

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**MEDIA PRACTITIONERS AND THE PHENOMENON OF CASH
FOR COVERAGE (*SOLI*) IN GHANA**

AHMED TAUFIQUE CHENTIBA

**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION
AND MEDIA STUDIES, FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION, SUBMITTED TO THE
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF
EDUCATION, WINNEBA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF THE MASTER OF
PHILOSOPHY (COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES
[BUSINESS COMMUNICATION]) DEGREE**

JULY, 2017

DECLARATION

I, Ahmed Taufique Chentiba, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **MR. KWESI AGGREY**

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincerely, I will like to thank my supervisor Mr. Kwesi Aggrey of the Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Education Winneba for his guidance and counsel and for supervising the work in spite of the bottlenecks that posed threats to completing the work on time. I am forever grateful and indebted to you for this kind gesture.

My special thanks also go to my uncle Shaibu Ibrahim Tanko (Off the Road) for believing in me and selflessly funding my pursuit of this masters degree programme in spite of your own financial commitments. You were such a pillar of support and I remain indebted to you. I will also like to thank my parents Mr. Napari Ahmed Chentiba and Hajia Asiya Shaibu for your continuous prayer and support since I was born into this earth. You remain my motivation to aspire to greatness in order to do you proud.

I will like to thank my mentors; Dr. Sulemana Abudulai and Mr. Alhassan Musah for your immense support, guidance and encouragement throughout this programme. I am also grateful to my friend and brother Mr. Kailan Ibn Abdul-Hamid for providing me with the tutelage to carry out this study and for making time to proof-read my work. To my brother and friend, Abdulai Yakubu, I cannot thank you enough for all the support over the years. Your reward is with Allah. I am also grateful to my wife Raihana Yussif for given me the peace of mind to concentrate and finish up this work. Special thanks go to Patience Quaye, Erick Terkper Kutor and Lydia Atiirimbey Anyateng for your immense support, constructive criticisms, and for being my family in school. To all CoMSSA _09' members, most especially Salifu Issah, Delight, Gifty, Stepehen, Mashud and Justice, I say kudos to all of you for your invaluable friendship.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my uncle Shaibu Ibrahim Tanko and my parents Mr. Napari Ahmed Chentiba and Hajia Asiya Shaibu.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| DECLARATION | II |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | III |
| DEDICATION | IV |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | V |
| LIST OF TABLES | IX |
| LIST OF FIGURES | XI |
| ABSTRACT | XII |
| CHAPTER ONE | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.0. Background to the Study | 1 |
| 1.1. Statement of the Problem | 5 |
| 1.2. Objectives of the study | 7 |
| 1.3. Research Hypotheses | 7 |
| 1.4. Significance of the study | 8 |
| 1.5. Definition of Concepts | 9 |
| 1.6. Scope of the study | 16 |
| 1.7. Organisation of the Study | 16 |
| CHAPTER TWO | 17 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW | 17 |
| 2.0. Introduction | 17 |

| | | |
|----------------------|--|-----------|
| 2.1. | The Media Relation Function of PR Practitioners | 17 |
| 2.2. | PR and Journalism Relationship | 19 |
| 2.3. | Ethics and Public Relations | 22 |
| 2.4. | Ethics and Journalism | 24 |
| 2.5. | Ethical Decision Making | 26 |
| 2.6. | Ethical Reasoning | 27 |
| 2.7. | Related Studies on the Phenomenon of Cash for Coverage (<i>Soli</i>) | 28 |
| 2.8. | Relationship between Salary Level and Ethical Decision Making | 31 |
| 2.9. | <i>Soli</i> and the Journalism Codes of Ethics | 32 |
| 2.10. | <i>Soli</i> and PR Code of Ethics | 35 |
| 2.11. | Relationship between Positive Media Coverage and <i>Soli</i> | 37 |
| 2.12. | Theoretical Framework | 40 |
| CHAPTER THREE | | 46 |
| METHODOLOGY | | 46 |
| 3.0. | Introduction | 46 |
| 3.1. | Research Approach | 46 |
| 3.2. | Research Design | 47 |
| 3.3. | Population | 48 |
| 3.4. | Sampling technique and sample size | 50 |
| 3.5. | Sample Size | 52 |
| 3.6. | Instrumentation | 52 |
| 3.7. | Validity and Reliability | 54 |
| 3.8. | Reliability of Instrument | 56 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| 3.9. | Piloting of Questionnaires | 56 |
| 3.10. | Data Collection Procedure | 57 |
| 3.11. | Data Analysis | 58 |
| 3.12. | Summary | 58 |
| CHAPTER FOUR | | 59 |
| FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS | | 59 |
| 4.0. | Introduction | 59 |
| 4.1. | Demographics of Respondents | 60 |
| 4.2. | The Phenomenon of <i>Soli</i> | 67 |
| 4.3. | Knowledge of Professional Code of Ethics on Inducement | 71 |
| 4.4. | Journalists' Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | 74 |
| 4.5. | Payment of <i>Soli</i> by PR Practitioners | 77 |
| 4.6. | Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> and Positive Media Coverage | 81 |
| 4.7. | Payment of <i>Soli</i> and Positive media Coverage | 83 |
| 4.8. | Testing of Hypothesis 1 using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient: Salary level and Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | 84 |
| 4.9. | Testing of Hypothesis 2 using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient: Knowledge of GJA Codes and Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | 87 |
| 4.10. | Regression Analysis of Hypotheses 1 and 2 | 89 |
| 4.11. | Testing of Hypothesis 3 using Pearson Correlation Moment Coefficient: Knowledge of IPR Code and Payment of <i>Soli</i> | 93 |
| 4.12. | Testing of Hypothesis 4 using Pearson Correlation Moment Coefficient: Payment of <i>Soli</i> and Positive Media Coverage | 96 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 4.13. Regression Analysis of Hypotheses 3 and 4 | 97 |
| CHAPTER FIVE | 103 |
| CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION | 103 |
| 5.0. Introduction | 103 |
| 5.1. Summary of Major Findings | 103 |
| 5.2. Conclusions | 105 |
| 5.3. Limitations | 106 |
| 5.4. Recommendations | 107 |
| 5.5. Suggestion for Future Research | 109 |
| REFERENCE | 110 |
| APPENDIX ONE | 118 |
| APPENDIX TWO | 122 |
| APPENDIX THREE | 126 |



LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 4.1: Sex Distribution of Respondents | 61 |
| Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents | 61 |
| Table 4.3: Years of Experience in the Field | 62 |
| Table 4.4: Sector of Employment | 63 |
| Table 4.5: Category of Media Organisation Journalists Work | 64 |
| Table 4.6: Salary Level of Journalists | 64 |
| Table 4.7: Journalists with Journalism Training | 65 |
| Table 4.8: Member of GJA and IPR (Ghana) | 66 |
| Table 4.9: Awareness of <i>Soli</i> | 67 |
| Table 4.10: Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> considered as unethical behaviour | 68 |
| Table 4.11: Journalists Consideration of Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> as a Rewarding Behaviour | 69 |
| Table 4.12: Payment of <i>Soli</i> as an Acceptable behaviour | 70 |
| Table 4.13: Effect of <i>Soli</i> on Objectivity | 70 |
| Table 4.14: Responses to the Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | 74 |
| Table 4.15: Journalists' Considerations for Accepting <i>Soli</i> | 75 |
| Table 4.16: Items used as Payment of <i>Soli</i> | 79 |
| Table 4.17: Factors PR Practitioners Consider when paying <i>Soli</i> to Journalists | 80 |
| Table 4.18: Crosstabulation of Salary Level and Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | 85 |
| Table 4.19: Relationship between Salary Level and Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | 86 |
| Table 4.20: Knowledge of GJA Code of Ethics and Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | 88 |
| Table 4.21: Multiple Linear Regression Model Summary | 89 |
| Table 4.22: F-test Table for Journalists Considerations | 90 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 4.23: Multiple Regression Estimates for Journalists Considerations | 91 |
| Table 4.24: Knowledge of IPR (Ghana) Code on Inducement and Payment of <i>Soli</i> | 94 |
| Table 4.25: Payment of <i>Soli</i> and Positive Media Coverage | 96 |
| Table 4.26: Multiple Linear Regression Model Summary for PR Practitioners Considerations | 98 |
| Table 4.27: The F-Test for PR Practitioners Considerations | 98 |
| Table 4.28: Multiple Regression Estimates for PR Practitioners Considerations | 99 |



LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1: Journalists Knowledge of GJA code of Conduct on Bribery or Inducement | 72 |
| Figure 2: PR Practitioners' Knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code on bribery or inducement of journalists | 73 |
| Figure 3: Payment of <i>Soli</i> by PR Practitioners | 78 |
| Figure 4: Influence of Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> on Positive media Coverage | 82 |
| Figure 5: Payment of <i>Soli</i> to obtain Positive Media Coverage | 83 |



ABSTRACT

Some journalists in Ghana expect their sources to pay or reward them for covering a programme especially when they are invited by the organiser(s) of the programme. Similarly, PR practitioners are cited as being among the top three sources that perpetuate brown envelope journalism (*Soli*) in their dealings with journalists. The practice, thus, appears to have become a norm among event organisers (often PR practitioners) and journalists (reporters) without recourse to the ethical implications of the practice. This study investigates the factors media practitioners in Ghana consider when they are confronted with the phenomenon of *Soli*. The study adopted the quantitative research approach and the survey design to investigate this phenomenon. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Social Responsibility Theory (SRT) guided the study. Findings of the study were tested against the Pearson moment correlation coefficient and the Durbin-Watson regression model through SPSS version 20.0. The results of the study, among others, showed that there is a significant association between salary levels of journalists and journalists' inclination to accepting *Soli*. Ghanaian Journalists' knowledge of the GJA code of conduct was also found to be significant and positively related to journalists' acceptance of *Soli*. There was a significant relationship between PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics and payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners. The study also found a significant relationship between PR practitioners desire to obtain positive media coverage and payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background to the Study

Media relations practices account for about 60 to 70 percent of all Public Relations (PR) efforts to convey organisations' messages to various publics (Zoch & Molleda, 2006; cited in Tsetsura & Grynko, 2009). The core of Public Relation practice is to establish and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and its various publics (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994) of whom journalists constitute a critical segment. Thus, Public Relations – media relationship is a core function of public relations practice. It requires of the PR practitioner to relate well with the media in order to get stories or events of their (PR practitioners) clients covered by the media. In an effort to perform this function for their clients or organisations, some PR practitioners pay reporters or editors to publish their stories (Tsetsura, 2015). Similarly, journalists of the various media houses rely on PR practitioners for newsworthy stories. For instance Lewis, William and Franklin (2008, p. 27) argue, "reliance on public relations copy has been promoted by the need for a relatively stable community of journalists to meet an expansive requirement for news in order to maintain newspapers' profitability in the context of declining circulations and revenues". Blumler and Gurevitch (1981, p. 473) therefore notes that the journalists and sources (PR practitioners) are inextricably linked," working in complementary (if not collusive) ways to achieve each other's ambitions (cited in Lewis et al, 2008). Similarly, Tsetsura and Grynko (2009) note that there is a symbiotic relationship between PR practitioners and journalists: both need each other and both realise that the free flow of information is essential (Tsetsura & Grynko, 2009). There

are, however, ethical concerns regarding how this relationship between the PR practitioners and journalists is established and maintained, particularly in Ghana.

Every day of the year, somewhere in the world—and, more likely, many places around the world – money changes hands in order to buy positive media coverage or avoid negative media coverage (Ristow (2010). In the Ghanaian media landscape, it is not uncommon to see journalists who demand various kinds of favours – ranging from lunch and refreshments to cash (for fares) from event organisers – a phenomenon known in the Ghanaian media landscape as *‘Soli’* (Kasoma, 2009). This practice is a wide-spread phenomenon in global media relations and is given various terminologies (euphemisms), depending on the nature and locality. It is termed as cash for news coverage (Kuckeberg & Tsetsura, 2003), envelope journalism (Shafer, 1990; Romano, 2000), media bribery (Tsetsura, 2005), Media Non-transparency (Tsetsura & Grynko, 2009), media opacity (Tsetsura & Kuckeberg, 2009; Tsetsura & Klyueva, 2010) and paid news (Tsetsura, 2015).

As generally understood in Ghana, *Soli* is a term used to describe “the practice of when journalists accept money from event organisers at the end of press conferences or similar events. The money is supposedly to be used to pay for the cost of travel to the event” (Temo, 2013: 7). *Soli* is derived from the word 'Solidarity' –denoting that the source has some sort of sympathy with the despairing situation of the journalist and therefore wants to extend a helping hand which can also strengthen the ties between the two parties” (Skjerdal, 2010). Kruckeberg and Tsetsura (2003) define brown envelope (*Soli*) syndrome as the act of offering cash to journalists in exchange for favourable news coverage in the media. The payment is normally offered in the form of cash or surplus

per diem (Kruckeberg & Tsetsura, 2003). Kasoma (2009) also defines brown envelope journalism (*Soli*) as the practice of granting monetary incentives to journalists or media outlets in order to get ample coverage. These monetary incentives are normally enclosed in brown envelopes - the idea being that since the envelopes are opaque, the monetary content does not become apparent. The phenomenon – *Soli*, though unethical and unprofessional (Skjerdal, 2010) seems to have become entrenched in journalism practice in Ghana to the extent that journalists sometimes heckle event organisers for *Soli* when they are denied (Agbemenu & Tandoh, 2015). The various Public Relations practitioners arranging these events are not oblivious of these demands and –simply accept this [*Soli*] as a necessary expense” (Mathews, 2016). These practices by both professions have come under serious scrutiny by well-meaning Ghanaians, academics and diplomats at large and with some calling to question the ethical implications of such behaviours/practices.

There are some who are of the view that such practices amount to bribery and a breach of the Ghana Journalists’ Association’s Code of Ethics. Others however do not see it as bribery, but a way of supporting and encouraging relatively junior and poorly-remunerated Journalists to enjoy the profession (Kasoma, 2009). Nwabueze (2010, p. 504) thus provides the rationalisations for and against the practice of *Soli* by identifying four (4) groups of people who view the practice from different perspectives:

Idealists (who see brown envelope as a form of bribery and unethical practice in journalism and should not be accepted for any reason);

Altruists/culturists (who opine that it is offered to be nice to journalists and in line with the hospitality nature of African culture);

Realists (who believe that though the practice is morally wrong, the media landscape is such that you need to do something to get your story published);

Opportunists (who have no firm conviction but simply believe that to accept or reject *Soli* depends on the situation)

Speaking on the *Super Morning Show* of Joy FM on Monday, December 1, 2014, Professor Audrey Gadzekpo stated that it is ethically wrong for journalists to demand appreciation from their news sources before publication. The views of Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo cited in Myjoyonline.com appear to capture the sentiments of the Idealists who see the practice as bribery and a breach of the code of ethics of the journalistic profession. The British High Commissioner to Ghana, Jon Benjamin has also questioned the propriety of this attitude. He asked:

What are we to think when certain journalists expect the famous *Soli* – to cover our events? Isn't covering the news actually their job to start with? And, if they aren't paid sufficiently for doing so, isn't that an issue between them and their employer, rather than our or anyone else's problem? And if those journalists who pride themselves on reporting corruption in others then ask for unofficial payments themselves, isn't that just a touch hypocritical? An event or story is either intrinsically newsworthy or it isn't: it doesn't become newsworthy because someone has paid for it – that isn't journalism, it's advertising which is perfectly legitimate in itself of course but is a different professional activity (modernghana.com, 2nd Dec. 2014).

These questions put forward by the British High Commissioner also raises ethical concerns regarding the practice, and points to the fact that most of the news items carried in the media outlets are *Soli*-news which are guised as newsworthy for the audience. This

raises questions regarding the factors media relations practitioners consider when they are confronted with the ethical consideration of *Soli*. This study therefore seeks to examine the factors PR practitioners and journalists in Ghana consider when they are confronted with the ethical dilemma of either paying or accepting *Soli*.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Throughout the world, both anecdotal and statistical evidence make it apparent that cash for news coverage (*Soli*) is more common in journalism practice (Ristow, 2010). Ristow (2010) asserts that in Ghana, a reporter goes to a press conference - and inside his/her press packet, there is a brown envelope containing GH¢100. Not surprised, the reporter slips it into his/her purse before heading back to the office to write up the event. Meanwhile journalists under normal circumstance are to gather news or cover programmes for their media houses without being remunerated by their sources (Agbemenu & Tandoh, 2015). Some journalists in Ghana however expect their sources to pay or reward them after gathering news or covering a programme especially when they were invited by the organiser(s) of the programme (Agbemenu & Tandoh, 2015). This unethical trend is widely practiced by reporters who demand it (*Soli*) as a right; a situation that portrays the *Soli* syndrome as a journalism convention rather than a condemnable act” (Nkwocha, 2004:68). Also, a study by Kasoma (2010) revealed that public relations practitioners were cited as being among the top three sources that perpetuate brown envelopes (*Soli*) in their dealings with journalists. The practice, thus, appears to have become a norm among event organisers (often PR practitioners) and journalists (reporters) without recourse to the ethical implications of the practice.

The Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) Code of Ethics states that a journalist should not accept a bribe or any form of inducement to influence the performance of his/her professional duties. Similarly, the Institute of Public Relations (Ghana) code of ethics also frowns on PR practitioners inducing journalists in order to compromise their professional integrity. However, Kasoma (1999) posits that human beings subscribe to several moral systems at any point in time and ethics begins where elements within a moral system conflict, and a person (PR practitioner/journalist) is called upon to choose between various alternatives (cited in Nwabueze, 2010, p. 499). Thus, it is not clear whether the ethical provisions of IPR (Ghana) and GJA are not at variance with the reality/practice by practitioners when they are confronted with the ethical dilemma of paying or accepting *Soli*. The question is what ethical considerations inform the decision of PR practitioners to pay journalists *Soli* and also inform the latter to accept it in spite of the ethical provision in their respective professions regarding the practice?

Previous studies on the occurrence of *Soli* have sought to establish the existence, forms, perceptions, pervasiveness and effects of the phenomenon on news reportage in the countries of study (e.g. Agbemenu & Tandoh, 2015; Grynko, 2012; Ristow, 2010; Klyueva and Tsetsura, 2015; Tsetsura, 2015). However, there appears to be minimal works in Ghana particularly on the factors media practitioners consider when they are confronted with the phenomenon of *Soli*. On the methodological front, most of the studies have largely been qualitative instead of quantitative which this study seeks to adopt as an approach.

In Ghana, Agbemenu and Tandoh (2015) explored the effect of *Soli* on news reportage and concluded that *Soli* elicit favourable reportage and makes stories advertorial news

rather than a fact-based news. However, minimal works have been done to ascertain the ethical considerations that inform the decision of PR practitioners and Journalist to pay or accept cash in exchange for news coverage in Ghana. Thus, using the quantitative approach, this study seeks to examine the factors media practitioners in Ghana consider when they are confronted with the phenomenon of *Soli*.

1.2. Objectives of the study

The phenomenon of cash for media coverage is a wide spread phenomenon. However, the ethical consideration for such practice has been given little attention particularly in Ghana. This study, thus, seeks to examine the ethical consideration for such practices in Ghana. The following objectives would guide the study:

1. To examine whether or not salary level of journalists influences their acceptance of *Soli*.
2. To examine whether or not knowledge of professional ethical principles on inducement influences the payment or acceptance of *Soli*.
3. To ascertain whether the desire to obtain positive media coverage influences the payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

In pursuing the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were tested:

- H₁₀**: There is no significant association between salary levels of journalists and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*

H1₁: There is a significant association between salary levels of journalists and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*.

H2₀: There is no significant correlation between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of conduct on inducement and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*.

H2₁: There is a significant correlation between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of conduct on inducement and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*.

H3₀: There is no significant relationship between PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media and payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners

H3₁: There is a significant relationship between PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media and payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners

H4₀: PR practitioners' desire to obtain positive media coverage has no significant relationship with payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners.

H4₁: PR practitioners' desire to obtain positive media coverage has a significant relationship with payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners.

1.4. Significance of the study

The study would, among other things, provide the perspectives of practitioners in Public Relations and Journalism regarding *Soli*. It also enriches our understanding of how ethical decisions are made when PR practitioners and Journalists encounter the phenomenon of *Soli* in their work situations. This will help the Institute of Public

Relations Ghana and the Ghana Journalist Association, to identify the motivating factors that influence the decisions of PR practitioners and journalists respectively to engage in the practice of *Soli*. The study will also enable professional bodies to adopt best strategies towards enforcing or upholding the best ethical practices of their respective professions.

The study would also add to existing literature on *Soli* and particularly on the ethical issues surrounding the phenomenon.

1.5. Definition of Concepts

1.5.1. Media Practitioners

Media Practitioners as used in this study refers to public relations practitioners and journalists working in the Ghanaian media environment.

1.5.2. Journalists

The study used Weaver and Wilhoit's (1991) definition of a journalist as any full and/or part-time employee actively involved in the newsgathering process (i.e. going out to collect stories, writing them and transmitting them).

1.5.3. PR Practitioners

PR practitioners as used in this study refer to public relations officers, managers or consultants representing various organisations in Ghana. They are drawn from the 2015 list of members of the Institute of Public Relations who are in good standing. The list composed of accredited members, associates, affiliates and founding members of the Institute.

