14 Facebook and Twitter ensure interactivity between authorities and students

Facebook and Twitter ensure interactivity between authorities and students	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	1	1.3
Agree	15	19.2
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	47	60.3
Disagree	13	16.7
Total	78	100.0

Responses by respondents as shown in Table 4.14 points out that majority of students representing more than half (60.3%) were indecisive in affirming whether Facebook and twitter features enable interactivity. A cumulative percent of 23.1 of the respondents agree that the Facebook and twitter links on the CAUC website page ensure interactivity between the University's authorities and students whereas 16.6% of the respondents disagree to the statement.

4.15 Responses to Facebook and Twitter interactivity features on the website

Utilizing the interactive capabilities of a Web page has been noted as a key to getting users to not only visit a site but also to return (Esrock & Leichty, 2000). The interactivity of a website tend to establish rich relationships at a lesser cost as Gordon & MacIntosh (2000)

reveal, the potential of the Internet is to enable rich relationships with broad numbers and to target audiences at low marginal cost. Thus, the researchers found it important to establish whether Facebook and twitter links on the CAUC website ensure interactivity among students.

Table 4.15 Facebook and Twitter ensure interactivity among students

Facebook and Twitter ensure interactivity among students	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	6	7.7
Agree	24	30.8
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	38	48.7
Disagree	8	10.3
Strongly Disagree	2	2.6
Total	78	100.0

Table 4.15 indicates that majority of the students representing about half of the respondents could not state whether both Facebook and Twitter promote interactivity among the CAUC students. A cumulative of 38.4% agreed that Facebook and twitter links on the CAUC website ensure interactivity among students with 12.9% stating outright disapproval.

4.16 Respondents responses to the website as a primary source of information for enrollment

The Web as a media technology that may provide universities with an effective strategy for recruitment efforts within a limited financial resource Prospective students, wherever they are, can access information on the website of a school in order to make a decision on enrolment within a little space of time and cost (Kang & Norton, 2006; Liu, 2007). It is important to establish from this study whether students use the CAUC website as the primary source of information in their enrolment decisions.

Table 4.16 Primary Source of Information for enrolment

Categories	Frequency	Percent
	1	1.3
Strongly Agree	19	24.4
Agree	17	21.8
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	17	21.8
Disagree	17	21.8
Strongly Disagree	7	9.0
Total	78	100.0

The table 4.16 shows that majority of the respondents, 47.4% said that information on the CAUC website was primary source of information for deciding to enroll at the University. A cumulative of respondents, 30.80% disagreed that the information on the University's

website was a primary source of information for their decision to enroll. Thus a good number of the students representing about half of the respondents depended on other sources to make that decision.

4.17 Responses to website mode of communication

Lindeborg (1994) says that two-way symmetrical public relations create a mechanism by which organizations and publics interact to manage interdependence and conflict for the benefit of all and critical for the survival of the organization. This mode of communication helps authorities to know the opinions of clients and work towards satisfying their information needs. Thus, the study sought to establish the mode of communication on the CAUC website.

Table 4.17 Two-way communication between authorities of CAUC and students

Two way communication between students and authorities	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	2	2.6
Agree	16	20.5
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	32	41.0
Disagree	27	34.6
Strongly Disagree	1	1.3
Total	78	100.0

Majority of the respondents representing more than one-third as indicated in table 4.17 neither agreed nor disagreed that the mode of communication on the CAUC website ensures two-way communication between the students and authorities. A cumulative of

23.1% of the respondents agreed that communication on the school's website promote two-way communication while about one-third of the respondents disagreed.

4.18 Responses to one-way communication on website

The traditional top-down one-way communication enables broad, but shallow, relationships with large numbers of people, argue Gordon & MacIntosh, (2000). This shallow relationship asserted by Gordon & MacIntosh limits feedback from visitors to the website which is important for the authorities to know how to engage them for a dialogic relationship though the model promotes relationships with large numbers of people.

Table 4.18 response to one way mode of Communication on website

|	Categories	Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Agree	6	7.7
	Agree	36	46.2
	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	27	34.6
	Disagree	8	10.3
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.3
	Total	78	100.0

Table 4.18 shows that a majority of respondents representing 53.9% stated that the mode of communication on the university's website is one-way communication while 11.6% disagreed with the statement. This is a confirmation of the earlier results which indicate

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that majority of the respondents disagree that the mode of communication on the school's website promote two-way communication.

4.19 Responses to additional interactive features on the website

Kent & Taylor (1998) state that organizations should design Web sites to facilitate real dialogue between the organization and its stakeholders. Moreover, utilizing the interactive capabilities of a Web page has been noted as a key to getting users to not only visit a site but also to return. The researchers found it necessary to find out from the students of CAUC whether other features should be added to the features on the school's website.