1.5.4. Media Relations

Defining media relations has simply been explained to mean an activity carried out by PR practitioners to develop and maintain a favourable relationship between the practitioners' client and the media. This simplification of the definition of media relations does not capture all the intricacies associated with the performance of that activity. Thus, it is important to consider and assess Turk's (1985) definition of media relations. Turk (1985) posits that it is the practice, performed by public relations practitioners, of providing information subsidies to the media to systematically disseminate information on behalf of their client. Information subsidy as used in the definition is a term used to describe the generation by practitioners of prepackaged information to promote their organisations' viewpoints on issues, with little cost (in terms of time or money) or effort to the person receiving the information" (Zoch and Molleda, 2006). Thus, Supa and Zoch (2009) underscored the media relations practitioner acts as a sort of pre-reporter" for the journalist, providing them with information that they need to do their jobs. This definition by Turk (1985) is very fundamental, introducing what is involved in media relations activity, the overriding aim of the activity and the trade-offs between the PR practitioner and the journalist. However, this definition by Turk (1985) does not spell out in detail some of the specific activities which are performed in media relations.

Theaker (2004) posits that media relations consist of the mechanics of contacting the media, how to write press releases in a specific format that conforms to the needs of journalists and the best ways to target and distribute this information. This definition highlights a number of issues in the media relations activity. First, it points to the ways in which the PR practitioner carries out this function through a contact with the media.

Secondly, it exposes the specific activities which are carried out in the performance of this function which includes press releases. It also highlights the requirement for professionalism in carrying out this activity since there are defined standards for carrying out the specific activities within the media relations function. Finally, it points to the need to adopt the best medium for reaching out to the target audience with the clients' information. However, this definition fails to highlight the trade-offs that exist in carrying out this activity as highlighted in the definition of Turk (1985).

Supa and Zoch (2009) also define media relations to denote ~~the~~ systematic, planned, purposeful and mutually beneficially relationship between journalists in the mass media and the public relations practitioners. Its goal is to establish trust and understanding and respect between the two groups (Lattimore, et. al, 2004.)". This definition by Supa and Zoch (2009) highlights the professionalism involved in media relations, the symbiotic nature of the relationship, and the actors in the relationship as well as the medium through which the goal of this relationship is achieved (Mass media).

1.5.5. Code of Ethics

A code of ethics is a document that sets out guidelines aimed at proscribing certain types of conduct deemed unethical, and identifying other types of conduct as being ethical (Retief, 2002; cited in Mare & Brand, 2010, p. 411). Codes act as a stock of knowledge of what constitutes common business news standards. On the one hand, it allows the public to know what behavior to expect from journalists and further know the standards against which to measure their performance (Duncan, 2010; cited in Mare & Brand, 2010, p. 411). This study makes particular reference to the code of ethics of two professional bodies whose members are used for this study. That is the code of ethics of

Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) and the Institute of Public Relations, Ghana (IPR). The GJA is a professional body responsible for ensuring that journalists who are members of the association adhere to standards set out by the Association. The IPR also set out the standard practice for public relations practitioners in Ghana.

1.5.6. Cash for coverage/brown envelope journalism/*Soli*/paid news

There is no universal definition of the phenomenon of brown envelope journalism. Okunna (1995, p. 57) for instance, defines brown envelope journalism as “a monetary bribe handed out to an unethical journalist to pressurise him or her into doing what the bribe giver wants” (cited in Eke, 2014). He further notes that “once accepted, monetary bribes and other gifts tie the hands of journalists who then become incapable of being objective in reporting events and issues involving people who give the gifts.” Okunna’s (1995) definition highlights how the acceptance of cash from news sources compromises the credibility and independence of the media, thus, forcing the media to do the bidding of those who have the money to buy their way out with the media. However, the definition limits the forms of media bribery to only ‘money’ as the gift offered to compromise the unethical journalist.

Kruckeberg and Tsetsura (2003) also define brown envelope (*Soli*) syndrome as “the act of offering cash to journalists in exchange for favourable news coverage in the media. The payment is normally offered in the form of cash or surplus per diem.” This definition points out the trade-off between journalists and their news sources in the phenomenon of cash for coverage. That is cash in exchange for favourable news coverage. However, this definition by Kruckeberg and Tsetsura (2003) fails to also point out the other forms the phenomenon may take such as free trips, freebies, among others.

Nkwocha (2004, p. 68) defines Brown Envelope to denote the ~~money~~ given to reporters or editors to persuade them to write positive stories or kill a negative story” (Cited in Eke, 2014). This definition highlights the rationale for offering ‘brown envelope’ to journalists. However, this definition also offers a narrow view of the phenomenon since what is involved in persuading journalists goes beyond monetary offers to include free lunch, free trips, among others.

Akabogu (2005, p. 202) also says that ~~‘Brown envelope~~ refers to the form of gifts, drinks, food or money [given] in order to influence the judgment of a journalist. The practice stifles journalistic freedom in the exercise of professional judgement and evokes the idea of criminality in the minds of right-thinking people.” Akabogu’s definition captures other incentives besides money that is offered to journalists in the brown envelope syndrome. It also points out the effects such practices have on the freedom and independence of the media.

According to Tsetsura (2005) *Paid News* (cash for coverage) is "any form of payment for media coverage or any influence on editorial decisions that are not clearly indicated in the finished product or the media" (Tsetsura, 2005, p. 3). Tsetsura’s (2005) definition captures the overall idea of the phenomenon of cash for coverage and the effect it has on news reportage as well as the non-transparency involved in news production.

Kasoma (2009) also defines brown envelope journalism (*Soli*) as ~~the~~ practice of granting monetary incentives to journalists or media outlets in order to get ample coverage. These monetary incentives are normally enclosed in brown envelopes - the idea being that since the envelopes are opaque, the monetary content does not become apparent.” The

definition offered by Kasoma (2009) highlights the rationale for engaging in the phenomenon and the reason for which such payments are enclosed in an envelope. This gives credence to the euphemism "brown envelope" as used in the extant literature on the phenomenon.

According to Skjerdal (2010, p. 369) the term "brown envelope journalism" is applied to denote journalistic activity which involves the transfer of various types of rewards from sources to the reporter. He further notes that the practice occurs on the *personal level*, has some degree of *confidentiality*, and denotes an *informal contract* between the source and the reporter whereby both parties have certain obligations. He also suggests that the wider term "brown envelope journalism" denotes a range of incentives involving cash (brown envelopes) and other gifts (freebies) that may put the journalist's independence into question (p. 371). Skjerdal (2010) has provided a broader view of the phenomenon and the levels at which it occurs.

Temo (2013, p. 7) defines *Soli* as the practice of when journalists accept money from event organisers at the end of a press conference or similar. The money is supposed to be used to pay for the cost of travel to the event.

After reviewing of the several definitions of brown envelope journalism/cash for coverage/*Soli*/paid news, the researcher defines *Soli* as the various incentives given by news sources to journalists to induce them to give a positive reportage or avoid a negative reportage in order to enhance or avoid ruining, the reputation of a person, an event or an organisation. This definition is used as the operational definition for *Soli* in this study.

1.5.7. Positive media coverage

There is no known available definition of “Positive media coverage” in the literature as the researcher has reviewed. But anecdotal evidence from the literature suggests positive media coverage to denote “a media report of a person, an organisation or an event in the best positive light possible in order to enhance or avoid ruining the reputation of the person, organisation or event for which the report is given.” This definition is used by the researcher as the operational definition of “Positive media coverage” as used in this study.

1.5.8. Salary level

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (7th edition) defines salary as “monies that employees receive for doing their job, especially professional employees or people working in an office, usually paid every month” (p. 1291). Salary level as used in this study is limited to the cash received monthly from work (wage or salary) by journalists after doing their job. The salaries are then classified as high or low based on the salary bracket provided in the study. A salary of between Gh¢500-Gh¢1000 is regarded as low salary level, Gh¢1001-Gh¢1500 is regarded as mid-salary level while a salary of between Gh¢1501-Gh¢2000 is regarded as high salary level.

1.5.9. Ethical considerations

Ferrell & Fraedrich (1991), defines an ethical consideration or issue as “a problem, situation or opportunity requiring an individual or organisation to choose among several actions that must be evaluated as right or wrong, ethical or unethical” (Cited in Olsen, Eid, & Larsson, 2010). Sonenshein (2007) also notes that ethical issues are equivocal, meaning that they can be interpreted in more than one way, and are uncertain with regard to the future. Ethical considerations or issues may also be problematic because of the

feeling they evoke or because they contain a dilemma of some kind (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991).

1.6. Scope of the study

The study is limited to Public Relations practitioners who are members of IPR (Ghana) who are scattered across the length and breadth of Ghana, and Journalists who are working in media houses located in the greater Accra Region.

1.7. Organisation of the Study

The study is presented in six main chapters as follows:

Chapter one presents an introduction to the study, problem statement, research objectives, and research hypotheses, significance of the study, definition of concepts, scope of the study, and organisation of the study. Chapter two (2) contains a review of relevant literature related to the study and the theoretical framework. Chapter three (3) explains the research methods adopted for the collection and analysis of data. Chapter five (4) contains an analysis of the findings and discussions. Chapter six (5) presents the summary of findings, conclusions, limitations, recommendation of the study, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the reviewed literature and theoretical framework on the phenomenon of cash for coverage (*Soli*). This review highlights the media relations function of public relations practitioners, ethics and public relations, ethics and journalism, ethical decision making, the relationship between salary level and ethical decision making, relationship between *Soli* and the journalism code of ethics and the relationship between positive media coverage and *Soli*.

2.1. The Media Relation Function of PR Practitioners

According to Theaker (2004:42), PR has its origins in the field of media relations anchored by Ivy Ledbetter Lee's infamous Declaration of Principles which states:

we aim to supply news...Our matter is accurate...Our plan is, frankly and openly, on behalf of the business concerns and public institutions, to supply to the press and public of the United States prompt and accurate information concerning subjects which is of value and interest to the public to know about.

The media are therefore a strategic public in the functioning of PR. Theaker (2004) further observed that media relations is still the activity on which the majority of PR practitioners spend most of their time. Bianco (n.d.) also notes that although the media are critical to public relations, many PR practitioners become so preoccupied with media coverage that they forget why relationships with the mass media are important.

On how the media relations function is performed, Theaker (2004) explains that media relations involve the mechanics of contacting the media, how to write press releases in a specific format that conforms to the needs of journalists, and the best ways to target and distribute this information. She further indicates that a media relation is judged on the number of releases produced and the level of press cuttings achieved, and not on the appropriateness or effectiveness of the output. Bland, Theaker and Wragg (1996) however, are of the view that the purpose of media relations is not to issue press releases, or handle enquiries from the media, or even to generate a massive pile of press cuttings. The true purpose of media relations is to enhance the reputation of an organisation and its products and to influence and inform the target audience. Chinowth (2010) also asserts that prior to the advent of the internet, the thrust of media relations work was just about “pushing” information from the organisation to the desks of media reporters, producers, and editors via news releases, news tips, and press kits.

Cho (2006) also found that public relations practitioners have varying amounts of power in their interactions with journalists and must assess their relationship status with journalists from time to time by reviewing how the organisation was covered in past news stories, how the journalists previously responded to information subsidies, and how influential the journalist is in setting the agenda on a particular topic (cited in Waters, Tindall & Morton, 2010, p. 245). Waters et al. however, see the performance of the media relations function to encompass all types of initiatives – including maintaining and updating media contacts, disseminating news releases, organising press conferences, offering content and responding to media queries – primarily to seek favourable

publicity by –systematically distributing information subsidies” (Sallot and Johnson, 2006).

The media relations function of PR practitioners as established by existing literature above suggests that media relation is an integral part of the functions performed by PR practitioners. There are however, varying views on how such an important function is performed and measured. This gives room for contextualization of the media relations function depending on the exigencies and the environmental issues that might impact on how the media relations function is performed to achieve the overall objective of such function; favourable media coverage. In light of this study, the media relations function of PR practitioners in Ghana is examined to ascertain the factors that influence the performance of such function in their bid to obtain favourable media coverage for the organisation they (PR practitioners) represent

2.2. PR and Journalism Relationship

Much has been written about the PR–media relationship (Sterne, 2010). Based on extensive literature on PR practitioners and journalists relationship, Kasoma (2010) notes that the relationship between PR practitioners and journalists is fluid in nature. This relationship is punctuated with cooperation sometimes, conflict at other times, and negotiation at yet others (Kasoma, 2010). Bianco (n.d) also observed an area of conflict between journalists and PR practitioners in media relations and notes:

Journalists feel overwhelmed by mass of press agents and publicists – flacks,‘ as they call PR people - who dump unwanted press releases on their desk and push self-serving stories that have little news value. On the other hand, public relations practitioners feel that they are at the mercy of

reporters and editors who are biased against their organisation, who would rather expose than explain, and who know little about the complexities of their organisation.

Citing PR practitioners in Zambia, Kasoma (2010, p. 458) reports “we have a very cordial relationship with journalists based on mutual understanding that the other [one] cannot effectively work without the other,” said one interviewee. Another practitioner described the relationship as, “suspicious because while journalists have a duty to get information, [we] are under oath to keep secrets” (Kasoma, 2010, p. 458).

Sterne (2010) identified six interrelated factors that contribute to PR-journalists relationships. These factors are: the hunger for publicity which drives approaches to the media; the use of flattery, bribery and exaggeration; the use of stunts to attract attention; the search for free advertising; the pressure journalists experience due to poor working conditions; and the reluctant acknowledgement that journalists often end up in the public relations profession because of the attraction of higher pay and greater job opportunities. Collison (2003) also asserts that the message from the journalists is clear to PR Practitioners — they have less help to do their jobs and have more to cover; so it is the responsibility of public relations professionals to provide information not only in a timely and concise manner, but as effectively as possible. Lewis et al. (2008) argue that journalists’ reliance on public relations and news agency copy has been promoted by the need for a relatively stable community of journalists to meet an expansive requirement for news in order to maintain newspapers’ profitability in the context of declining circulations and revenues. This suggests that PR practitioners see their role in providing journalists with information as a form of help in order to ease the burden of journalists in

their news gathering process. Thus, doing so has the tendency to build a relationship of dependency among the two professions, that is, PR and journalism.

On the empirical front, Kaur and Shaari (2006) examined perceptions on the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists based on four categories of relationship: Satisfaction with contributions made to each other, interdependence, trust and ethical practices. A survey of 48 public relations practitioners and 63 journalists was conducted regarding their perceptions on each other's profession. Generally, the survey indicates some differences and similarities in the perceptions of the two groups with public relations practitioners holding stronger perceptions than the journalists on the various aspects of their relationship. The data suggests that public relations practitioners believe more strongly that the information they provide to the journalists enables the latter to perform more satisfactorily compared to the journalists who think less strongly of the contribution made by the former. The public relations practitioners also seem to think that there is more of a symbiotic relationship between the two groups than the journalists.

The available literature above is suggestive of a symbiotic relationship between journalists and PR practitioners though with inherent issues of mistrust and antagonism between the two professions. There are indications also of how the cultivated relationship between the two professions can have the audience short-changed in the news production process as PR copies are sometimes presented as newsworthy stories rather than treated as advertorials, hence, raising ethical concerns regarding the very nature of the PR-journalists relationship. There is also an indication of PR practitioners gaining positive media coverage out of the cultivated relationship with journalists, an issue that has the

tendency for non-transparent media thereby undermining the gatekeeping role of journalists. This study would examine the relationship between PR practitioners and Journalists in Ghana to unearth the ethical issues that may arise as a result of the cultivated relationship between the two professions and how it impacts on media coverage.

2.3. Ethics and Public Relations

Public relations has been referred to as the “social conscience” of the organisations they represent, even though the degree to which public relations professionals have been able to impact the ethics programmes of their organisations remains debatable (Danner, 2006). Skinner, Mersham & Valin (2003) however, emphasise the importance of ethical decision making of practitioners through the symmetry between personal and professional values, the values of the client organisation, and the values of the publics with which the organisation has relations with in the two-way symmetrical model of public relations practice. Many critics argue that there can be no ethical public relations because the practice itself is akin to manipulation and propaganda. Many journalists, policy makers, and laymen believe that the term ‘public relations ethics’ is an oxymoron, either an unreal possibility or smoke and mirrors to hide deception (Bowen, 2007). This worldview held by critics is informed by the historical antecedence of hyperbole, sensationalism, and untruths in the practice of public relations during the press-agentry phase (public be damned era) of public relations (Bowen, 2007).

Bowen (2007) posits that Ivy Lee’s Declaration of Principles ushered in an era of Ethical Public relations and moved the practice into an era of the “public be informed” with

emphasis on telling the truth and providing accurate information. This development in the evolution of PR, thus, informed modern ethical consideration in the practice of public relations and the numerous ethical codes that guide the practice of PR.

According to Parson (2008, p. 150), public relations ethics focuses on the ethical implications of the strategies and tactics that are applied to solve the public relations and communications problems of organisations. It focuses on the ethical issues that emanate directly and sometimes indirectly from the strategic decisions that are made to meet public relations objectives. Skinner, Mersham, and Valin (2004) observed that practicing ethical public relations has become one of the greatest challenges facing practitioners in the 21st century because it impacts on the management of strategic relationships within the complex dynamics and interrelationships of a global context. That is, public relations professionals have the dilemma of making decisions that satisfy (1) the public interest, (2) the employer, (3) the professional organisation's code of ethics and (4) their personal values. Bowen (2004) also notes that Public Relations is a field fraught with ethical dilemmas. According to Lee (2012) much of the discussion about ethics in public relations is philosophical and prescriptive; outlining what public relations professionals ought to do to fulfill moral obligations to various stakeholders, and how to avoid ethical lapses. However, Tsetsura and Krukeberg (2011) note that, although codes of ethics exist worldwide, there are numerous problems with their reinforcement. Tsetsura and Grynko (2009) and Tsetsura and Zuo (2009) found that accepted codes of ethics are not enforceable and thus are not practiced by public relations practitioners

On the empirical front, Lieber (2005) did a cross-cultural analysis of public relations ethics to ascertain the ethical-decision making patterns of public relations practitioners

using qualitative interviews, Defining Issues Test (DIT) and a quantitative version of the five-factor (TARES) test. The results indicate no statistically significant difference in levels of moral development and ethical consideration between sampled practitioners in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

From the foregoing therefore, it can be argued that ethics is an integral part of Public Relations practice and PR practitioners are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards in the discharge of their duties and by extension, members of IPR (Ghana) are expected to do same. Contrary to this expectation however, PR practitioners are criticised for not maintaining the ethical standards required. This study is thus motivated by these criticisms, among others, to assess the extent to which PR practitioners in Ghana live by their ethics especially in their daily interaction with practicing journalists.

2.4. Ethics and Journalism

Human beings subscribe to several moral systems at any point in time, and Kasoma (1999), for example notes that ethics begins where elements within a moral system conflict and a person (journalist) is called upon to choose between various alternatives. Nwabueze (2010) also asserts that professionalism cannot be divorced from ethical standards. Ethics ensures that people practicing a particular profession are led to deciphering what is morally right from what is morally wrong without being policed to do so. Ethics is a set of guiding principles which are not laws but become binding to people who adopt it as a moral boundary for the practice of their profession. Ethics could also be described as a moral *modus operandi* adopted or willingly accepted by a person or

group of persons in day-to-day dealings in a particular trade or in a relationship with others (Nwabueze, 2010).

According to Kasoma (1999), journalism ethics is concerned with making sound decisions in journalistic performance and that it assumes the presence of societal morality which consists of actions guided by generally acceptable human values and responsibilities which constitute a moral system. Nwabueze (2010) also asserts that journalism ethics is played up where a journalist is faced with conflicting values in the society, especially values that are incompatible with tenets of professionalism. This exposition by Kasoma and Nwabueze suggests that the journalism profession recognises the importance of ethics, and journalists are expected to abide by the code of ethics of their profession. Situational issues however, confront journalists in the discharge of their duty for which they are expected to take the ethical high road.

Sanders (2003, p. 30-32) however, identified five (5) approaches to ethics in journalism – the cynic, the PR executive, the deontologist, the professional dogmatist, and the lawyer.

a. *The Cynic:*

Cynics in journalism claim that the ethical practices do not matter or are impossible.

b. *The PR executive:*

To the PR executive kind of a journalist, an ethical practice may be treated as a way of keeping the audience sweet. That is, provided there is no protest, there is no problem. Thus, unless there is a popular outcry or the threat of legislation, nothing would be done.

c. *The Deontologist:*

Deontologist type of journalists takes their ethical bearings through strict adherence to professional codes of practice setting out duties.

d. *The Professional Dogmatist:*

They take strict adherence to professional codes regarding speed, exclusivity, and objectivity or appeals to the public interest, the public's right to know, or freedom of expression. The importance of getting a story out can override the imperative to check sources or a 'spoiler' – a story copying and 'spoiling' another publication's exclusive – can be considered perfectly acceptable in keeping with the view that being first to a good story is one of the highest journalistic accomplishment.

e. *The lawyer:*

The lawyer kind of a journalist applies the principle "if it's legal, it's right, illegal wrong".

These views by Sanders therefore suggest that perhaps with the exception of the *Cynic*, the rest aim at encouraging 'right' journalistic practices and may all play their part in achieving this. The different categorisation by Sanders suggests that the approach to journalism differ based on the inner disposition of the journalist concerned. Depending on the worldview of the individual journalist therefore, higher ethical journalism standards can be upheld or otherwise. The objective of this study, among others, is to examine whether or not journalists in Ghana take the ethical high road or not when they are confronted with the phenomenon of *Soli*.

2.5. Ethical Decision Making

Ethical decision making is described in theory and research as a process comprising several stages, each one affected by different individual, environmental, and situational

variables. Rest (1986) describes the process of decision making as a four-component model in which a moral agent must first recognise the moral issue, make a moral judgment, place moral concerns ahead of other concerns, and act according to these moral concerns. Trevino (1986) proposed that ethical decision making is the result of the interaction between individual and situational components, with the individual's way of thinking about ethical dilemmas being moderated by individually and situationally based moderators. Trevino and Youngblood (1990) found that individuals' responses to ethical issues are affected by their reasoning processes, as well as by rewards and punishments (cited in Sonenshein, 2007:1023). PR Practitioners and journalists are confronted with ethical dilemmas in the discharge of their duty for which an ethical evaluation of the situation is brought to bear before a decision is made. The factors that influence the decision of PR practitioners and journalists when they are confronted with the phenomenon of *Soli*, which arguably is an ethical issue of contention, is examined in this study.

2.6. Ethical Reasoning

According to Pettifor, Estay and Paquet (2002), ethical reasoning and judgment refer to the ways in which individuals determine whether a course of action or a stance about an ethical issue is morally right by evaluating various courses of action and taking into account ethical principles. Ethical reasoning is considered to be necessary for moral decision making and behaviour (Rest, 1984; Pettifor et al., 2002), and it represents the process involved in judging what is morally right (Trevino, 1992; cited in Pettifor, Estay, and Paquet, 2002). Research on moral or ethical reasoning has been concerned with discovering people's moral judgment strategies by presenting them with hypothetical

moral dilemmas and asking them to judge what is right or wrong and to explain their judgments. Their explanations and justifications are then used to define their reasoning about moral issues (Pettifor, Estay, and Paquet, 2002).

Drawing from the discussions above, it can be argued that PR practitioners and journalists make ethical decisions by a careful evaluation of the various courses of action and this is what is referred to as ‘ethical consideration’ in this study. PR practitioners and journalists in Ghana consider certain factors when they are confronted with the phenomenon of *Soli*. Three key considerations perhaps influence the payment and acceptance of *Soli*. These are the inner disposition of the individual, the code of ethics of the professional body the individual belongs to, and the situational issues as well as expected outcomes. These among other considerations influence the decision of PR practitioners to pay or not to pay *Soli*, and journalists to accept or reject *Soli*. The objective of this study is to examine these considerations in order to ascertain level of influence it has on the decision of PR practitioners and journalists to pay and accept *Soli* respectively.

2.7. Related Studies on the Phenomenon of Cash for Coverage (*Soli*)

Romano (2000) studied brown envelope journalism in Indonesia and found that it leads to the exploitation of either sources and in extreme cases generates a nefarious criminal subculture among journalists. The policy responses were also found to have failed as a result of the ambiguous nature of the policies, inability of the policies to be accompanied by pay increases sufficiently substantial to encourage behavioural change, failure of

senior journalistic role models to set appropriate examples, and newsrooms' lack of systems for detecting and prosecuting offenders of the policy.

Okoro and Ugwuanyi (2006) conducted a study on brown envelope syndrome and mass media objectivity in Nigeria. They found that journalists accept brown envelopes because of poor conditions of service and lack of adherence to ethical standards which affect mass media objectivity negatively. A similar study by Lodamo and Skjerdal (2009) in Ethiopia found that respondents agree on the problematic sides of the practice but justify it by referring to low salary and poor journalistic training as the influencing factors.

Kasoma (2010) also studied Zambian PR practitioners' perspectives on "brown envelopes" and freebies and found that although they perceive the practice as unethical, unprofessional and detested any association of the phenomenon with them, they were responsive to freebies. The considerations for their responsiveness to freebies were found to be the offshoot of the interdependent relationship they shared with journalists, the perception of freebies as part and parcel of their news management function as well as its (freebies) instrumentality in achieving their boundary spanning role.

Nwabueze (2010) studied the perceptions of practicing journalists in Nigeria regarding the phenomenon of brown envelope and why it persists in their profession. The findings show that 84% of the respondents accept brown envelopes and 16% do not accept brown envelopes. 70% see brown envelope as a gift or kind gesture from the giver and does not see anything wrong with the acceptance of it. However, 78% indicated that acceptance of brown envelopes does not make them less objective in coverage of events.

Quansah, Ako-Gyima and Boateng (2012) examined the influence and effects of Brown Envelope syndrome on journalism practice in Kumasi. Findings of the study showed that the level of education of journalists, meagre salaries received by journalists, and the view that it is appreciation and/or transportation from news sources contributes to the phenomenon of *Soli*. The study also found that *‘Soli’* takes various forms such as money, car, clothing, and in some cases scholarships.

Oberiri (2016) examined Nigerian journalists' perception on news commercialisation and media credibility using Journalists in Jalingo metropolis. The study adopted the quantitative survey method with a sampled population of 75 journalists who are members of Nigerian Union of Journalists. Findings from the study revealed that sourcing and reporting of news stories are the common journalism practice that brown envelope is more manifest. The study also revealed that brown envelope affects the social responsibility as well as objectivity and balance in journalism practice/reporting.

These studies above show the pervasiveness, the forms and the influencing factors of cash for coverage (*Soli*). The methodology used for most of the studies was largely qualitative with a few being mixed method and quantitative. However, it appears minimal quantitative studies have sought to examine the relationship between the influencing factors and the phenomenon of *Soli*. This study therefore, made use of statistical tools such as Pearson moment correlation coefficient and Regression analysis to examine the relationship between the influencing factors and the phenomenon of cash for coverage (*Soli*) in Ghana to address this gap in literature.

2.8. Relationship between Salary Level and Ethical Decision Making

The relationship between salary level and ethical decision making is widely acknowledged in literature across the globe. Some studies suggest that employees with lower salaries are more likely to make decisions that are unethical in their professional line of work than those with higher salaries. Pratt (1991) for instance found a consistent non-significant tendency for employees with higher salaries to be more sensitive to ethical violations and to self-report higher ethical standards compared to those with lower salaries. Signhapakdi, Vitell and Franke (1998) found a moderate negative relationship between individual's salary and relativism, indicating that individuals having lower salaries are more likely to adhere to relativism as their moral philosophy. Lodamo and Skjerdal (2009) found that low salaries among Ethiopian journalists aided such phenomena as freebies and "brown envelope" journalism. Klyueva and Tsetsura (2015) also suggest that economic hardships may affect journalistic ethics and may force journalists to make moral compromises.

In studying Ugandan and Cameroonian journalists, Mwesige (2004) and Nyamnjoh (2001) respectively, also found that poor salaries was instrumental in perpetuating brown envelopes. In a comparative study of Ghana and Zambia, Kasoma (2007) found a correlation between low salary levels and acceptance of brown envelopes among Ghanaian and Zambian journalists. Agbemenu and Tandoh (2015) also observe that poor remuneration of media men is one major reason why media men take *Soli* in Ghana.

All these studies point to the fact that low pay is intrinsically linked to the incidence of *Soli*. There exist other findings that disagree with the position that low salary of

journalists is the main determinant of people engaged in *Soli*. A study by Mak'Ochieng (1994) in Kenya found that well-paid journalists also take bribes (*Soli*) (cited in Skjerdal, 2010). In Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe's (2009) study of Nigerian journalists, only 34% agreed or strongly agreed that increase in salary would curb the brown envelope syndrome. Corroborating this, less than half (43%) of the respondents in Nwabueze's (2010) study in Nigeria agree that poor remuneration is the main reason for journalists taking brown envelopes. Lodamo and Skjerdal (2009) in their study of Ethiopian journalists also reject the low pay argument, citing international comparative studies in which the material conditions of journalists leave a lot to be desired, but the ethical standards remain in good shape. They argue that ethical consciousness, or lack of it, is the decisive factor, and journalistic corruption is more prevalent in those countries where it is generally accepted as a culture. To further this discourse, this study is of the view that the salary level of journalists has an influence on journalists' acceptance of *Soli* from news sources. The salary levels of journalists are therefore obtained and examined to ascertain the level of influence it has on journalists' acceptance of *Soli*.

2.9. *Soli* and the Journalism Codes of Ethics

Codes of ethics are at the core of media regulation, as they define the standards that are expected of the media in their reporting (Mare & Brand, 2010). A code of ethics is a document that sets out guidelines aimed at prescribing certain types of conduct deemed unethical, and identifying other types of conduct as being ethical (Mare & Brand, 2010). Journalism codes act as a stock of knowledge of what constitutes common business news standards. On the one hand, it allows the public to know what behaviour to expect from

journalists and further know the standards against which to measure their performance (Mare & Brand, 2010).

On the issue of *Soli* and journalism code of ethics, the international journalism code dubbed *The Journalist's Professional Integrity* states that the integrity of the profession does not permit the journalist to accept any form of bribe or the promotion of any private interest contrary to the general welfare (Eke, 2014). The Society of Professional Journalists has as part of its codes that journalists should be wary of sources offering information for favours or money; do not pay for access to news. Identify content provided by outside sources, whether paid or not. The Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) also cautions journalists not to act, formally or informally, on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural. The organisation notes, “we should declare to our editors – or the audience – any of our political affiliations, financial arrangements or other personal information that might constitute a conflict of interest.” According to Skjerdal (2010), there are at least 17 national codes of ethics for journalists on the continent of Africa that warns against journalistic bribery. For example in the West African Sub-Region, the charter of the West African Journalists' Association (WAJA) in its Article X condemns the brown envelope syndrome thus: in all circumstances, the journalist must show proof of integrity by avoiding illicit remuneration, directly or indirectly. He also has the duty of refusing to aid and abet the promotion of interests that are contrary to the general wellbeing (Eke, 2014). The Nigerian Press Organisation (NPO) that deals with the brown envelope syndrome is code-named Reward and Gratification also states that a journalist should not give or accept bribe in order to publish or suppress information neither should he accept patronage or gratification of any

type because this will affect the society's expectation on him of an unbiased, accurate and fair report of people and events (Eke, 2014). The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) has as part of its guidelines for the advancement of professionalism in journalism practice, regulations that states that a journalist does not suppress news, information and materials on the basis of threats, inducements, and individual preferences or for personal gain; does not accept a bribe or any form of inducement to influence the performance of his/her professional duties.

Generally scholars in journalism ethics describe brown envelope journalism as problematic and unethical, likely to have an impact on journalistic coverage, but they differ on the question as to whether it constitutes bribery or corruption (Skjerdal, 2010). Retief (2002) notes that among many writers in media ethics, 'brown envelope' although usually small, is seen as being at variance with journalistic interest because at the end of the day "it boils down to bribery" (cited in Skjerdal, 2010).

Sanders (2003:122) note that most media organisations in the UK have become "increasingly squeamish" about journalists accepting freebies and junkets (*Soli*) from sources that their organisations might have dealings with. She notes that the BBC's Producer Guidelines (2001) for instance states "individuals must not accept personal benefits or benefits for family/close personal relations e.g. goods, discounts, services, cash, gratuities, or entertainment outside the normal scope of business hospitality, from organisations or people with whom they might have dealings with on the BBC's behalf." The argument is that "such practices can be subtly corrupting, undermining a reporter's detachment and objectivity, or at least giving the appearance that they might". However, Sanders (2003, p. 122) observed that journalists in the UK print industry accept free

books, CDs, film tickets, car loans, foreign trips etc. despite media organisations' disgust about accepting them.

On the empirical front to ascertain journalists' compliance with ethical codes, Onyebadi and Alajmi (2014) investigated the application of ethical injunction on the media in Kuwait. The ethical injunction recommended that in order to maintain objectivity and professional integrity, Kuwaiti journalists should avoid accepting any form of gratification from news sources. The study surveyed and interviewed Kuwaiti journalists on their attitude toward gratification. The findings indicated a breach of the ethical recommendation. The reasons for the breach were revealed to be lack of media ethics education and training among journalists and the absence of ethical guidance by media owners. A study by Temo (2013) also revealed that 90% of the journalists in Ghana have accepted *Soli* but only 21% believed that it affected their objectivity. In light of the foregoing, this study investigates whether or not journalists in Ghana comply with the GJA code of ethics which frowns on journalists' accepting of *Soli* from news sources.

2.10. *Soli* and PR Code of Ethics

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) has Advocacy, Honesty, Expertise, Independence, Loyalty, and Fairness as its core values that set the foundation for the Member Code of Ethics and set the industry standard for the professional practice of public relations. These values are the fundamental beliefs that guide the behaviours and decision-making process of members. As part of the Code of Ethics of PRSA, a provision on the free flow of information reads, "core principle protecting and advancing the free flow of accurate and truthful information is essential to serving the public interest and

contributing to informed decision making in a democratic society." The intent of this provision is to maintain the integrity of relationships with the media, government officials, and the public and to aid informed decision-making.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under this Provision include:

- A member representing a ski manufacturer gives a pair of expensive racing skis to a sports magazine columnist, to influence the columnist to write favourable articles about the product.
- A member entertains a government official beyond legal limits and/or in violation of government reporting requirements.

The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) has as part of its Ethical Codes specifically codes 13 and 14 that frowns on inducement and influence of the media and other publics respectively. On inducement, code 13 reads "neither directly nor indirectly offer nor give any financial or other inducements to public representatives or the media, or other stakeholders." On influence, code 14 reads "neither propose nor undertake any action which would constitute an improper influence on public representatives, the media, or other stakeholders."

The Institute of Public Relations Ghana adopted the code of conduct of IPRA popularly referred to as the 'Code of Venice'. All members of IPR (Ghana) are expected to abide by the ethical provisions enshrined in the IPRA code of conduct. Specifically on the issue of inducement and influence, as indicated in the IPRA code above, code 13 and 14 frowns on members of IPR (Ghana) inducing or influencing public representatives, the media, or other stakeholders. This implies that in the case of the media as is the focus of this study, members of IPR (Ghana) are enjoined by these provisions (codes 13 and 14)

not to do anything that would induce, influence and compromise the integrity and independence of the media. It is the interest of this study to examine the compliance or otherwise of PR practitioners in Ghana to these provisions as stipulated in the IPR (Ghana) code of ethics when dealing with the media.

2.11. Relationship between Positive Media Coverage and *Soli*

Pang (2010) posits that gaining positive coverage in and through the media remains “central” to the work of PR practitioners. Kasoma (2010) also notes that there are extant literature showing that public relations practitioners perceive themselves as playing a news management role in society. This new role is defined by Larsson (2009) as strategies for controlling the news agenda by producing and serving the media with material that promotes the instrumental purposes of the sender’s interests. Kasoma (2010) thus suggests that it is plausible that public relations practitioners perceive brown envelopes and freebies as a means of arriving at their stated role in society.

Seitel (2004) asserts that getting positive media coverage remains central for public relations practitioners even though public relations have grown much beyond the mere press agency or securing of publicity. This is arguably the result of the desire of public relations practitioners to get the views of the organisations they represent out to the public who are heterogeneous in nature and the news media serve as the appropriate vehicle through which the public can be reached with those views. In order to achieve this goal, PR practitioners build relationships with the media through a variety of ways some of which are deemed as unethical. *The Jakarta Post* of March 21, 2005 for instance asserts that “envelope journalism” – the practices of giving bribes including

money to win favourable media coverage – has been embraced by many public relations practitioners (Sinaga & Wu, 2007). . A study by Jo and Kim (2004) also found that PR practitioners believe that the media have power to control the public agenda, as well as their own; hence in order to set a positive agenda for the organisation they represent, PR practitioners pay ‘_Hong bao’ (an envelope full of money) to journalists. Corroborating this, Tsetsura (2015) found that PR practitioners desire to control what is published about them in China; resort to payment of gifts to the media. Mathews (2016) also observed that companies are rarely explicit that they want good coverage in return for the money paid to journalists but an understanding nonetheless exists. Mathews further asserts that if journalists did not receive ‘_hong baos’ (an envelope full of money) they would write negatively about the organisation or event or not give much coverage. Impliedly, the desire to obtain positive media coverage and payment of *Soli* are inextricably linked. It is the interest of this study to ascertain how the desire to obtain positive media coverage influences the payment of *Soli* to journalists by PR practitioners in Ghana.

Meanwhile it is worthy of note that the media also take advantage of the situation to trade their objectivity and independence by granting the desires of the PR practitioners in exchange for gifts and other monetary returns. That is, the phenomenon of *Soli* seems to be the appropriate avenue through which PR practitioners and the journalists reach a compromise in order to obtain positive media coverage. For instance Dirbaba (2010) asserts that there are accounts of investigative journalists in Ethiopia who use their position to harass and force individuals to pay money to them. Others promise positive and glorified coverage for sources in exchange for good amounts of money. Citing an account of a journalist in *The Ethiopian Herald*, Dirbaba notes:

When I go for news gathering, I discuss with him [the news source] whether the news event should be covered in a news flash or be given more space. If he needs more space, I will arrange an appointment for further interview. I then send him some three or four copies of the newspaper. I post the person's photo on the front page, and write the article very emphatically. I may not openly ask him to give me the money. But – I agitate him by calling him several times and discuss in a manner that makes him understand the intention. [...] You can agitate him to give you the money, you blow up the article using lots of adjectives, enumerate all the positive sides undermining all the weak and negative sides, even when the institution is practically very weak. You pump it up to make the weak organization very strong. Then, the person himself expresses his appreciation to you via telephone. And he invites you to his office. You get the money placed in a white envelope from the secretary with great gratitude. (Former editor with *The Ethiopian Herald*, personal communication, 17 July 2010).

Making a case for a positive relationship between *Soli* and the desire to obtain positive media coverage, Ristow (2010, p. 14) indicates:

If low pay is one explanation for incidents of cash for news coverage, perhaps the most obvious explanation is also very simple: Governments, corporations, and private individuals often want to control what is said about them...the easiest way to do that is, effectively, to "own" the journalists.

According to Ristow, this means that corporations have a strong vested interest not only in getting their news into the media, but getting the spin they want on it hence it is the most common form of cash for news coverage in some countries.

The studies above give indications that the primary goal of PR practitioners in the performance of the media relations function is put the views of the organisation they (PR practitioners) represent across to the publics. The studies have also established that in order to achieve the goal of obtaining favourable media coverage, PR practitioners build a variety of relationships with the media. Inherent in this relationship with the media as indicated by the studies above, is the payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners. It is the desire of this study to ascertain whether or not the desire of PR practitioners to obtain positive media coverage is intrinsically linked with the payment of *Soli* to the media and its assigns (journalists).

2.12. Theoretical Framework

2.12.1. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The theory was first propounded by Fishbein in 1967 in a quest to understand the relationship between attitude and behaviour. The theory was later developed by both Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen based on the assumption that human beings are usually quite rational and make systematic use of information available to them” (Tlou, 2009:26). The theory posits that a person’s behaviour follows logically and systematically from whatever information is available to him or her. The theory attempts, therefore, to clearly define the relationship between “belief, attitudes, intentions and behaviour” (Tlou, 2009:26). It also holds that the key to predicting behaviour lies with intentions; intentions that are shaped by attitudes towards the behaviour and subjective norms (Randall, 1989). The theory posits, “behaviour is determined by the behavioural intentions to emit the behaviour and that there are two major factors that determine

behavioural intentions: a personal or attitudinal factor and a social or normative factor” (Vallerand, Deshaies, Cuerrier, Pelletier, and Mongeau, 1992, p. 98).

The theory is explicitly concerned with behaviour and does not attempt to predict individual’s attitude towards the performance of the behaviour. The theory rather recognises the existence of other situations or factors that limit the sole influence of attitude and behaviour. These factors are those referred to as subjective norms. The intention to behave in a particular way is in effect, a function of two basic determinants which are attitudes towards performing the behaviour, and a subjective norm regarding the behaviour (Randall, 1989). This simply means that an individual’s beliefs about the outcome of the performance of a specific behaviour (attitude) as well as his or her beliefs about what is expected of him or her by others in the environment (subjective norms) can inform the intention to execute the behaviour.

2.12.1.1. Criticisms of the Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) has been criticised on several grounds. Critics outlined three major issues, namely –relationship between attitudes and subjective norms, the sufficiency of TRA components as valid predictors of intentions and behaviours, and the restricted range of meaning” the theory holds (Greene, Hale, & Rubin, 1997:270). Considering the issue of the relationship between attitudes and subjective norms, TRA posits that attitudes and subjective norms have –empirically separate and distinct influences on behavioural intentions” (Greene *et al.*, 1997:270). Critics of TRA have also asserted that the theory fails to specify theoretically, conditions under which the components of attitudes and subjective norms would or would not have distinct influences on intentions to perform behaviour.

Another issue that TRA has been criticised on is the view that attitude and subjective norms are insufficient as valid predictors of the intention to perform behaviour and the behaviour itself. This is on grounds of the existence of other possible predictors of behavioural intentions. These other predictors are one's "moral obligations, self-identity, affect and prior behaviours" (Greene et al, 1997:271). These variables are said to often offer the individual with an opportunity to choose to perform the behaviour or not. TRA fails to consider this element of choice possessed by the individual, which may or may not allow subjective norms and his or her attitudes towards the behaviour to determine whether the behavioural intent will be carried out or not.