Figure 4.1 Adding interactive features to the website
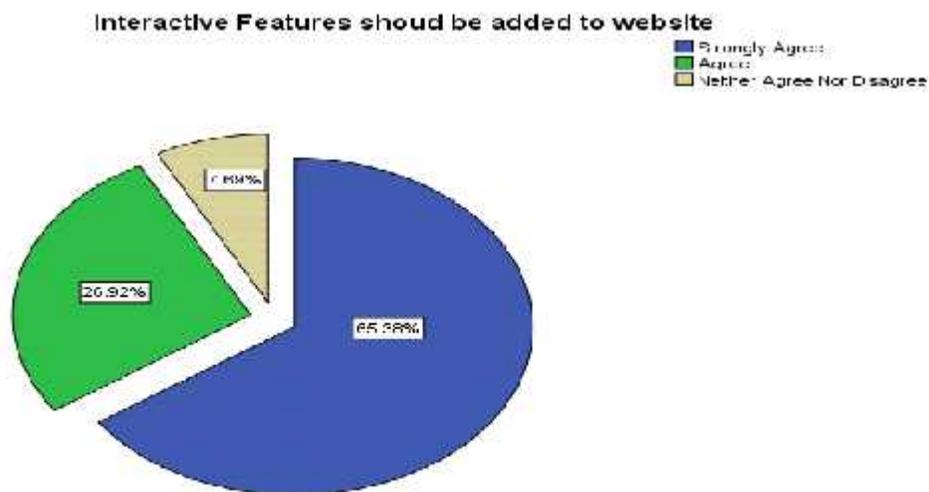
Respondents representing more than forth-fifth of the students of CAUC want more interactive features to be added to the website. The percentage of the respondents who want more interactive features to be added to the website shows that consideration must be given to incorporating those features on the CAUC website.

4.20 Responses to the engaging and interesting nature of the website

The stories published on an organizations website must be interesting and engaging in order to have people visit the website frequently. So, it is only right for the researchers to find out what respondents think about the stories on the university's website.

Table 4.20 Responses to stories on website interesting and engaging

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	3.8
Agree	39	50.0
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	25	32.1
Disagree	11	14.1
Total	78	100.0

As observed from table 4.20, majority of the respondents representing half of the responses indicated that the website's stories are interesting and engaging. Less than one-five of the respondents disagreed. This is an indication that the authorities are meeting the information needs of the students of CAUC.

4.21 Responses to enhancing the CAUC website with additional features

Ashcroft and Hoey (2001) posit that to engage and attract visitors to a website it is important to add new content and features that provide information to visitors. The researchers sought to find out what features needed to be added to the CAUC website from the respondents.

Table 4.21 Additional features to be added onto the website

	Categories	Frequency	Percent
	profile of lecturers	18	23.1
	students research projects	39	50.0
	research activities of lecturers	15	19.2
	job opportunities	6	7.7
	Total	78	100.0

More than half of the respondents indicated that students' research projects should be available on the CAUC website. About one-fifth of the respondents wanted profile of lecturers to be published on the website followed by research activities of lecturers and job opportunities. Thus, the features on the CAUC website are not in meeting the information needs of the students.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The study was conducted to assess the Christ Apostolic university College website as a public relations tool. The study was carried out around these objectives:

- To find out the nature of information satisfaction provided by the CAUC website
- To assess the interactive nature of the website
- To find out the benefits the website offers to student

This study was based on two communication theories: two-way symmetrical and the uses and gratification theories. The principles and assumptions of these theories were the bases for assessing the CAUC website as a public relations tool.

Based on the objectives and theories this study considered, the following research questions were formulated:

- Does the website satisfy information needs of students?
- How interactive is the website?
- Do students find the website beneficial?

The responses given by those who access the CAUC website as public relations tool were analyzed in terms that enhance the understanding of the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The key findings of the analysis of data in the previous chapter were:

5.2.1 Time spent on website

The researchers sought to find out the time students spend on the CAUC website and the frequency of their visit to the website. The primary public of the University's website are the students and it is meant to meet their information needs. The time students spend on the website and the frequency of their visit to the website could be influenced by whether information on the website meets their information needs. The researchers found out that majority of the respondent spend about an hour on the website. A cumulative of 92.31% spend up to an hour on the website. This is good for a generation of youth who spend more time on the other sites on the Internet for social activities. The researchers again found out that majority of the respondents visit the website within a week with a cumulative of 62.81% but a significant number of the respondents, 26.92% said they visit the website monthly. This cannot be attributed to the medium they use to access the website as majority of the respondents indicated that they use mobile devices such as laptops, tablets and mobile phones which allows them to access the website from everywhere and whenever so far as there is Internet connectivity.