Critics of TRA also indicate that the theory lacks a broad range of meaning. It is argued that a valid theory should be broad enough to "neither confirm the obvious nor address socially trivial issues" (Greene et al., 1997:274). The critics argue that TRA lacks theoretical attributes. Conversely, a theory's broad range of meaning should not be misunderstood as an attribute which inhibits application to behaviours that occur daily. The theory also fails to include a "broad scope of human activities" (Greene *et al.*, 1997:274). For example, the theory limits itself to behaviours that are as a result of one's own volition such as learning the performance of a new behaviour, without recognising stronger predictors of behaviour which are usually non-volitional in nature such as previous behaviour or habits.

Be that as it may, the TRA offers alternatives by which theorists and practitioners in the field of public relations and journalism can explain the differences in human will and the choices people make in their daily lives. This study thus employs the theory to serve as the basis for understanding the reasons why PR practitioners and journalists alike, engage

in the phenomenon of cash for coverage (*Soli*) in spite of the ethical guidelines adopted by their respective professional bodies to elicit ethical behaviour of their members.

2.12.2. Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The TPB is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The TPB attempts to also predict nonvolitional behaviours by incorporating perceptions of control over performance of the behaviour as an additional predictor (Ajzen, 1988, 1991; cited in Conner & Armitage, 1998). According to the theory, human behaviour is guided by three kinds of considerations: beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behaviour and the evaluations of these outcomes (behavioural beliefs), beliefs about the normative expectations of others and motivation to comply with these expectations (normative beliefs), and beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behaviour and the perceived power of these factors (control beliefs) (Ajzen, 2006). In their respective aggregates, behavioural beliefs produce a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the behaviour; normative beliefs result in perceived social pressure or subjective norm; and control beliefs give rise to perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 2006). In combination, attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perception of behavioural control lead to the formation of a behavioural intention. As a general rule, the more favourable the attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control, the stronger should be the person's intention to perform the behaviour in question (Ajzen, 2006). Finally, given a sufficient degree of actual control over the behaviour, people are expected to carry out their intentions when the opportunity arises. Intention is thus assumed to be the immediate antecedent of behaviour (Ajzen, 2006). However, because many behaviours pose difficulties of execution that may limit

volitional control, it is useful to consider perceived behavioural control in addition to intention. To the extent that perceived behavioural control is veridical, it can serve as a proxy for actual control and contribute to the prediction of the behaviour in question (Ajzen, 2006).

In the light of this study, the theory of planned behaviour is employed to help bring clarity on the decisions of PR practitioners and journalist to engage in the phenomenon of *Soli* in spite of the numerous societal and professional expectations of them not to indulge in such an unethical behaviour for the greater good.

2.12.3. Social Responsibility Theory (SRT)

Another theory which underpins this study is the Social Responsibility Theory (SRT) of the press propounded by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1956. The theory has as its major premise that freedom has corresponding obligations attached to it, and that the press, which enjoys a privileged position under the government, is obliged to be responsible to society for carrying out essential functions of mass communication (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2008). McQuail, Goldings, and De Bens (2005:172) outlines the basic tenets of the theory as follows: (i) the media have obligations to society, and media ownership is a public trust. (ii) news from the media should be free but self-regulated. (iii) the media should adhere to certain stipulated codes/ethics in order to guide its practices (iv) and in some circumstances, government could intervene to defend the public interest.

Guided by the tenets of this theory which calls for objectivity, fairness and adherence to codes of ethics, a journalist is expected to be immune from gratification and gifts as this

could disrupt his sense of social responsibility. This theory was employed to serve as a guide in assessing the compliance or otherwise of journalists to the responsibility that they owe to society when they encounter the phenomenon of *Soli*.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This study examines the factors media practitioners in Ghana consider when they encounter the phenomenon of *Soli* in Ghana. The methods and strategies that are employed in data collection and analysis are presented in this section. Specifically, the research approach and design, population, sampling strategy and sample size, data collection methods, instruments and analysis are presented in this chapter.

3.1. Research Approach

Research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). For the purpose of this study, the quantitative research approach was used.

This study adopted the quantitative research approach with the intention of identifying the factors that influence an outcome. The study therefore is concerned with the factors media practitioners in Ghana consider when they encounter the phenomenon of *Soli*. Creswell (2014) sees quantitative research as an approach for testing theories by way of assessing the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2014). Also, quantitative studies seek to determine the extent of a problem or the existence of a relationship between aspects of the phenomenon by quantifying the variations (Boateng, 2014:135). This study is interested in measuring the

relationships that exists among variables that are deemed significant or not in the acceptance or rejection of *Soli*. The quantitative approach as explained above is therefore considered quite appropriate for analysing the study. The study also used quantitative instruments, significantly the questionnaire, as well as quantitative sampling technique, multistage sampling, to examine the considerations for the acceptance or rejection of *Soli*.

3.2. Research Design

Research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a study (Creswell, 2014). For the purpose of this study, the survey design will be selected.

Mathers, Fox and Hunn (2009) indicate that the survey approach is frequently used to collect information on attitudes and behaviour. Survey researchers therefore seek to describe or explain people's current attitudes, opinions, thoughts, and perhaps, reports of behaviour surrounding an issue or event (Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 2005). To do so, survey researchers provide a quantitative or numeric description of the trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population with the intent of generalising from a sample to a population (Fowler, 2008; cited in Creswell, 2014). Pinsonneault and Kraemer (1993) also indicate that survey requires standardised information from and/or about the subjects being studied. The subjects studied might be individuals, groups, organisations or communities; they also might be projects, applications, or systems. The questions asked respondents in the study are for the purposes of eliciting standardised information from respondents. A survey research design was employed for this study so that the attitudes and opinions of the sampled PR

practitioners and journalists about *Soli* can be quantitatively described and understood. Reinard (1998) also indicates that a survey is an empirical study that uses questionnaires or interviews to discover descriptive characteristics of a phenomenon. Thus, this study uses questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaires were made up of both closed ended questions to help measure the ethical considerations of the acceptance or rejection of *Soli* within the Public Relations and Journalism professions.

According to Neuman (2007), survey asks many people (called respondents) about their beliefs, opinions, characteristics, and past or present behaviour and is therefore appropriate for studies that bother on self-reported beliefs or behaviour. This study, thus sought to investigate the underlying reasons and the considerations that guide media practitioners' (PR and journalists) desire to pay and/or receive *Soli* in Ghana. Responses to the questions posed were a self-reported belief or behaviour regarding the phenomenon under study.

3.3. Population

Salant and Dillman (1994) observed that a prerequisite to sample selection is to define the target population as narrowly as possible. Parahoo (1997) defines population as the total number of units from which data can be collected. The units may include individuals, artifacts, events or organisations. For this study, all PR practitioners in Ghana and journalists working and in all the media houses in Ghana constitute the population of the study. However, the population of a research can be categorised into two – the target population and the accessible population (Nworgu, 2006). The target population includes all the members of a group whom the research is targeting or related to, while the

accessible population is defined in terms of those members in the group within the reach of the researcher. Hence, all PR practitioners in Ghana and journalists working in all the media houses in Ghana constituted my target population while those who were eventually sampled and were willing to partake in this survey, constituted the accessible population.

The population of a study is essential in sample selection; however, it was challenging to establish the actual population number of PR practitioners and journalists in Ghana. Consequently, the professional associations of PR practitioners and journalists were considered. The Institute of Public Relations (Ghana) and the Ghana Journalist Association were all unable to provide the actual numbers of either journalists or PR practitioners in Ghana but had lists of what they described as members in good standing. These were a list of members or practitioners who had paid subscriptions, dues, and also participate in their activities. The Institute of Public Relations provided a list of 395 members while GJA provided a list of 988 members in good standing using the 2015 and 2017 lists respectively. Due to the seemingly low population numbers and the fact that not all PR practitioners and journalists belong to IPR (Ghana) and the GJA respectively, the population size of this study was not quantified. Accordingly, all PR practitioners and all practicing journalists with a Radio, TV, and Newspaper constituted the population for this study. However, the lists provided some parameters for sampling of respondents.

3.4. Sampling technique and sample size

3.4.1. Cluster sampling – multi-stage

According to Marshall, (1996) the aim of quantitative sampling approaches is to draw a representation to the population for the purpose of generalisation. This study adopted a random sampling technique in the selection of respondents. A random sample, sometimes called a probabilistic sample, is a sample in which each member of the sampling frame has an equal chance of being selected as a study participant (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009:27).

Specifically, a cluster sampling technique was used. A Cluster sampling is a probability sampling method in which the sampling units are not individual elements of the population, but group of elements or group of individuals are selected as sample. The total population is divided into a number of relatively small sub-divisions or groups which are themselves clusters and then some of these clusters are randomly selected for inclusion in the sample (Haque, 2010). There are two stages in sampling, single-stage and multistage. According to Creswell (2014), a single-stage sampling procedure is one in which the researcher has access to names in the population and can sample the people (or other elements) directly. In a multistage or clustering procedure, the researcher first identifies clusters (groups or organisations), obtains names of individuals within those clusters, and then samples within them. Multistage sampling is used in cluster sampling. Multistage sampling occurs when a researcher must cluster together certain groups because a master list is not available but encounters a more complex design. Another reason to make this sampling is that sometimes it is too expensive to make a complete list of all the elements of the population that we want to study, or that when we finish making

the list it may make no sense to the study (Barreiro & Albandoz, 2001). It involves two stages: 1) select clusters randomly from the population and list, and 2) select individuals randomly from the clusters (Babbie, 1990).

Given that journalists and Public Relations practitioners are different groups from which the researcher drew his sampling, the multistage sampling technique was used for this study. On the journalism front, a cluster of radio, television and print constituted the first stage towards sampling. The next stage of the sampling procedure was to select journalists from specific media houses for the study. What is significant is that The National Communication Authority provided a list of 37 and 13 commercial and public on-air radio and TV stations respectively that are operating in Greater Accra Region. Based on the high number of radio stations relative to TV stations, the study targeted 250 respondents from the radio stations and 50 from the TV stations. In addition, The National Media Commission provided a list of 135 newspapers that are in circulation in Ghana. Consequently, the study targeted 100 respondents from the Newspaper cluster. Eventually, journalists from 18 radio stations, 7 TV stations, and 3 Newspaper publishing houses were sampled for the study.

On the PR practitioners' front, respondents were selected from the 2015 list of members of IPR (Ghana) who are in good standing. The rationale for targeting the accredited members was the fact that they are final certificate holders of the institute who have undertaken courses in ethics at the institute. These respondents were the accredited members of the institute.

3.5. Sample Size

Subsequent to the study's inability to ascertain the actual population size of PR practitioners and journalists in Ghana, the sample size was derived from the population using no mathematical formulae. Although some other studies in similar situations have used convenient and purposive sampling to derive the sample size, this study was guided by extant literature which had used sample sizes of 189, 250 and 328 with a response rate of 16%, 27.1% and 6.1% (Grynko, 2012; Kluyeva & Tsetsura, 2015; Tsetsura, 2015). In view of this, the study sample size for journalists was 400 and that of PR practitioners was 123. This sample size is higher than the observed sample sizes in the studies acknowledged above because of data collection and data cleaning outcomes that might arise. These outcomes could reduce the data available for analysis and the higher sample size may compensate for these differences. Subsequently, the questionnaires that were completed and returned were 123 for journalists and 89 for PR practitioners; hence the response rate was 30.8% and 72.4% respectively. However, cumulatively, the response rate was 40.5%. After data cleansing, the usable questionnaires for data analysis were 185; 98 for journalists and 87 for PR practitioners.

3.6. Instrumentation

3.6.1. Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire was used to obtain the primary data for this study. Questionnaires are survey forms in which individuals respond to written items. It asks people to report their understanding of things, often including their own behaviour (Reinard, 1998). Questionnaires play a central role in the data collection process, and have a major impact

on data quality (Statistics Canada, 2003). The questionnaire used for this survey were structured and consisted of both closed and opened-ended in order for the researcher to have a standardised response for some of the items while allowing respondents to also respond in their own words regarding some other items. On the part of the journalists, the questionnaires were administered face to face, and were completed by respondents on their own. However, the questionnaire for the accredited members of IPR (Ghana) was designed using Google-forms application and sent to accredited members on behalf of the researcher by IPR (Ghana). This was done to ensure easy access to the respondents since they are widespread, thus, making it difficult for the researcher to reach all of them with a printed questionnaire.

The questionnaire used for the study was designed by the researcher but 5-Point Likert-type statements used Klyueva and Tsetsura (2015) was also adapted for this study. However, not all the statements used by Klyueva and Tsetsura (2015) were used for the study. The additional statements on the scale were drawn from extant literature that made reference to the consideration journalist and PR practitioners have for engaging in the phenomenon of *Soli*. The questionnaire for the journalists contained 29 items organised into five (5) sections. The first section obtained information on the demographic characteristics of respondents which included sex, age, years of experience, sector of employment, category of media organisation and salary level. Section two (2) obtained information on awareness of the phenomenon and ethical codes, section three (3) was on perception about the phenomenon, section four (4) was on ethical considerations of certain variables in the phenomenon of *Soli*, and section five (5) was a five-point scale requiring respondents to agree or disagree on the items contained in the scale. On the

other hand, the PR questionnaire contained 21 items and was divided into five (5) sections. The first section was on demographics of respondents, the second section was on awareness of the phenomenon, the third was on how practitioners encounter the phenomenon, the fourth was on the ethical considerations practitioners have about the phenomenon, and the 5th section as a five-point (1-5) Likert scale containing twelve (12) items that required of respondents to agree or disagree with the items contained in the scale.

3.6.2. Scale Selection

The five-point scale was selected to measure the degree of agreement among journalists and PR practitioners on the factors they consider when they are confronted with the phenomenon of *Soli*. The scale was selected because it was originally developed by Tsetsura (2005) to study bribery for media coverage in Poland and subsequently modified by Kluyeva and Tsetsura (2015) to examine the questions of ethics and transparency in Russian journalism. The five-point (1-5) Likert type of scale required of respondents to choose from gradation of responses from strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat agree/somewhat disagree, agree, to strongly agree. The scale, however, was modified to address the research objectives of this study. The rationale for the modification was that some of the questions were unrelated to this study.

3.7. Validity and Reliability

3.7.1. Validity

According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006), if a piece of research is invalid, then it is worthless. Creswell (2014) is of the view that validity in quantitative research refers to whether one can draw meaningful and useful inferences from scores on particular

instruments and whether it can lead to meaningful interpretation of data. The scholar notes that establishing the validity of the scores in a survey helps to identify whether an instrument might be a good one to use in survey research. Bhattachjee (2012) also notes that validation of research instrument involve finding out the extent to which the instrument adequately represents the underlying construct that it is supposed to measure. The research instrument (questionnaire) used for this study was validated to ensure that it could adequately elicit useful information from respondents for this study. For the purposes of ensuring that a meaningful and useful inference can be drawn from the final score on the instrument (questionnaire), face and content validity had to be established for the instrument (questionnaire).

3.7.2. Face Validity

Face validity describes how a research instrument could reasonably measure its underlying construct –on its face” or based on appearance (Creswell, 2014). To ensure face validity of the instrument (questionnaire), the questionnaire was submitted to researchers in communication, particularly those who were knowledgeable in media relations and journalism for their assessment.

3.7.3. Content Validity

According to Cohen, Manion, & Keith (2007:137) to demonstrate this form of validity the instrument must show that it fairly and comprehensively covers the domain or items that it purports to cover. It seeks to establish whether a research instrument can accurately measure what is was designed to measure based on its composition (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

To ensure content validity for this study, the research instrument (questionnaire) was submitted to the study supervisor for inputs and revision.

3.8. Reliability of Instrument

Reliability is the extent to which a measure, procedure, or instrument provides the same results on repeated trials (O'Leary, 2004:59). According to Cohen, Manion, & Keith (2007, p. 146), for a research to be reliable it must demonstrate that if it were to be carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context (however defined), then similar results would be found. To ensure reliability of the instrument, the research questionnaire used for his study was pretested to ensure consistent and reliable information for the study.

3.9. Piloting of Questionnaires

After designing research instruments, it is necessary to pilot them no matter the scale of the research and the constraints in terms of time and resources (Kusi, 2012). The instrument (questionnaire) for journalists was piloted on 38 journalists in Tamale-based radio and television stations. The questionnaires were also administered to reporters of Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic in Tamale. Similarly, the instrument (questionnaires) for the PR practitioners was piloted on sixteen (16) PR practitioners in some institutions in Tamale. Responses from the pilot helped the researcher to identify some ambiguities and repetitiveness of some of the items. It also helped in the addition of some items and the deletion of some other items deemed irrelevant to ensure that the questions elicit the required information.

After the pilot test, one of the items which read “How often do you give *Soli* to journalists” had options of “Always, Very often, quite often, occasionally, and less often” without an option for “never” if the respondent has indicated “no” in a preceding question that read “do you give *Soli* to journalists when you invite them to events/programmes in your organisation.” This led to those who responded “no” to skip the question that asks for the frequency of occurrence. The test coefficient after the pilot testing using Cronbach’s Alpha was .73 and .70 for the PR practitioner and journalists questionnaires respectively which meant that the instrument could obtain reliable information.

3.10. Data Collection Procedure

The primary data from journalists was collected from journalists who report for GTV, TV3, TV Africa, Peace FM, Citi FM, Radio Gold, Kasapa FM, Adom FM, Montie FM, Onua FM, 3 FM, Uniiq FM, Asempa FM, Joy FM, Daily Graphic, Daily Guide and the Chronicle. All these media houses were concentrated in Accra. This was done for the purposes of proximity and time since it was technically impossible to visit all the media stations in the country. On the selection of PR Practitioners, only accredited members of IPR (Ghana) who are serving as PR officers in their respective organisations were selected for this study. The rationale for targeting only accredited members was based on the fact that they are final certificate holders of IPR (Ghana) and have some level of work experience on the field.

The researcher sought the permission of the selected media houses through formal letters from the department of Communication and Media Studies, UEW. A formal letter was also written to IPR (Ghana) explaining the research methodology and the need to get in

touch with the accredited members through their emails that are available to the institute. Subsequently, the questionnaire was designed using google-forms and emailed to the accredited members. On the part of the journalists, the questionnaire was administered to journalists of the various media houses at their workplace.

3.11. Data Analysis

Computer software, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to quantitatively analyse all coded responses from the respondents. Frequencies, percentages, cross tabulations; Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient, Durbin-Watson test, F-test, T-test and ANOVA tests were all performed to effectively address the research hypotheses of the study. The study also used tables and charts to present the findings of the study.

3.12. Summary

This chapter discussed the method used for this study. The research approach was quantitative with survey as the research design. The target population was accredited members of IPR Ghana and journalists of some selected media houses while sampling strategy was multi stage. Questionnaires (both opened and closed ended) were used as the instrument for the study. A rating scale adapted from Kluyeva and Tsetsura (2015), was also used in the questionnaire.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of findings of this study. Journalists and Public Relations (PR) practitioners constituted the respondents for this study. The data gathered were analysed by the descriptive and inferential analyses technique with the support of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 20.0. In all, five hundred and twenty-three (523) questionnaires were administered among journalists and PR Practitioners. Of the five hundred and twenty-three (523), four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered among journalists while one hundred and twenty-three (123) were circulated among PR practitioners. However, 212 questionnaires comprising 123 and 89 journalists and PR Practitioners' questionnaires respectively were returned culminating into a return rate of 40.5%. However, the analysis was based on one hundred and eighty-five (185) usable questionnaires after data cleansing. As the study essentially focused on Journalists and PR practitioners, the presentation of findings combines them on separate columns of tables. The findings of the study are presented according to the objectives and hypothesis of the study. The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H₁₀: There is no significant association between salary levels of journalists and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*

H₁₁: There is a significant association between salary levels of journalists and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*.

H2₀: There is no significant correlation between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of conduct on inducement and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*.

H2₁: There is a significant correlation between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of conduct on inducement and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*.

H3₀: There is no significant relationship between PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media and payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners

H3₁: There is a significant relationship between PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media and payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners

H4₀: PR practitioners' desire to obtain positive media coverage has no significant relationship with payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners.

H4₁: PR practitioners' desire to obtain positive media coverage has a significant relationship with payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners.

4.1. Demographics of Respondents

The Socio-demographic characteristics of respondent are presented below:

4.1.1. Sex distribution of respondents

Respondents were required to indicate their sex by checking the appropriate sex applicable as indicated in the questionnaire. The result of the sex distribution is presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

| Sex | Journalists | | PR practitioners | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage % | Frequency | Percentage % |
| Male | 56 | 57.1% | 60 | 69.0% |
| Female | 42 | 42.9% | 27 | 31.0% |
| Total | 98 | 100% | 87 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As shown in Table 4.1 above, a greater number of the respondents were males and a few were female. On the journalism cluster, 57% of the respondents were male while 43% were female. In the case of the PR Practitioners cluster, 69.0% were male and 31.0% were female. By implication, majority of the respondents from both the journalism and the PR Practitioners' clusters were males.

4.1.2. Age distribution of respondents

Respondents in this study were required to indicate the ages that were applicable to them. Table 4.2 below shows the age distribution of the respondents in this study.

Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents

| Age | Journalists | | PR Practitioners | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage% | Frequency | Percentage% |
| Less than 30 | 44 | 44.9% | 7 | 8% |
| 30-39 | 51 | 52.0% | 55 | 63.2% |
| 40-49 | 3 | 3.1% | 7 | 8% |
| 50 and above | 0 | 0 | 18 | 20.7% |
| Total | 98 | 100% | 87 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey Data, 2017

As indicated in Table 4.2 above, the ages of respondents in this study revealed that most of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 39. From the journalism cluster, 44.9% were less than 30 years of age, 52% were between the ages 30-39,

3.1% were between the ages of 40-49, and none was up to 50 years. On the PR Practitioners cluster, 8% were less than 30 years of age, 63.2% were between the ages of 30-39, another 8% were between the ages of 40-49, and 20.7% were 50 years and above.

4.1.3. Years of experience

To ascertain the years of practice as a journalist or PR practitioner, respondents were asked to indicate how long they have been working as journalists or PR practitioners.

Table 4.3 below shows the results from the respondents.

Table 4.3: Years of Experience in the Field

| Years of Experience (N) | Journalists | | PR Practitioners | |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage % | Frequency | Percentage % |
| Less than 5 | 43 | 43.9% | 28 | 32.2% |
| 5-10 | 27 | 27.5% | 28 | 32.2% |
| 10+ | 28 | 28.6% | 31 | 35.6% |
| Total | 98 | 100% | 87 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As observed in Table 4.3 above, majority of the journalists had less than 5 years of work experience while majority of the PR practitioners had more than 10 years of experience. The study found that 43.9% of journalists and 32.2% of PR practitioners had less than 5 years of work experience; 27.5% of journalists and same 32.2% of PR practitioners had between 5-10 years' work experience in, and 28.6% journalists and 35.6% PR Practitioners had more than 10 years' work experience. This implies that majority of the journalists is still young in the media industry and inexperienced while majority of PR practitioners is old in the industry and very experienced. Arguably, the young journalists with less experience have the tendency to accept *Soli* as a result of their inexperience with regard to handling of PR practitioners who are experienced and could take advantage of their inexperience to influence them.

4.1.4. Sector of employment

Respondents were also required to indicate whether they worked in a public or private sector organisation by checking the appropriate box as provided in the questionnaire.

Table 4.4 below shows the results from respondents in this study.

Table 4.4: Sector of Employment

| Sector of Employment (N) | Journalist | | PR Practitioners | |
|-----------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage % | Frequency | Percentage % |
| Public | 33 | 33.7% | 67 | 77.0% |
| Private | 65 | 66.3% | 20 | 23.0% |
| Total | 98 | 100% | 87 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey: 2017

As indicated in Table 4.4 above, majority of the journalists worked in the private sector while majority of the PR Practitioner worked in the public sector. There were 33.7% of journalists who indicated that they work in the public sector while 66.3% of them indicated that they worked in the private sector. However, the reverse is the case for the PR practitioners cluster. The study revealed that 77% of the PR practitioners work in the Public sector and only 23.0% work in the private sector. This suggests that majority of journalists in Ghana work in private media houses. Also, it suggests that majority of PR practitioners in Ghana worked in the public sector while a minority of them work in the private sector.

4.1.5. Category of media organisation

The questionnaire asked of journalists to indicate whether they worked in a Newspaper, TV or a radio station. Table 4.5 below shows the responses for each category of media organisation that respondents worked for.

Table 4.5: Category of Media Organisation Journalists Work

| Category of Media organisation (N) | Frequency | Percentage % |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Newspaper | 20 | 20.4% |
| TV | 21 | 21.4% |
| Radio | 57 | 58.2% |
| Total | 98 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey: 2017

As reported in the Table 4.5 above, majority of the journalists (58.2%) who responded to the survey were reporters for radio stations. The other respondents comprised journalists from TV stations (21.4%) and Newspaper organisations (20.4%). What accounts for this disparity is the fact that most of the returned questionnaires were from the reporters in the radio stations.

4.1.6. Salary level

The salary level of journalists was also investigated to ascertain whether it has a bearing on the phenomenon of *Soli* in Ghana. Respondents were asked to indicate their salary level by checking the answer applicable to them. The distribution of the salary levels of the journalists who participated in this study are presented in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Salary Level of Journalists

| Salary Level (N) | Frequency | Percentage % |
|------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 500-1000 | 81 | 82.7% |
| 1001-1500 | 10 | 10.2% |
| 1501-2000 | 7 | 7.1% |
| Total | 98 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As shown in Table 4.6 above, the salary distribution of journalists who participated in this study shows a majority (N=81) earning salaries between ₵500 and ₵1000. There were 81 respondents representing 82.7% of the total number of respondents who indicated that they earn salaries between GH₵500 and GH₵1000. The second category

of respondents numbering 10 respondents and accounts for 10.2% of total respondents also indicated that they earn salaries between GH¢1001 and GH¢1500. The last category of respondents numbering 7 respondents and representing 7.1% of respondents also indicated that they earn salaries between ¢1500 and ¢2000. This suggests that majority of the respondent earn low salaries. This is consistent with the findings of Kasoma (2009) where journalists earned salaries between \$200-\$399, an equivalent of GH¢874.5-GH¢1744.6 at current exchange rate. With majority of journalists found in the low salary bracket means that the likelihood and temptation to accept *Soli* could be high. This is premised on the fact that findings from Lodamo and Skjerdal (2009) indicate that low salaries among journalists aided the phenomenon of freebies and brown envelope journalism in Ethiopia. Tsetsura (2015) also found income levels for media practitioners in China to vary widely and argued that this variance could contribute to journalists' willingness to accept paid news, since paid news allows journalists to supplement their income.

4.1.7. Respondents with journalism training

The professionalism of the journalists was also investigated by asking journalists to indicate whether they have journalism training or not. Table 4.7 below shows the number of respondents with journalism training.

Table 4.7: Journalists with Journalism Training

| Journalism Training | Frequency | Percentage % |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Yes | 64 | 65.3% |
| No | 34 | 34.7% |
| Total | 98 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

It can be observed from the Table 4.7 above that 64 respondents representing 65.3% of the total number of journalists who participated in this study indicated that they

obtained journalism training. However, 34 respondents who account for 34.7% of the respondents had no journalism training. This point to the fact that majority of the respondents were professionals by virtue of their training in the field of journalism. This also suggests that as professionals, they are expected to uphold the highest ethical tenets of their profession.

4.1.8. Membership of a professional body

Respondents in this study were required to indicate whether they belong to the professional body as pertains in their profession. Table 4.8 below shows the responses of journalists and PR practitioners as to whether they belong to the Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) or the Institute of Public Relations, Ghana (IPR, Ghana) respectively.

Table 4.8: Member of GJA and IPR (Ghana)

| Item | Journalists | | PR Practitioners | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage % | Frequency | Percentage% |
| Yes | 34 | 34.7 | 87 | 100% |
| No | 64 | 65.3 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 98 | 100% | 87 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

It can be seen from Table 4.8 above that, majority of the journalists did not belong to the Ghana Journalist Association while all the PR practitioners were members of IPR (Ghana). There were 34.7% of journalists who indicated that they were members of GJA while 65.3% indicated that they were not members of GJA. However, all the PR practitioners (100%) were members of IPR (Ghana). Being a member of a professional association suggests that the individual is expected to have knowledge of, subscribe to, and at the same time uphold the highest ethical standards of that professional body.

4.2. The Phenomenon of *Soli*

4.2.1. Level of awareness of the Phenomenon of ‘*Soli*’ in Ghana and Related Matters

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of a phenomenon in Ghana called ‘*Soli*’. Table 4.9 shows the responses of the journalists and PR practitioners to the question.

Table 4.9: Awareness of *Soli*

| Awareness of <i>Soli</i> | Journalists | | PR practitioners | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage % | Frequency | Percentage % |
| Yes | 98 | 100% | 80 | 92% |
| No | 0 | 0 | 7 | 8% |
| Total | 98 | 100% | 87 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From Table 4.9 above, majority of the respondents indicate that they are aware of the phenomenon called *Soli*. All the journalists (100%) indicated that they were aware of the phenomenon of *Soli*. However, from the PR Practitioners cluster, 92% of the respondents indicated that they are aware of the phenomenon of *Soli* while 8% indicated that they were unaware of the phenomenon of *Soli*. This implies that both journalists and PR practitioners were not oblivious of the fact that the phenomenon of *Soli* exists in the Ghanaian media landscape.

4.2.2. Acceptance of *Soli* considered as an unethical behaviour

To ascertain whether journalists considered the acceptance of *Soli* as an unethical behaviour or not, respondents were asked to indicate if they were aware that acceptance of *Soli* from news sources was considered as an unethical behaviour. Table 4.10 below shows the results of journalists’ awareness of acceptance of *Soli* as an unethical behaviour.

Table 4.10: Acceptance of *Soli* considered as unethical behaviour

| Awareness | Frequency | Percentage% |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 80 | 81.6 |
| No | 18 | 18.4 |
| Total | 98 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As presented in Table 4.10 above, 80 journalists representing 81.6% responded in the affirmative while 18 journalists representing 18.4% responded in the negative. This implies that majority of the respondents were aware that acceptance of *Soli* from news sources is considered as an unethical behaviour. This is consistent with the findings of Skjerdal (2010) where journalists indicated that it was unethical to accept *Soli*. The recognition by journalists that the acceptance of *Soli* is unethical is an indicator to ethical decision making. According to Rest (1986), to make an ethical decision, moral agents must first recognise the moral issue and make a moral judgement.

4.2.3. Journalists Consideration of Acceptance of *Soli* as a rewarding Behaviour

It was also of interest to this study to ascertain whether journalists think the acceptance of *Soli* was a rewarding behaviour or not. Table 4.13 below shows journalists' perception on whether their colleagues who accepts *Soli* earn more income than those who do not accept *Soli*.

Table 4.11: Journalists Consideration of Acceptance of *Soli* as a Rewarding Behaviour

| Item | Frequency | Percentage% |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| Yes | 86 | 87.8% |
| No | 12 | 12.2% |
| Total | 98 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As shown in Table 4.11 above, majority of the respondents (N=86; 87.8%) think that their colleagues who accept *Soli* earn more income than those who do not accept *Soli* while a minority (N=12; 12.2%) do not think so. This means that majority of journalists see the acceptance of *Soli* as a rewarding behaviour. By implication, there is the tendency or motivation for most journalists to be influenced into accepting *Soli* because of the perception that their colleagues who accept it earn more income than they do. This is consistent with the observation of Li (1994) where he posits “when reporters who work hard on serious news make less money than those who write the paid news, financial motivations might lead more reporters to cover paid news (*Soli* news) instead of real news”. Tsetsura (2015) found that those who adhere to ethical policy and professional integrity usually do not receive as much income as those who abandon the principles and only work for their own financial interests. This negative financial incentive might be driving more and more journalists to give up news principles and embrace the practice of paid news (*Soli*).

4.2.4. Payment of *Soli* as an Acceptable Behaviour

Additionally, PR practitioners were asked to indicate whether they think it was ethically acceptable to give *Soli* to journalists or not. Table 4.12 shows the Perception of PR Practitioners regarding the payment of *Soli* to Journalists.

Table 4.12: Payment of *Soli* as an Acceptable behaviour

| Item | Frequency | Percentage% |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| Yes | 7 | 8.0 |
| No | 80 | 92.0 |
| Total | 87 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As observed in Table 4.12 above, 92% of respondents thought that it is not ethically acceptable to give *Soli* to journalists when they are invited to cover an event while 8% (N=7) thought otherwise. This implies that majority of PR Practitioners do not think it is ethically acceptable to give *Soli* to journalist when they are invited to cover an event or a programme of the organisation the PR practitioner represents. As argued in the preceding section (4.3.2.), the recognition by PR practitioners, complicit in the phenomenon of *Soli*, that it is unethical to pay *Soli* to journalists is a first step towards making an ethical decision as espoused by Rest (1986) in his four-component model in which moral agents must first recognise the moral issue, make a moral judgment, place moral concerns above other concerns, and act according to these moral concerns.

4.2.5. Effect of *Soli* on objectivity

Respondents were asked to indicate whether acceptance of *Soli* influences the way they report about an event. Table 4.13 below shows the responses obtained.

Table 4.13: Effect of *Soli* on Objectivity

| Effect on Objectivity | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Yes | 45 | 45.9 |
| No | 53 | 54.1 |
| Total | 98 | 100.0 |

Source; Field Survey, 2017

As indicated in Table 4.13 above, majority of the respondents (N=53) representing 54.1% answered ‘_No’ to indicate that the acceptance of money and gifts from news

sources does not influence the way they report about an event. However, 47 respondents representing 45.9% responded in the affirmative. This is consistent with the findings of Temo (2013) where only 21% of the journalists in Ghana believe that accepting *Soli* affected their objectivity. The consistency in the response of the journalists in this study and that of Temo (2013) is significant as it suggests a total rejection of the fact that the objectivity of the media is being compromised as a result of accepting *Soli*. This rejection of the idea that acceptance of *Soli* affects journalists' objectivity could stem from the fact that the phenomenon of *Soli* is so common to the extent that journalists downplay the adverse effect it has on their objectivity. This response could also stem from the fact that journalists do not want to be criticised for being unethical in their reporting. However, contrary to this believe by journalists that acceptance of *Soli* does not affect their objectivity in reporting, Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012, p. 517) argue that "monetary gifts could pressurise a journalist into doing what the giver wants, and this makes the journalist unable to be objective in his reporting of events and issues involving the people who give such gifts."

4.3. Knowledge of Professional Code of Ethics on Inducement

4.3.1. Journalists' knowledge of GJA code of conduct on bribery or inducement

In order to ascertain whether respondents' knowledge on a specific provision in the GJA professional code of conduct which frowns on bribery or inducement of journalists, respondents were required to check the appropriate box applicable to the respondent. Figure 1 below shows the responses from the journalists who participated in this study.

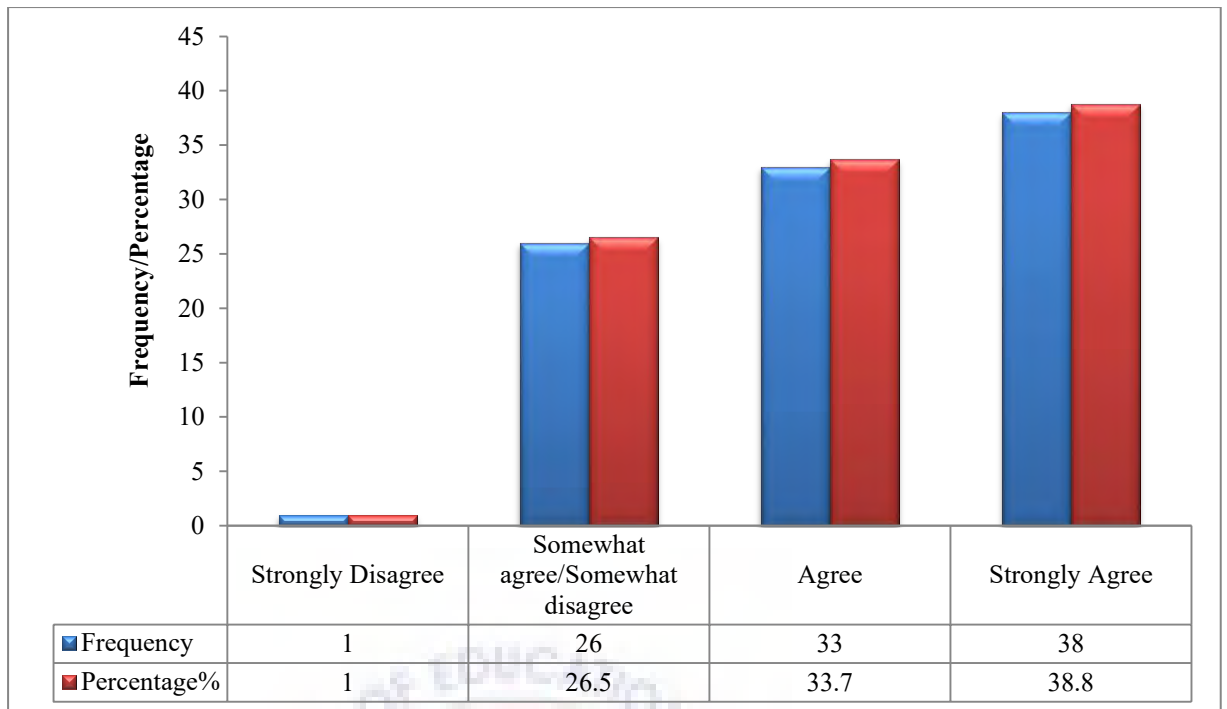


Figure 1: Journalists Knowledge of GJA code of Conduct on Bribery or Inducement

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As observed in Figure 1 above, 38 respondents representing 38.8% Strongly Agree to have knowledge of a provision of GJA code of ethics which frowns on bribery and inducement of journalists, 33 respondents representing 33.7% also Agree to have knowledge of GJA code on inducement, 26 respondents representing 26.5% were indifferent (neutral) while 1 respondent representing 1% Strongly Disagree to have knowledge of GJA code of conduct on inducement of journalists. This implies that, cumulatively, majority of the respondents (N=71; 72.5%) had knowledge of the GJA code of ethics which admonishes journalists not to accept any form of bribe or inducement from news sources.

4.3.2. PR Practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of conduct on bribery and inducement of Journalists

PR practitioners were required to indicate whether they had knowledge of a specific code of conduct of IPR Ghana which frowns on inducement of journalists. Figure 2 shows PR Practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code on bribery and inducement of journalists.

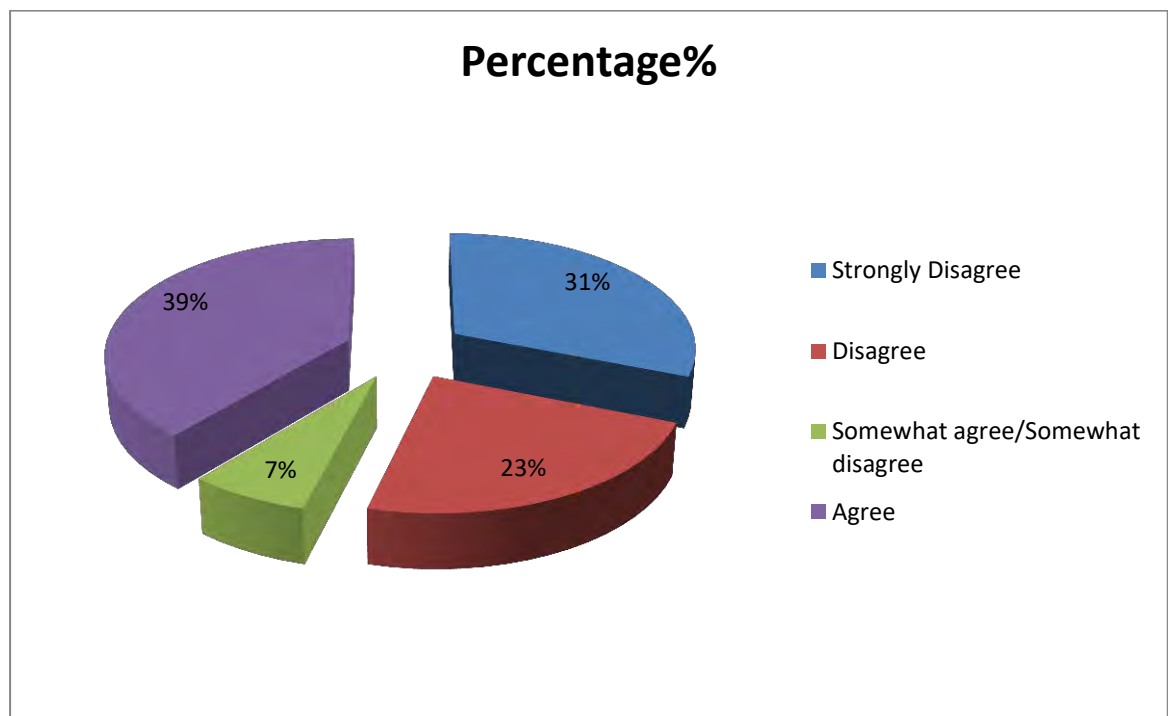


Figure 2: PR Practitioners' Knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code on bribery or inducement of journalists

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As observed from figure 2 above, majority of the respondents disagreed with the fact that they had knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics. Cumulatively, 54% of PR practitioners disagreed that they had knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media, 7% were indifferent whiles 39% agreed that they have knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media. However, the observed responses shows that 31% of PR practitioners strongly disagreed, 23% disagreed, 7% somewhat agreed/somewhat disagreed, whiles 39%

agreed. This suggests that majority of PR practitioners who participated in this study did not have knowledge of the IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media.

4.4. Journalists' Acceptance of *Soli*

An important variable for this study was to ascertain whether journalists in Ghana accept *Soli*. Table 4.14 below shows the responses to the questions posed to respondents on a five-point Likert Scale.

Table 4.14: Responses to the Acceptance of *Soli*

| Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | Frequency (N) | Percentage% |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Strongly Disagree | 13 | 13.3% |
| Disagree | 1 | 1% |
| Somewhat agree/Somewhat disagree | 5 | 5.1% |
| Agree | 12 | 12.2% |
| Strongly Agree | 67 | 68.4% |
| Total | 98 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The observed results of Table 4.14 above shows that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that they accept *Soli* from news sources. An observed 67 respondents representing 68.4% indicated that they strongly agreed to accepting *Soli* from news sources in their line of work, 12 respondents (12.2%) indicated that they agreed to accepting *Soli*, 5 respondents (5.1%) were neutral in their responses while 1 and 13 respondents representing 1% and 13.3% indicated that they respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed to accepting *Soli*. Cumulatively, 79 respondents representing 80.6% agreed that they accept *Soli*, 14 respondents representing 14.3% disagreed to accepting *Soli* while 5 respondents representing 5.1% were indifferent. This is consistent with the findings of Nwabueze (2010) where 84% of journalists agreed to accepting brown envelopes and 16% disagreeing to accepting brown envelopes. It is

also consistent with the findings of Temo (2013) where 90% of journalists in Ghana were reported to have agreed to accepting *Soli*. The findings suggest that the phenomenon of *Soli* is pervasive within the Ghanaian media landscape. What accounts for this, arguably, is the ethical considerations journalists have when they are invited to cover a story. These considerations may emanate from the personal idiosyncrasies of the journalists, the economic conditions of the journalists, or the socio-cultural environment in which the journalist operate. It was therefore of interest to ascertain the considerations of journalists for engaging in the phenomenon of *Soli*. The next section presents the results of the responses obtained from respondents regarding the considerations they had for engaging in the phenomenon of *Soli*.

4.4.1. Motivating factors influencing acceptance of *Soli*

In line with the rationale for this study and to establish the considerations that the respondents have for engaging in the phenomenon of *Soli*, respondents were asked to indicate some of the motivating factors (considerations) that influence journalists to engage in the phenomenon of *Soli*. Table 4.15 below shows the mean value that are used to rank the considerations to ascertain which consideration carries the most weight in terms of influencing journalists decisions to engage in the phenomenon of *Soli*.

Table 4.15: Journalists' Considerations for Accepting *Soli*

| Statements | Rank | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Non provision of transportation by media organisation | 1 | 3.90 | 1.439 |
| The ethical disposition regarding <i>Soli</i> | 2 | 3.87 | 1.510 |
| Distance travelled to cover events | 3 | 3.73 | 1.313 |
| Relatively low salary | 4 | 3.71 | 1.235 |
| Poorly paid reporters | 5 | 3.11 | 1.291 |
| Media organisation not financially strong | 6 | 2.87 | 1.590 |
| Professional norm | 7 | 2.37 | 1.495 |
| Viewed as a token of event organisers' appreciation | 8 | 2.19 | 1.455 |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As shown in Table 4.15 above, the mean and standard deviation vary on the 5-point Likert scale for the various considerations journalists had for engaging in the phenomenon of *Soli*. Of all the considerations that journalists had for engaging in the phenomenon of *Soli*, the most influencing factor with a mean value of 3.90 is the fact that journalists accept *Soli* because their media organisation do not provide for their transportation when they are assigned to go and cover an event. This was followed by the fact that journalists do not see anything wrong with accepting *Soli* (M=3.87) and because of the distance they travel to cover an event (M=3.73). The economic considerations (low salary level and poor pay) were next with mean values of 3.71 and 3.11 respectively. Other considerations included the fact that the media houses are not financially strong to provide better conditions of services to journalists (M=2.87), because acceptance of *Soli* is a norm in the journalism profession (M=2.37), and lastly because journalists see *Soli* as a token of appreciation from event organisers for covering their event (M=2.19). The foregoing implies that all the respondents agreed to the first four items with mean values of 3.90, 3.87, 3.73 and 3.71 respectively, since the obtained mean values are closer to 4 which represents Agree on the Likert scale. The 5th and 6th item with values of 3.11 and 2.87 are close to 3 which represent somewhat agree/somewhat disagree on the Likert scale. The remaining items with values of 2.37 and 2.19 are close to 2 which represents Disagree on the Likert scale. This means that all respondents agreed that the non-provision of transportation by media houses to journalists (3.90), the ethical disposition of the journalists concerned (3.87), the distance journalists travel to cover events (3.73), and the relatively low salaries of journalists (3.71) were the most influencing factors (considerations) that journalists had for engaging in the phenomenon of *Soli*. However, all the respondents were indifferent when it came to the reason being that journalists in private/public

media houses are poorly paid and the fact that the media organisation they work for were not financially strong. All the respondents also disagreed with the fact that journalists accept *Soli* because 'it was a norm in their profession (2.37)' and because 'journalists see *Soli* as a token of appreciation from event organisers for covering their event (2.19).

The results, therefore, show that contrary to the many suggestions that low salaries of journalists is the major factor that influences journalists to accept or reject *Soli*, the finding of this study shows that the most influencing factor (consideration) is the non-provision of means of transportation to most reporters by the media organisations they represent. This means that reporters normally look for stories and find their own way of getting to the source without the assistance of their media organisation.

4.5. Payment of *Soli* by PR Practitioners

Another key variable in this study is the payment of *Soli* to journalist by PR practitioners. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they give *Soli* to journalists or not when journalists are invited to an event or programme in their organisation. Figure 3 below shows the responses of PR practitioners to the question of whether they give *Soli* to journalists when they invite journalists to events or programmes.

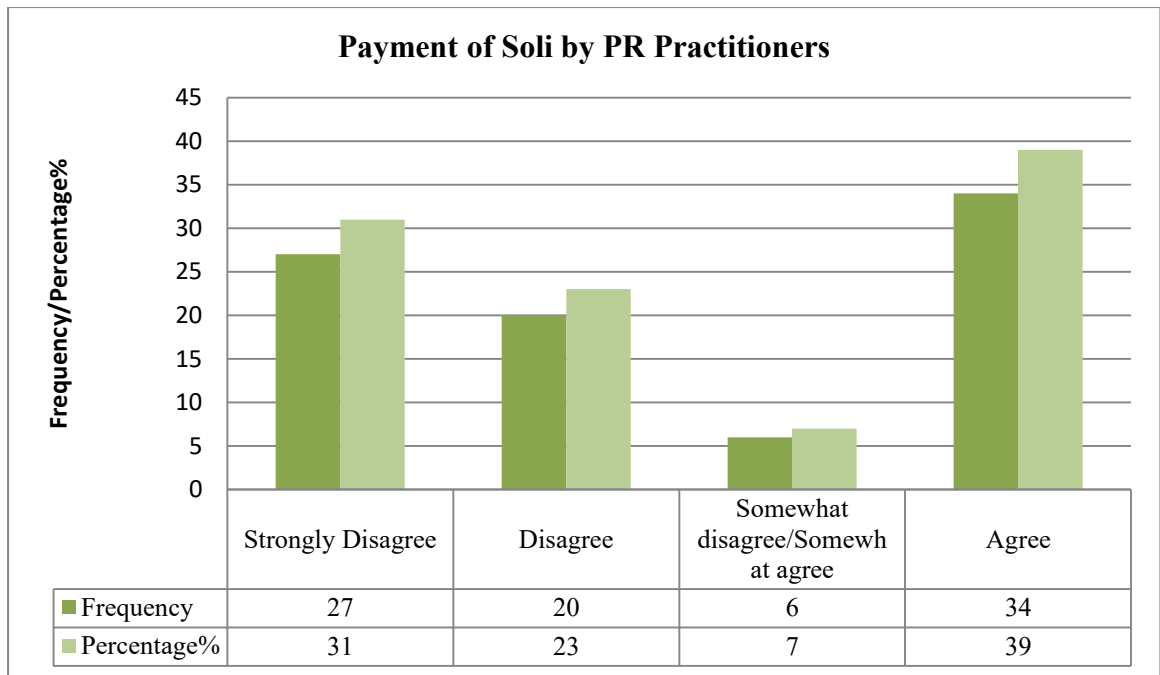


Figure 3: Payment of *Soli* by PR Practitioners

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As observed in Figure 3 above, 34 respondents representing 39% agreed that they pay *Soli* to journalists when they invite them (journalists) to events or programmes, 6 respondents representing 7% of respondents were indifferent (somewhat agreed/somewhat disagreed), 20 respondents representing 23% of respondents disagreed while 27 respondents representing 31% of respondents strongly disagreed. This implies that, cumulatively, majority of the respondents (N=47; 54%) disagreed with paying *Soli* to journalist when they invite them (journalists) to events or programmes.

4.5.1. Items used as payment of *Soli*

Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate what they usually give to journalists as *Soli*. Of the 87 practitioners who indicated that they give *Soli* to journalists, 67 of them representing 77% indicated that they give ‘_cash’, 7 practitioners representing 8% indicated that they give ‘_free lunch’, another 7 respondents accounting for 8%

indicated they give out souvenirs, while the remaining 6 respondents representing 7 practitioners indicated that they offer free trips. The results are shown in Table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16: Items used as Payment of *Soli*

| Items | Frequency | Percentage % |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Cash | 67 | 77% |
| Souvenirs | 7 | 8% |
| Free lunch | 7 | 8% |
| Free trips | 6 | 7% |
| Total | 87 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

4.5.2. Factors PR Practitioners consider in the payment of *Soli* to Journalists

To ascertain the considerations PR practitioners have for engaging in the phenomenon of *Soli*, the respondents were asked to respond to some items on the five-point Likert scale. Table 4.17 below shows the mean values of each response obtained from practitioners.

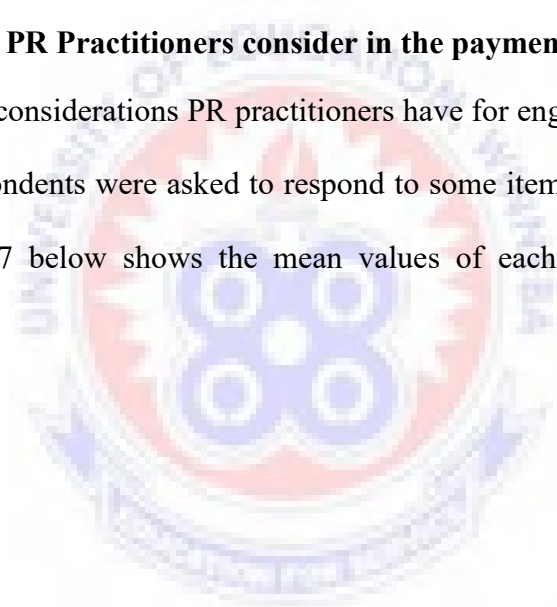


Table 4.17: Factors PR Practitioners Consider when paying *Soli* to Journalists

| Statements | Rank | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|------|--------|----------------|
| Demand for <i>Soli</i> by journalists | 1 | 3.7586 | .98790 |
| Poor pay of journalists | 2 | 3.3908 | 1.39231 |
| Budgetary allocations for <i>Soli</i> | 3 | 3.2759 | 1.21703 |
| Motivation for the media to honour an invitation | 4 | 3.1494 | 1.11573 |
| Positive media Coverage | 5 | 3.0000 | 1.37249 |
| Relationship management | 6 | 2.8851 | 1.24289 |
| As a token of appreciation to journalists | 7 | 2.8736 | .94996 |
| Professional norm | 8 | 2.8621 | 1.24052 |
| Compelled by Superiors | 9 | 2.6092 | 1.01565 |
| Interdependent Relationship | 10 | 2.5172 | 1.28373 |
| Boundary spanning role | 11 | 2.3908 | 1.01565 |
| News management function | 12 | 2.3103 | 1.00360 |
| Killing a negative story | 13 | 2.2529 | 1.26875 |
| Organisational policy | 14 | 1.9195 | .61414 |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.17 above, of all the considerations that PR practitioners have for paying *Soli* to journalists, the demand by journalists to be paid *Soli* when they cover an event is the motivating factor with the highest consideration by PR practitioners (M=3.758) while the least consideration was the policy of the organisation to pay *Soli* whenever they invited the media to their event or programme (M=1.9195). In order of priority, considerations include: demand by journalists (M=3.578), poor pay of journalists (3.39), because it is budgeted for (M=3.27), to get continuous coverage of events (M=3.14), to obtain positive media coverage (M=3.0), to maintain good relationship with the media (2.88), as a token of appreciation for the journalists attending the event (2.87), because it's a norm (2.86), compulsion from superiors (2.6) the interdependent relationship they share with journalists (2.5), as a boundary spanning role (2.39), as part of PR practitioners news management function (2.31), to kill a negative story

(2.25), and because it is the policy of the organisation the PR practitioner works (1.91). The implication is that the value of 3.75 obtained by the first item (I give *Soli* because journalists often demand *Soli* from me) is closer to 4 which represents agree on the 5-point Likert scale. It also means the only item that all the respondents agreed to as the consideration for paying *Soli* is journalists who come to cover their events often demand *Soli*'. The next 9 items had mean values of approximately 3 which represents a point of neutrality (somewhat agree/somewhat disagree) on the 5-point Likert scale; hence, all the respondents were indifferent with regard to those items. The remaining 4 items had mean values of approximately 2 which represents 'disagree' on the 5-point scale, hence, all the respondents 'disagree' with those four items to be a consideration for paying *Soli*.

The findings above, therefore, is at variance with the general notion of 'positive media coverage' being the most consideration PR practitioners have for paying *Soli* to journalists (e.g. Sinaga & Wu, 2007; Pang, 2010; Mathews, 2016). The findings therefore suggest that the phenomenon of *Soli* is perpetuated by journalists because they are the ones who request it from their news sources (PR practitioners) as indicated above.

4.6. Acceptance of *Soli* and Positive Media Coverage

Respondents (journalists) were required to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the fact that acceptance of *Soli* influences their decision to report positively about the organisation or event in the media.. Figure 4 below shows the level of agreement and disagreement among respondents regarding the effect of acceptance of *Soli* on Positive media coverage.

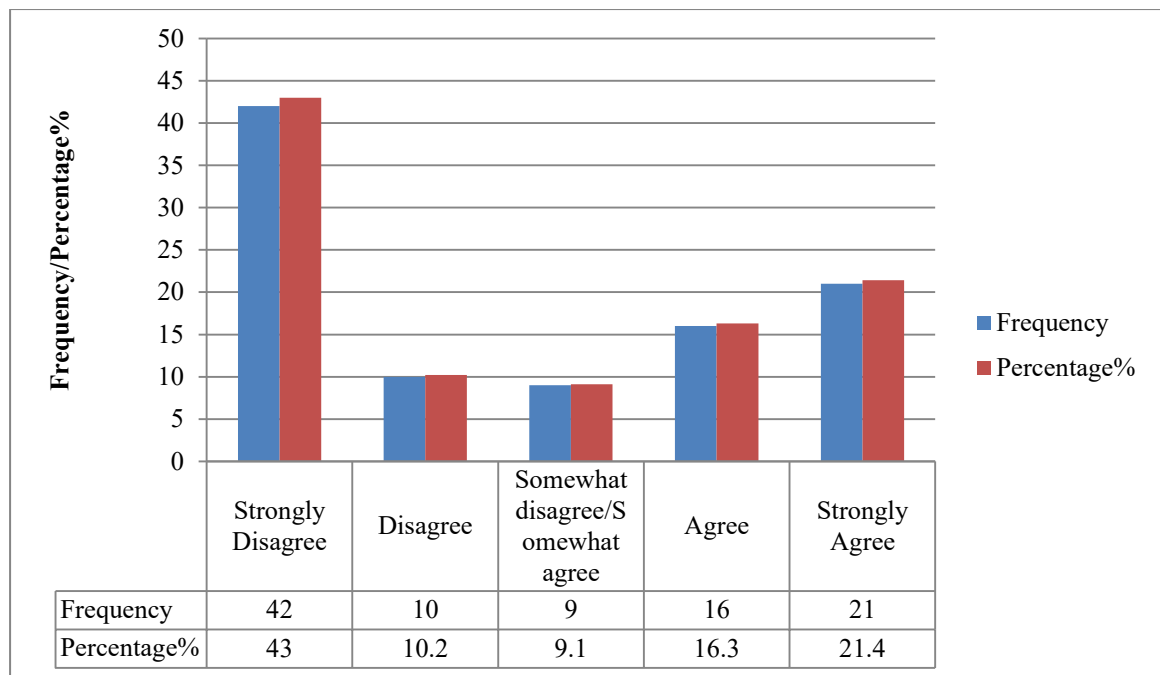


Figure 4: Influence of Acceptance of *Soli* on Positive media Coverage

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As observed in Figure 4 above, majority of the respondents strongly disagreed with the fact that when they accept *Soli*, they feel obliged to write positively about the organisation or event for which the *Soli* was paid. Of the 98 respondents, 43% strongly disagreed with the statement, 10.2% disagreed with the statement, 9.1% were indifferent, 16.3% agreed, while 21.4% strongly agreed that when they accept *Soli*, they feel obliged to report positively about the event or organisation which paid the *Soli*. Cumulatively, 53.2% disagreed and strongly disagreed that when they accept *Soli* they feel obliged to report positively about the event or organisation which paid the *Soli*, 9.1% were indifferent, while 37.7% agreed and strongly agreed that when they accept *Soli*, they feel obliged to report positively about the event or organisation which paid the *Soli*. This implies that journalists do not believe the acceptance of *Soli* affects their objectivity to the extent that they would feel obliged to report positively about the organisation which paid the *Soli*. This is consistent with the findings of Nwabueze (2010) where 78% of the respondents indicated that the acceptance of *Soli*

does not make them less objective in the coverage of events. However, Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) argued that “the news stories produced [as a result of accepting *Soli*] are likened to commercial products that have been paid for by the customer which should serve the need to which the product is expected, in favour of the customer.” Thus, the acceptance of *Soli* has the tendency to influence the decision of journalists to write positively about the event or the organisation for which the *Soli* was paid, hence an incidence of positive media coverage.

4.7. Payment of *Soli* and Positive media Coverage

PR practitioners were also required to indicate if the payment of *Soli* was the result of their desire to obtain positive media coverage for the organisation of client they represent. Figure 5 below shows the level of agreement among practitioners regarding the desire to obtain media coverage being an influencing factor in their decision to pay *Soli* to journalists.

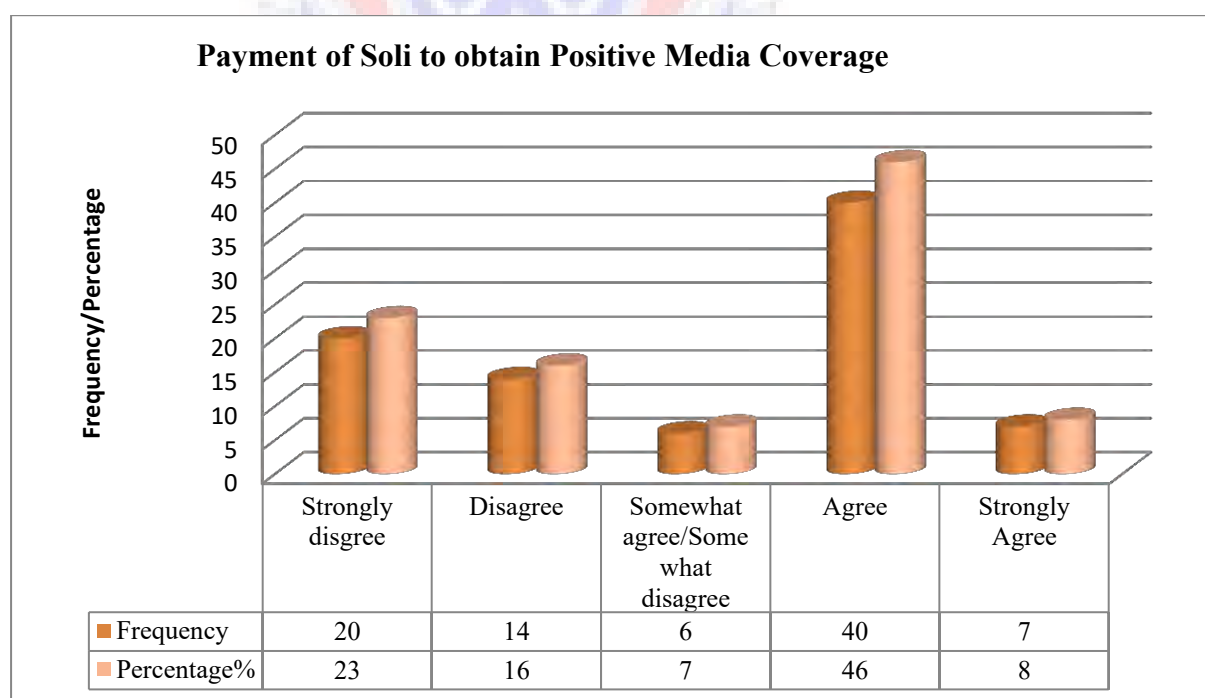


Figure 5: Payment of *Soli* to obtain Positive Media Coverage

Source: Field Survey; 2017

The observed (Figure 5) above shows that majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they pay *Soli* in order to obtain positive media coverage. Of the 87 respondents, 46% and 8% of the respondent respectively agreed and strongly agreed that they pay *Soli* in order to obtain positive media coverage, 7% were indifferent, while 23% and 16% strongly disagreed and agreed respectively that they pay *Soli* in order to obtain positive media coverage.