5.2.2 Website information accuracy

Integrity and reputation is important in public relations practice hence information published on the school's website should be accurate. The findings showed that majority of the respondents believe the information published on the CAUC website is accurate. About two-thirds (62.9 %) of the respondents said information on the school's website is accurate with only 3.8 % who disagreed that the information published on the website is accurate. As McQuail (2005) asserted in his principles of uses and gratification that media and

content choice is generally rational and directed towards certain specific goals and satisfactions

5.2.3 Attractive nature of the website

A website's attractiveness is key to visitors developing likeness for the Website and the continuous use of the website by those who visit. Li, (2005) asserts that the more attractive a website is, the easier it will be for the individual to learn how to use it and more likely to continue to use it. More than two-thirds of the respondents (78.2%) believe the University College's website is attractive. Notwithstanding, 1.7 % disagreed.

5.2.4 Interactivity of the website

Mentz & Whiteside (2003) have explained that in this era of Information Technology, it has become the order of the day for the young generation to use the Internet to research schools and communicate with the school through online chat, email. The researchers sought to find out whether the interactive features of Facebook and Twitter on the CAUC website promote interactivity between students and CAUC authorities, and among students. Respondents, 23.1 % said Facebook and Twitter links on the website ensure interactivity as significant number of the respondents (16.6%) said the links do not promote interactivity. Thus the researchers' objective of assessing the interactivity of the CAUC website has proven not to be interactive enough as indicated by the respondents.

5.2.5 Satisfaction of information needs

The success of the Christ Apostolic University College depends hugely on its information management and that makes the University's website, one of its information apparatus,

crucial in providing information services to its core public. Holtz, (2002) says that the consumers in the information age are more aware and demanding, therefore, their satisfaction has become the key to organisational success. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents expressed that the website satisfies their information needs which was an objective of this study though 39.74% disagreed.

5.2.6 Features to enhance CAUC website page

The responses from the respondents show that a lot more features should be added to the CAUC web page to satisfy students' information needs. All the list of features put on the questionnaire received high frequencies to be added on the website. Students' research projects received the highest frequency with 23.81 percent, followed by job opportunities with 15.48 percent and Examination results also with 15.48 percent while lecture time table received the least frequency with 9.52 percent. Thus, though majority of the respondents have indicated that the CAUC website satisfy their information, more features should be added to the website page to ensure that students do not rely on other sources to satisfy their information needs about the University.

5.3 Discussion

The researchers' findings revealed that the Christ Apostolic University College website has the potential to be an effective and efficient public relations tool. The public relations department of the university is yet to make use of the full potential the CAUC website presents as an effective public relations tool. Especially, in the areas of mode of communication, interactive features and other information features that will inure to the

satisfaction of students information needs as established by the findings of the study. Generally, the researchers are convinced that the CAUC website has largely been an effective public relations tool as majority of the students agreed that the website satisfy their information needs. The research findings also affirmed that the Christ Apostolic University College website satisfies the needs of the majority of students. Majority of the sampled students see the school's website as a useful source of information.

The researchers observed that the study affirms the two-way-symmetric theory of communication as a model that engages and enhance interactivity between publics and management for mutual benefits. This is because, the study revealed majority of the students indicated that communication on the CAUC website is one-way as against minority who said it is two-way. The students affirmed the communication nature of the CAUC website by indicating that interactive features on the website do not promote enough interactivity. The results also affirm the principle behind the Uses and Gratification theory about the patronage of a medium and the benefits the medium provides.

5.4 Limitation of the study

The researchers used a sample population of 80 for a population of a little over 600 for the entire Christ Apostolic University College. The researchers faced a challenge with enrollment for some of the programmes at levels 300 and 400. As a result of this, the researchers were limited to gathering data for the research from only levels 100 and 200. This is seen as a weakness because the views of students who have stayed longer, comparatively, in the school could not be sampled.

5.5 Recommendations

) Hurme (2001) thinks that it is vital that organizations rethink their public relations strategies and tactics to include their organizational website.

) In line with the finding of the research, the researchers put forward the following recommendations: the authorities of the University should consider including more interactive features on the website to encourage dialogic relationship helping students to interact well among themselves and also between the students, lecturers and management online.

) Again, a redesign of the website should have the following additional features: student research project, job opportunities or vacancies, research activities of lecturers, profile of lecturers, Examination results, video archives of CAUC events and lecture time table.

) In addition, further studies in line with this study should be replicated in other universities to assess and ensure that educational institutions assess the effectiveness of their websites as a public relations tool in order to take full advantage of the potential of the Internet revolution the world is experiencing.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the research has revealed that the Christ Apostolic University College website is a useful tool in the University's information management and dissemination processes to establish good relationship between the students and the authorities. Notwithstanding, a lot more need to be done to make the CAUC website a very effective public relations tool by improving interactive devices and other features that enhance web interactivity.

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