4.8. Testing of Hypothesis 1 using Pearson Moment Correlation

Coefficient: Salary level and Acceptance of *Soli*

H₁₀: There is no significant association between salary levels of journalists and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*

H₁₁: There is a significant association between salary levels of journalists and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*.

The first hypothesis sought to examine whether the salary level of journalists has any significant association with journalists' acceptance of *Soli*. First, a cross tabulation of the salary levels was done to ascertain the acceptance of *Soli* within each category of the salary levels. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was then used to test the relationship between salary levels of journalists and the acceptance of *Soli* at a significant level of .001. The results of the cross tabulation is presented in Table 4.18 below.

Table 4.18: Crosstabulation of Salary Level and Acceptance of *Soli*

| | | | Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | | | | | Total |
|--------------|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------|
| | | | SD | D | Sa/Sd | A | SA | |
| Salary level | Low 500- 1000 | Count | 3 | 1 | 5 | 12 | 60 | 81 |
| | | % within Salary level | 3.7% | 1.2% | 6.2% | 14.8% | 74.1% | 100% |
| | | % within Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | 20.0% | 25.0% | 100.0% | 85.7% | 100.0% | 82.7% |
| | | % of Total | 3.1% | 1.0% | 5.1% | 12.2% | 61.2% | 82.7% |
| | Mid. 1001- 1500 | Count | 9 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| | | % within Salary level | 90.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 10.0% | 0.0% | 100% |
| | | % within Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | 60.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 7.1% | 0.0% | 10.2% |
| | | % of Total | 9.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.0% | 0.0% | 10.2% |
| | Upper 1501- 2000 | Count | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| | | % within Salary level | 42.9% | 42.9% | 0.0% | 14.3% | 0.0% | 100% |
| | | % within Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | 20.0% | 75.0% | 0.0% | 7.1% | 0.0% | 7.1% |
| | | % of Total | 3.1% | 3.1% | 0.0% | 1.0% | 0.0% | 7.1% |
| Total | Count | 15 | 4 | 5 | 14 | 60 | 98 | |
| | % within | 15.3% | 4.1% | 5.1% | 14.3% | 61.2% | 100% | |
| | Salary level % within | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100% | |
| | Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | | | | | | | |
| | % of Total | 15.3% | 4.1% | 5.1% | 14.3% | 61.2% | 100% | |

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The observed values of Table 4.18 show that majority of the respondents within the lower salary bracket are more receptive to *Soli* relative to the other respondents within the mid and upper salary levels. From the Cross-tabulation table, of the 81 respondents who earn salaries between Gh¢500-Gh¢1000, 72% agreed and strongly agreed that they accept *Soli*, 3 respondents representing 3.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed, 5 respondents (6.2%) were indifferent within the low salary bracket. Of the 10 respondents who earn salaries between GH¢1001-GH¢1500, majority of the respondents (9; 90%) strongly disagreed that they accept *Soli* while only 1

respondent (10%) agreed to accepting *Soli*. Those who earn salaries between Gh¢1501-Gh¢2000 were 7 out of which 6 (85.7%) agreed and strongly disagreed to accepting *Soli* while one respondent (14.3%) indicated that he/she accepts *Soli*.

Meanwhile cumulatively, of the 98 respondents, majority of the respondents (N=74; 75.5%) agreed (N=14; 14.3%) and strongly agreed (N=60; 61.2%) that they accept *Soli*, 19 respondents (19.4%) disagreed (N=4; 4.1%) and strongly disagreed (15; 15.3) that they accept *Soli*. However, only 5 (5.1%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed they accept *Soli*.

4.8.1. Testing of H₁₀ using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between Salary levels and acceptance of *Soli*. Table 4.19 shows the output of the test results.

Table 4.19: Relationship between Salary Level and Acceptance of *Soli*

| Correlations | | Salary level | Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Salary level | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.690** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 98 | 98 |
| Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | Pearson Correlation | -.690** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 98 | 98 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2017

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between salary levels of journalists and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*. There was a significant correlation between the two variables. However, the relationship was inverse; $r = -.690$, $n = 98$, $p = 0.001$. Hence, the H₁₀ is rejected. This implies that there was a significant, negative association between salary level of

journalists and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*. As salary level of journalists increases journalists' acceptance of *Soli* would decrease. However, as the salary levels of journalists decreases, journalists' acceptance of *Soli* would increase.

The findings are consistent with the findings of Kasoma (2007; 2009) where she found a correlation between low salary levels and acceptance of brown envelopes among Ghanaian and Gambian journalists, and a statistically significant interaction between pay and propensity to engage in brown envelope journalism (*Soli*). It is also consistent with Tsetsura and Grynko (2009); Klyueva and Tsetsura (2015) where in Ukraine and Russia respectively, many journalists indicated that their poor salaries and unsatisfactory work conditions forced them to accept cash and other payments for publications. Pratt (1991) also found a consistent non-significant tendency for employees with higher salaries to be more sensitive to ethical violations and to self-report higher ethical standards compared to those with lower salaries. Tsetsura (2015) also found income levels for media practitioners in China to vary widely and argued that this variance may contribute to journalists' willingness to accept paid news, since paid news allows practitioners to supplement their income.

4.9. Testing of Hypothesis 2 using Pearson Moment Correlation

Coefficient: Knowledge of GJA Codes and Acceptance of *Soli*

H₂₀: There is no significant correlation between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of conduct on inducement and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*.

H₂₁: There is a significant correlation between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of conduct on inducement and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*.

The second hypothesis of this study holds that journalists' knowledge of GJA code of conduct on inducement has no significant correlation with journalists' acceptance of *Soli*. What it means is that, when journalists have knowledge of the GJA code of ethics which frowns on journalists accepting any form of bribery or inducement, there is the likelihood that journalists would not accept *Soli*. The result was tested using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to ascertain the relationship between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of ethics and journalists acceptance of *Soli*. Table 4.20 shows the outcome of the results tested.

Table 4.20: Knowledge of GJA Code of Ethics and Acceptance of *Soli*

| Correlations | | Knowledge of GJA code on inducement | Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Knowledge of GJA code on inducement | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.408** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 98 | 98 |
| Acceptance of <i>Soli</i> | Pearson Correlation | -.408** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 98 | 98 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source; Field Survey, 2017

As observed in Table 4.20 above, there was a significant negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.408$, $n = 98$, $p = 0.001$. Hence, the H_{20} is rejected. This implies that there was a significant negative correlation between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of ethics on inducement/bribery and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*. So holding other things constant, the more knowledgeable a journalist is, regarding the code of ethics on inducement, the less likelihood would the journalist accept *Soli*. On the other hand the less knowledgeable a journalist is about GJA code of ethics which frowns on inducement, the more likelihood the person would accept *Soli*.

This means that as more journalists are exposed to the code of ethics of GJA, there is the likelihood of journalists not accepting *Soli* and vice versa. It also suggests that journalists would comply with the GJA code of ethics which frowns on accepting *Soli* when they have knowledge of such provision in the GJA code of ethics. Theoretically, this is supported by the tenets of the Social responsibility theory which requires of the media to adhere to certain stipulated codes/ethics in order to guide its practice. However, this arguably is not the case as extant literature suggests otherwise. A study of Onyebadi and Alajmi (2014) found a breach of the ethical recommendations that Kuwaiti journalists should not accept any form of gratification from news sources since that could undermine their (journalists) objectivity and professional integrity. Adeyemi (2013) found a non-compliance of Nigerian journalists to the ethical code on bribery.

4.10. Regression Analysis of Hypotheses 1 and 2

A standard regression analysis was performed to assess the ability of journalists' salary levels and their knowledge of GJA code of ethics, to predict journalists' acceptance of *Soli*. Table 4.21 below shows the multiple regression model summary.

Table 4.21: Multiple Linear Regression Model Summary

| Model Summary ^b | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|--|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson | |
| 1 | .922 ^a | .851 | .832 | .612 | 1.980 | |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Acceptance of *Soli* because event organisers offer it as a token of their appreciation for covering their event, I have a journalism training, Acceptance of *Soli* because I don't see anything wrong with accepting *Soli*, journalists' salary level, Acceptance of *Soli* because my media organisation is not financially strong, It is alright for journalists to accept monetary incentives from news sources given the financial constraints they encounter in their work, Acceptance of *Soli* because it is the norm of our profession, Acceptance of *Soli* because reporters in private/public media houses are poorly paid, knowledge of GJA code on inducement, Acceptance of *Soli* because of the distance I travel to cover an event, Acceptance of *Soli* because my media organisation doesn't provide for my transportation when I go to cover events

b. Dependent Variable: Acceptance of *Soli*

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.21 above shows the multiple linear regression model summary and overall fit. The results shows that the adjusted R^2 is .832 with the R^2 being .851. This means that the linear regression explains about 85.1% of the variance in the data. The Durbin-Watson $d=1.980$ is between the critical value of $1.5 < d > 2.5$. Therefore we can confidently assume that there is a first order linear auto-correlation in the multiple regression data.

Table 4.22: F-test Table for Journalists Considerations

| | | ANOVA ^a | | | | |
|-------|------------|--------------------|----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 183.715 | 11 | 16.701 | 44.546 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 32.244 | 86 | .375 | | |
| | Total | 215.959 | 97 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Acceptance of *Soli*

b. Predictors: (Constant), Acceptance of *Soli* because event organisers offer it as a token of their appreciation for covering their event, I have a journalism training, Acceptance of *Soli* because I don't see anything wrong with accepting *Soli*, journalists' Salary level, Acceptance of *Soli* because my media organisation is not financially strong, It is alright for journalists to accept monetary incentives from news sources given the financial constraints they encounter in their work, Acceptance of *Soli* because it is the norm of our profession, Acceptance of *Soli* because reporters in private/public media houses are poorly paid, knowledge of GJA code on inducement, Acceptance of *Soli* because of the distance I travel to cover an event, Acceptance of *Soli* because my media organisation doesn't provide for my transportation when I go to cover events

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As observed in Table 4.22, the F-test is highly significant with a value of 44.546. This means that the regression model explains a significant amount of the variance in the dependent variable (acceptance of *Soli*).

Table 4.23: Multiple Regression Estimates for Journalists Considerations

| Model | Coefficients ^a | | | | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---------|------|-------------------------|--------|
| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | | Tolerance | VIF |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 4.420 | .684 | | 6.462 | .000 | | |
| Journalists' salary level | -1.655 | .144 | -.638 | -11.480 | .000 | .562 | 1.780 |
| Professional in the field | -.411 | .178 | -.324 | -2.306 | .024 | .088 | 11.398 |
| Knowledge of GJA code on Inducement | .463 | .204 | .268 | 2.268 | .026 | .125 | 8.016 |
| It is alright for journalists to accept <i>Soli</i> from news sources | -.015 | .091 | -.017 | -.164 | .870 | .159 | 6.307 |
| Because my media organisation is not financially strong | .392 | .090 | .417 | 4.345 | .000 | .188 | 5.315 |
| Because I don't see anything wrong with accepting <i>Soli</i> | .282 | .127 | .285 | 2.224 | .029 | .105 | 9.485 |
| Because it is the norm of our profession | .254 | .078 | .255 | 3.241 | .002 | .281 | 3.561 |
| Distance of travel to cover event | -.132 | .209 | -.117 | -.635 | .527 | .052 | 19.385 |
| Non provision of means of transport by media houses | .572 | .191 | .551 | 2.989 | .004 | .051 | 19.603 |
| Poor pay of reporters in private/public media houses | -.341 | .165 | -.295 | -2.069 | .042 | .085 | 11.745 |
| Because it is a token appreciation from event organisers | -.069 | .059 | -.057 | -1.170 | .245 | .730 | 1.371 |

a. Dependent Variable: Acceptance of *Soli*

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As observed from Table 4.23 above, the Beta value of the independent variable (Salary level) is -.638 which is significant at .001. This shows a significantly negative relationship between the independent variable (salary level) and the dependent variable (acceptance of *Soli*). The implication is that, of all the reasons journalists accept *Soli*; the salary level of the journalist is able to explain 63.8% of the reasons

why journalists accept *Soli*. That is to say that, for every 1 unit increase in the salary level of journalists, there would be a corresponding decrease in journalists' acceptance of *Soli* by 63.8%. On the other hand, for every 1 unit decrease in the salary level of journalists, there would be a corresponding increase in journalists' acceptance of *Soli* by 63.8%. Hence the null hypothesis one (H_{10}) is rejected.

In the case of the second hypothesis which seeks to examine the relationship between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of conduct on inducement and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*, the Beta value of the independent variable (GJA Code on inducement) is .268 at a significant level of .026. This shows a significant positive relationship between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of ethics on inducement and the acceptance of *Soli*; hence the null hypothesis (H_{20}) is rejected. The implication is that, of all the reasons that account for journalists' acceptance of *Soli*, journalists' knowledge of the GJA code of ethics on inducement explains about 26.8% of the reasons why journalists accept or reject *Soli*. This means that, for every 1 unit increase in journalists' knowledge of the GJA code of ethics on inducement, there is a corresponding increase in journalists' acceptance of *Soli* by 26.8%. On the other hand, for every 1 unit decrease in journalists' knowledge of GJA code of ethics on inducement, there is a correspondent decrease in journalists' acceptance of *Soli* by 26.8%. This suggests that having knowledge of GJA code on inducement does not sway journalists from accepting *Soli*. This contravenes the social responsibility theory which admonishes journalists to adhere to certain stipulated codes/ethics in order to guide its practices. It also suggests that journalists are "code breakers" and have inherent dispositions beyond the code of ethics which are the imperative. And because there are no punishable measures beyond condemnation when a journalist violates the

code of conduct of GJA as indicated in the MSI (2012) report, there is the likelihood that journalists would not feel obliged to comply with the code of ethics of GJA.

Again, the theory of Planned Behaviour also has it that human behaviour is guided among other things by beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behaviour and the evaluations of these outcomes (behavioural beliefs), beliefs about the normative expectations of others and motivation to comply with these expectations (normative beliefs), and beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behaviour and the perceived power of these factors (control beliefs). Therefore, a lot of considerations beyond the code of ethics come to play in journalists' decision to accept or reject *Soli*. Hence, the noncompliance of journalists to the GJA code of ethics is plausible.

4.11. Testing of Hypothesis 3 using Pearson Correlation Moment

Coefficient: Knowledge of IPR Code and Payment of *Soli*

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between PR Practitioners knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics and payment of *Soli*. The hypothesis that was formulated reads:

H₃₀: There is no significant relationship between PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media and payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners

H₃₁: There is a significant relationship between PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media and payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners

The table below shows the relationship between PR Practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media and payment of *Soli*.

Table 4.24: Knowledge of IPR (Ghana) Code on Inducement and Payment of *Soli*

| Correlations | | Knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code on inducement of the media | Payment of <i>Soli</i> |
|--|---------------------|--|------------------------|
| Knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code on inducement of the media | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .423** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 87 | 87 |
| Payment of <i>Soli</i> | Pearson Correlation | .423** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 87 | 87 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As shown in Table 4.24 above, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics on inducement/bribery and acceptance of *Soli*. There was a significant positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .423$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.01$; hence, the H_{30} is rejected. This implies that there was a significant positive relationship between knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement/bribery of the media and payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners. So holding other considerations constant, the more knowledgeable a PR practitioner is regarding IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media, the more likelihood the person would pay *Soli*. On the other hand the less knowledgeable a PR practitioner is about IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media, the less likelihood the person would pay *Soli*. This finding is consistent with the findings of

Hickson (2004) where he found that PR practitioners break the code of ethics of the PR organisations in Asia to engage in the payment of brown envelope to the media. However, it is inconsistent with the findings of Lee (2011) where he found that the number of ethics courses taken in an individual's public relations career is a significant determinant shaping the public relations practitioners' conceptualisations of ethical knowledge. This is contrary to this findings in the sense that, despite the fact that all the PR practitioners sampled for this study are member of IPR (Ghana) some of whom are final level certificate holders and have taking courses in ethics and are also aware of the stands of their professional body with regards to inducement of the media, they still violate the code and pay *Soli* to journalists.

Meanwhile, according to Nwabueze (2010), code of ethics ensures that people practicing a particular profession are led to deciphering what is morally right from what is morally wrong without being policed to do so. They are guiding principles which are not laws but become binding to people who adopt it as a moral boundary for the practice of their profession. It could also be described as a moral *modus operandi* adopted or willingly accepted by a person or group of persons in day-to-day dealings in a particular trade or in a relationship with others. Therefore, as members of IPR (Ghana), PR practitioners are expected to abide by the code of ethics. However, the findings of this study reveals otherwise. It suggests that majority of IPR members are 'code breakers' and do not abide by the code of ethics of their professional association by paying *Soli* to journalists which has the tendency to compromise their objectivity and independence. The logical explanation to this violation of the code is offered by Grynko (2012) where she underscored –although ethics is associated with rules and imperatives, in real life practice ethical decisions go

beyond normative concepts and formalised rules. It is also an internal process and personal choice that may or may not correspond with established imperatives.”

4.12. Testing of Hypothesis 4 using Pearson Correlation Moment

Coefficient: Payment of *Soli* and Positive Media Coverage

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship between Positive media coverage and payment of *Soli* by PR Practitioners. The hypothesis that was formulated reads:

H₄₀: PR practitioners’ desire to obtain positive media coverage has no significant relationship with payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners.

H₄₁: PR practitioners’ desire to obtain positive media coverage has a significant relationship with payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners.

Table 4.25 below shows the relationship between *Soli* and Positive media Coverage

Table 4.25: Payment of *Soli* and Positive Media Coverage

| Correlations | | Payment of <i>Soli</i> | Positive media coverage |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Payment of <i>Soli</i> | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .485** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 87 | 87 |
| Positive media Coverage | Pearson Correlation | .485** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 87 | 87 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As shown in Table 4.25 above, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between payment of *Soli* and positive media coverage. There was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .485$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.001$. Hence, the **H₄₀** is rejected. This implies that there is a significant positive correlation between the desire by PR practitioners to obtain positive media coverage

and payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners. So holding other things constant, the more PR practitioners have the desire to obtain positive media coverage, the more likely they would pay *Soli* to journalists. On the other hand, the less PR practitioners have a desire to obtain positive media coverage the less likely they would pay *Soli* to the media. This was in line with the proposition of the theory of reasoned action that an individual's beliefs about the outcome of the performance of a specific behaviour (attitude) as well as his or her beliefs about what is expected of him or her by others in the environment (subjective norms) can inform the intention to execute the behaviour. As such, PR practitioners desire to obtain positive media coverage, and the belief by PR practitioners that when they pay *Soli* they would obtain positive media coverage informs their decision to pay *Soli* to journalists in order to achieve the outcome (positive media coverage. The results is consistent with Tsetsura (2015) where PR practitioners desire to control what is published about them resort to payment of gifts to the media. It is also consistent with Jo and Kim (2004) where PR practitioners indicated that the media have power to control the public agenda, as well as their own; hence in order to set a positive agenda for the organisation they represent, PR practitioners pay 'Hong bao' (an envelope full of money) to journalists.

4.13. Regression Analysis of Hypotheses 3 and 4

A standard regression analysis was performed to assess the ability of PR Practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of conduct and their desire to obtain positive media coverage to predict their willingness to pay *Soli*.

H₃₀: PR Practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics is negatively related to payment of *Soli* by PR Practitioners.

H₄: PR practitioners' desire to obtain positive media coverage is not positively associated with payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners.

Table 4.26: Multiple Linear Regression Model Summary for PR Practitioners Considerations

| Model Summary ^b | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
| 1 | .763 ^a | .582 | .545 | .87176 | 2.264 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Relationship management consideration, Professional norm consideration, Organisational policy consideration, As a token of appreciation, Demand by journalists consideration, Positive media coverage Consideration, Knowledge of code of ethics considerations

b. Dependent Variable: I give *Soli* to journalists when we invite them to cover our event

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.26 above shows the multiple linear regression model summary and overall fit. The results show that the adjusted R² is .545 with the R² being .582. This means that the linear regression explains about 58.2% of the variance in the data. The Durbin-Watson d=2.264 is between the critical value of $1.5 < d < 2.5$. Therefore we can confidently assume that there is a first order linear auto-correlation in the multiple regression data.

Table 4.27: The F-Test for PR Practitioners Considerations

| ANOVA ^a | | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 83.572 | 7 | 11.939 | 15.710 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 60.037 | 79 | .760 | | |
| | Total | 143.609 | 86 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: I give *Soli* to journalists when we invite them to cover our event

b. Predictors: (Constant), Relationship management consideration, Professional norm consideration, Organisational policy consideration, As a token of appreciation, Demand by journalists consideration, Positive media coverage Consideration, Knowledge of code of ethics considerations

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As observed in Table 4.27, the F-test is highly significant with a value of 15.710. This means that the regression model explains a significant amount of the variance in the dependent variable (payment of *Soli*).

Table 4.28: Multiple Regression Estimates for PR Practitioners Considerations

| Model | Coefficients ^a | | | | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|--|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. | Tolerance | VIF |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 2.118 | .803 | | 2.637 | .010 | | |
| Relationship Mgt. | -.756 | .109 | -.727 | -6.909 | .000 | .478 | 2.092 |
| Professional norm | -.170 | .085 | -.163 | -2.006 | .048 | .802 | 1.247 |
| Organisational policy | -.672 | .262 | -.319 | -2.562 | .012 | .340 | 2.938 |
| As a token of appreciation | .484 | .126 | .356 | 3.843 | .000 | .617 | 1.620 |
| Demand by journalists | .297 | .160 | .227 | 1.863 | .066 | .355 | 2.814 |
| Positive media coverage | .579 | .122 | .615 | 4.756 | .000 | .316 | 3.162 |
| Knowledge of code of ethics considerations | .051 | .123 | .053 | .413 | .680 | .318 | 3.145 |

a. Dependent Variable: Payment of *Soli*

Source: Field Survey, 2017

where B= beta value; Std error = standard error; T=t-value; sig. = p-value; VIF=Variance inflation factor

As observed from Table 4.28 above, the Beta value of the independent variable is .053 which is insignificant at 0.680. This shows a non-significant positive relationship between the independent variable (Knowledge of IPR [Ghana] code of ethics on inducement) and the dependent variable (Payment of *Soli*). Hence we accept the null hypothesis (**H₃₀**). This implies that of all the reasons why the outcome variable can vary, the PR Practitioners' knowledge of the code of conduct of IPR (Ghana) on inducement explains about 5.3% of the reasons why PR practitioners pay *Soli* to journalists when they invite them (journalists) to cover an event. This means that, for any unit increase in PR Practitioners' knowledge of IPR code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media there would be a corresponding increase in their willingness to pay *Soli* to the media by 5.3%. On the other hand, a unit decrease in the

knowledge of PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics which frowns on inducement of the media; there would be a corresponding decrease in the payment of *Soli*. Although the impact of the non-compliance to the code of ethics is minimal in perpetuating *Soli*, it suggests that having knowledge of professional code of conduct is not an end in itself to guarantee ethical behaviour. The inherent moral value judgements of the individual and situational-based factors are key determinants in ensuring ethical behaviour. This is in tandem with the proposition of Trevino (1986) that ethical decision making is the result of the interaction between individual and situational components, with the individual's way of thinking about ethical dilemmas being moderated by individually and situationally-based moderators. The Theory of Reasoned Action also holds that there are other situations or factors referred to as 'subjective norms' that limits the sole influence (IPR code of ethics) of attitude and behaviour. This suggests that there are other considerations which have a heavy influence on the decision of PR practitioners to be willing to 'break' the code of ethics of their professional association to paying *Soli*. These other considerations, though not exhaustive, as shown in Table 4.17 were found to be the result of the following, among others: journalists demand for the payment, relationship management considerations, organisational policy consideration, positive media coverage considerations, a token of appreciation considerations, and a professional norm considerations.

In the case of the relationship between independent variable (desire to obtain Positive media coverage consideration) and the dependent variable (payment of *Soli*), the Beta value of the independent variable (Positive media considerations) is .615 which is significant at .001. This shows a significantly positive relationship between the independent variable (Positive media considerations) and the dependent variable

(Payment of *Soli*). Hence we reject the null hypothesis (**H₄₀**). The implication is that, of all the reasons PR Practitioners' desire to obtain positive media coverage for the organisation they represent, is able to explain 61.5% of the reasons why journalists accept *Soli*. This means that that, for every 1 unit increase in the desire of PR practitioners to obtain positive media coverage for the organisation they represent there would be a corresponding increase in the payment of *Soli* to the media by 61.5%. Conversely, a unit decrease in the desire of PR practitioners to obtain positive media coverage for the organisation they represent there would be a corresponding decrease in the payment of *Soli* to the media by 61.5%.

The desire by PR practitioners to obtain positive media coverage which is significant in this case and informs their payment of *Soli* to the media is in tandem with the expositions of the Theory of Reasoned Action. The theory holds that the key to predicting behaviour lies with intentions; intention that are shaped by attitudes towards the behaviour and subjective norms (Randall, 1989). Thus, an individual's beliefs about the outcome of the performance of a specific behaviour (attitude) as well as his or her beliefs about what is expected of him or her by others in the environment (subjective norms) can inform the intention to execute the behaviour. This means that since PR practitioners are expected to ensure that the organisations they represent are portrayed in a positive light in the media, PR Practitioners would be more than willing to pay *Soli* in order to obtain the media coverage; and as indicated in Table 4.14 and 4.16 above, a significant number of journalists (80.6%) agree that they accept *Soli* from news sources and that when they accept *Soli*, they feel obliged to report positively about the event of the organisation which paid the *Soli* (37%). Arguably, therefore, since majority of journalists accept *Soli* and feel obliged to report positively about the organisation which paid the *Soli*, there is the tendency that PR practitioners

would achieve their primary goal of obtaining positive media coverage through the payment of *Soli*.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0. Introduction

This study examined the factors media practitioners in Ghana consider when they are confronted with the phenomenon of *Soli*. Specifically, the study examined whether or not the salary level of journalists influences acceptance of *Soli*. It also sought to examine whether or not knowledge of professional ethical principles on inducement influences the payment or acceptance of *Soli*. The study further assessed whether or not the desire to obtain positive media coverage influences the payment of *Soli* by PR practitioners. This chapter presents a summary of major findings, draws the necessary conclusions and provides recommendations, limitations and suggestions for future research.

5.1. Summary of Major Findings

The following are the major findings of the study

The study found that majority of the journalists sampled for the study earned monthly salaries between GH¢500-GH¢1000. This represents the lowest category provided in the questionnaire for respondents to choose from. Also, the study showed that majority of journalists accepted *Soli* when they cover programmes for event organisers (PR practitioners). These findings were further tested to establish the relationship between the salary levels of journalists and journalists' acceptance of *Soli*. Rejecting the Null Hypothesis and accepting the Alternative, the study found a significant association between the salary levels of journalists and their acceptance of *Soli*. This is consistent with Kasoma (2007; 2009) studies which found a correlation between low salary levels and acceptance of brown envelopes among Ghanaian and

Gambian journalists, and a statistically significant interaction between pay and propensity to engage in brown envelope journalism (*Soli*).

Further, majority of journalists had knowledge of the GJA code of ethics which frowns on journalists accepting any form of payment from their news sources (PR practitioners). However, the study found that there was non-compliance with the code of conduct as majority of journalists violated the provision and accepted *Soli* from news sources. This was as a result of other considerations (factors) such as non-provision of means of transport by the media organisation they work for, low salaries, among others, that hindered the strict compliance to the ethical codes. These findings were confirmed by testing the second hypothesis (**H₂₀**) of the study. The results of the test showed that there was a significant association between journalists' knowledge of GJA code of conduct on inducement and their acceptance of *Soli*. This was contrary to the null hypothesis (**H₂₀**), hence **H₂₀** was rejected. The results were consistent with Onyebadi and Alajmi (2014) who found a breach of the ethical code for Kuwaiti journalists which recommended that in order to maintain objectivity and professional integrity, journalists in Kuwait should not accept any form of gratification from news sources.

Similarly, majority of PR practitioners did not have knowledge of the code of ethics of IPR (Ghana) which frowns on inducement of the media. Majority of PR practitioners indicated that they do not pay *Soli* to journalists when they invite them to cover their events. These findings were also tested to statistically examine the relationship between PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics and their payment of *Soli*. That is, the null hypothesis (**H₃₀**) was tested. The test results showed a significant relationship between PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code of ethics on inducement and their payment of *Soli* to journalists. In light

of this, the third hypothesis (**H3₀**) was rejected. This is consistent with Hickson (2004) where he found that PR practitioners break the code of ethics of the PR organisations in Asia to engage in the payment of brown envelope to the media.

Again, it was found that majority of PR practitioners paid *Soli* with the intention of obtaining positive media coverage for the event or the organisation they represent. Interestingly, majority of the PR practitioners denied paying *Soli* to journalists when they invited them to cover their event. Contrary to the fourth hypothesis (**H4₀**) that there will be no significant relationship between PR practitioners' knowledge of IPR (Ghana) their payment of *Soli* to journalists, the test results showed that there was a significant relationship between PR practitioners' desire to obtain positive media coverage and their payment of *Soli* to journalists. The fourth hypothesis (**H4₀**) was therefore rejected. This is consistent with Tsetsura's (2015) study which showed that PR practitioners desire to control what is published about them resort to payment of gifts to the media.

5.2. Conclusions

The study examined the factors media relations practitioners in Ghana consider when they engage in the practice of paying and accepting *Soli*. In light of the findings made by this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The condition of service of journalists in Ghana is relatively poor, especially their salary levels which makes them vulnerable and susceptible to *Soli*. This is because majority of journalists in this study earned lower salaries coupled with the fact that the media organisations they work for do not provide means of transport for them when they are assigned to cover events. These poor conditions of service make journalists vulnerable and receptive to *Soli*. Therefore, working condition of journalists

especially their salary level has an influence on their acceptance or rejection of *Soli*; hence there was a significant association between salary level of journalists and their acceptance of *Soli*.

Again, there is non-compliance of media practitioners in Ghana to the professional code of ethics of their professions. This stems from the fact that in spite of the media practitioners' knowledge of the codes of ethics of their profession, they still engaged in the practice of *Soli*, PR practitioners still paid *Soli* to journalists in order to obtain positive media coverage and journalists still accepted payments of *Soli* by PR practitioners. This suggests that having knowledge of professional code of ethics is not an end in itself to guarantee ethical behaviour.

PR practitioners in Ghana take advantage of the poor working conditions of journalists' to influence them when they (PR practitioners) need positive media coverage for the event or organisation they (PR practitioners) represent. This was because majority of PR practitioners indicated that they pay *Soli* in order to obtain positive media coverage. On the other hand, majority of journalists who earned lower salaries were more receptive to *Soli* than those who earned relatively higher salaries. This was confirmed by the test results which showed a significant positive relationship between PR practitioners desire to obtain positive media coverage and their payment of *Soli*.

5.3. Limitations

There were some limitations in the conduct of this study. First, it was challenging to obtain the population of journalists and PR practitioners in Ghana since there was no data available. The other option available to the researcher was to rely on GJA and IPR (Ghana) to draw samples from the population of members in good standing for

the respective professional bodies. IPR (Ghana) had a 2015 list of members in good standing with contacts and email addresses of members which made it easier to draw a sample from the population. However, GJA had a 2017 list of members in good standing but could not provide contacts of members for the researcher to reach them to make arrangement for a meeting to administer the questionnaire. This made it difficult to use any mathematical formulae to draw the sample from the population. Further, it was difficult to personally access most of the journalists as a result of their work schedules. The sensitive nature of the study also received some resistance from some of the sampled respondents.

5.4. Recommendations

The following recommendation are made based on the findings of the study

5.4.1. Improvement in the working Conditions of Journalists

The condition of service of journalists in Ghana particularly their salary level, need to be improved. As shown by the findings of this study, most of the journalists earn relatively low salaries and at the same time are not provided with means of transportation by their media organisations when they are assigned to cover events. This puts undue burden on reporters and thereby makes them vulnerable and susceptible to any inducement, including *Soli*. Media organisations should make it an organisational policy for their reporters not to indulge in the phenomenon of *Soli*.

5.4.2. Promotion and enforcement of professional and organisational policies on inducement

The findings of this study have led to the conclusion that having knowledge of professional codes is not an end in itself in ensuring the high ethical standards. Therefore a mere condemnation of journalists and PR practitioners who engage in the

phenomenon of *Soli* is not enough to assuage the payment or acceptance of *Soli*. The Institute of Public Relations, Ghana and the Ghana Journalists Association must institute punitive measures for practitioners who fall foul of the codes of conduct of their profession. A policy on licensing of PR practitioners and journalists must be advanced for consideration and to ensure the revocation of such license from members who break the code of ethics of the professional body. Media organisations operating in Ghana should also make it as a matter of policy to sanction their journalists when there is sufficient evidence to prove that a journalist accepts *Soli* from news sources. This would go a long way to enhance the reputation of the media organisations concerned and at the same time ensure that the public is not short-changed in the news production process. Similarly, organisations that engage the services of PR practitioners must as a matter of policy resist the temptation to approve payment of *Soli* to the media when such payments are included in the budget by the PR unit or PR consultant of their organisation.

5.4.3. The media relations function of PR practitioners must be redefined.

The media relations function of PR practitioners must be redefined to meet the dynamics of the 21st century PR practice. The mere counting of the number of releases produced and the level of press cuttings achieved or the handling of enquiries by the media should not be the only indicators for measuring performance of PR practitioners' media relations effort. The intricacies of the activities performed must be examined holistically with a view to ensuring that there are no ethical violations in the discharge of such function by the practitioners.

5.5. Suggestion for Future Research

Future studies may consider using the ethnography and phenomenology as an approach to explore the phenomenon in depth. This would shed more light on the lived experiences of journalists and PR practitioners as they encounter the phenomenon in their dealings with each other.

A more expansive study to cover the whole country, Ghana is also suggested to provide more statistical evidence on the pervasiveness or otherwise of the phenomenon in the Ghanaian media landscape.



Reference

- Adeyemi, A. (2013). Nigerian media and corrupt practices: The need for paradigm shift. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 9(1).
- Adeyemi, A., & Okorie, N. (2009, November). The perception of Nigerian journalists on brown envelope syndrome: South-west media practitioners in perspective. In *national Conference of African Council for Communication Education (ACCE) of the University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria* (Vol. 17).
- Agbemenu, M. K. S., & Tandoh, M. I. The Effect of 'Soli' on News Reportage in Ghana. Retrieved from <http://www.ijictm.org/admin/html/mail/attach/2015-08-07-09-52-19.pdf>
- Ajzen, I. (2006). Constructing a theory of planned behavior questionnaire.
- Akabogu, C. (2005). The ethical journalist and brown envelope syndrome: The way forward. *International Journal of Communication*, 3(20), 1-205.
- Anaeto, S. G., Onabajo, O. S., & Osifeso, J. B. (2008). Models and theories of communication. *Maryland: African Renaissance Books Incorporated*.
- Babbie, E. R. (1990). *Survey research methods*. Cengage Learning.
- Bhattacharjee, J. (2012). *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices*. USF Tampa Bay Open Access Textbooks Collection. Book 3
- Bianco, D. (n.d.). Public Relations. Reference for Business. Retrieved from <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/small/Op-Qu/Public-Relations.html>
- Boateng, R. (2016). *Research made easy: Classic edition*. Accra, Ghana: PearlRichard Foundation.
- Bowen, S. A. (2007). *Ethics and public relations*. Gainesville, FL: Institute for Public Relations.
- Carroll, C. E., & McCombs, M. (2003). Agenda-setting effects of business news on the public's images and opinions about major corporations. *Corporate reputation review*, 6(1), 36-46.
- Chinowth, E. (2010). The History of Public Relations, 24–49.
- Cohen, D., & Crabtree, B. (2006). Qualitative research guidelines project.
- Cohen, L., & Manion, L. Keith, M. (2007). *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge

- Conner, M., & Armitage, C. J. (1998). Extending the theory of planned behavior: A review and avenues for further research. *Journal of applied social psychology*, 28(15), 1429-1464.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches*. Sage Publication. (4th ed.).
- Cutlip, C., & Center, A. Broom (1994): *Effective Public Relations*. Eaglewood Cliff New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Danner, B. A. (2006). *The state of theory building in public relations ethics: A critical examination* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida).
- Dirbaba, B. O. (2010). The growing influence of bribery in Ethiopian journalism. *African Communication Research*, 3(3), 475-496.
- Dutton, J. E., & Dukerich, J. M. (1991). Keeping an eye on the mirror: Image and identity in organizational adaptation. *Academy of management journal*, 34(3), 517-554.
- Eke, I. W. (2014). Brown envelope syndrome and the future of journalism in Nigeria. *International Interdisciplinary Journal of Scientific Research*, 1(1).
- Ekeanyanwu, N. T. (2012). The Nigerian Press, Brown Envelope Syndrome (BES) and Media Professionalism: The Missing Link. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 2(4), 515-529.
- Greene, K., Hale, J. L., & Rubin, D. L. (1997). A test of the theory of reasoned action in the context of condom use and AIDS. *Communication Reports*, 10(1), 21-33.
- Grynko, A. (2012). Ukrainian journalists' perceptions of unethical practices: Codes and everyday ethics. *Central European Journal of Communication*, 2(5), 259-274.
- Haque, M. (2010). Sampling methods in social research. *Global Research Methodology Journal*.
- Hickson, K. (2004). Ethical issues in practising public relations in Asia. *Journal of Communication Management*, 8(4), 345-353.
- Jo, S., & Kim, Y. (2004). Media or personal relations? Exploring media relations dimensions in South Korea. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 81(2), 292-306.
- Kasoma, F.P. (1999). Independent media, professionalism and ethics in journalism education. In L.U. Uka (Ed.), *Mass Communication, democracy and civil society in Africa: International perspectives* (pp.445-59). Lagos: UNESCO-NATCOM.
- Kasoma, T. (2007). *Brown envelope journalism and professionalism in development reporting: A comparison of Zambia and Ghana*. University of Oregon.

- Kasoma, T. (2009). Development reporting as a crumbling tower? Impact of brown envelope journalism on journalistic practice in Zambia and Ghana. *Global Media Journal-African Edition*, 3(1), 18-32.
- Kasoma, T. (2010). Zambian PR practitioners' perspectives on 'brown envelopes' and freebies: Working through the confusion. *African Communication Research*, 3(3), 451-474.
- Kaur, K., & Shaari, H. (2006). Perceptions on the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists. *Kajian Malaysia*, 24(1), 2.
- Klyueva, A., & Tsetsura, K. (2010). Media Non-Transparency Research: A case of Romania. *Public Relations Journal*, 4(4). Retrieved from <http://www.prsa.org/Intelligence/PRJournal/Documents/2010FallKlyuevaTsetsura.pdf>
- Klyueva, A., & Tsetsura, K. (2015). Economic foundations of morality: Questions of transparency and ethics in Russian journalism. *Central European Journal of Communication*, 8(14), 21-36.
- Kruckeberg, D., & Tsetsura, K. (2003). A composite index by country of variables related to the likelihood of the existence of cash for news coverage.
- Kuckeberg, D., & Tsetsura, K. (2003). International index of bribery for news coverage. *Institute of Public Relations*. Retrieved from <http://www.instituteforpr.org/topics/bribery-news-coverage-2003/>
- Kusi, H. (2012). *Doing Qualitative Research; A guide for researchers* Accra: Emmpong Press.
- Larsson, L. (2009). PR and the media: A collaborative relationship? *Nordicom Review*, 30(1), 131-47.
- Lattimore, D., Baskin, O., Heiman, S. T., Toth, E. L., & Van Leuven, J. K. (2004). *Public relations: The profession and the practice*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Lee, S. T. (2011). Conceptualizing ethical knowledge and knowledge transfer in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 1(37), 96-98.
- Lewis, J., William, A., & Franklin, B. (2008). A compromised fourth estate? *Journalism Studies*, 9(1), 1-20, DOI: 10.1080/14616700701767974
- Li, M. (1994, November). Stop the paid journalism. *News Front*, 2-26.
- Lieber, P. S. (2005). Public relations ethics: A cross-cultural analysis.
- Lodamo, B., & Skjerdal, T. S. (2009). Freebies and brown envelopes in Ethiopian journalism. *Ecquid Novi*, 30(2), 134-154.

- Lyons, S. T., Duxbury, L. E., & Higgins, C. A. (2006). A comparison of the values and commitment of private sector, public sector, and parapublic sector employees. *Public administration review*, 66(4), 605-618.
- Manda, L. Z., & Kufaine, N. D. (2013). Starving the messenger: A study of journalists' conditions of service in Malawi. *Journal of Development and Communication Studies*, 2(2-3), 301-311.
- Mare, A., & Brand, R. (2010). Business journalism ethics in Africa: A comparative study of newsrooms in South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe. *African Communication Research*, 3(3), 407-430.
- Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family practice*, 13(6), 522-526.
- Mathers, N., Fox, N., & Hunn, A. (2009). Surveys and questionnaires. *Yorkshire & the Humber: The NIHR RDS for the East Midlands*.
- Matthews, D. (2016). Beware the PR bearing gifts. *British Journalism Review*, 27(4), 57-61.
- McQuail, D., Golding, P., & De Bens, E. (Eds.). (2005). *Communication theory and research*. Sage.
- Media Sustainability Index (2012): Retrieved from <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/.../media-sustainability-index-africa-2012-ghana.pdf>
- Mpagaze, D., & White, R. A. (2010). Tanzanian journalists' ambivalent perception of their ethics: A 'Jekyll and Hyde' occupation. *African Communication Research*, 3(3), 543-576.
- Mwesige, P. G. (2004). Disseminators, advocates and watchdogs: A profile of Ugandan journalists in the new millennium. *Journalism*, 5(1), 69-96.
- Neuman W. L. (2007). *Basics of social office research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (2nd ed.). Boston. Pearson
- News article: British High Commissioner delivers speech on corruption. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/british-high-commissioner-delivers-speech-on-corruption>
- Ngangu, P. T. (2016). The demography and current work conditions of cameroonian professional journalists. In *Proceedings of the 2nd World Conference on Media and Mass Communication* (Vol. 1, pp. 42-51).
- Nkwocha, J (2004). *Digital Public Relations: New Techniques in Reputation Management*, Volume One. Lagos: Zoom Lens Publishers.

- Nwabueze, C. (2010). Brown envelopes and the need for ethical re-orientation: Perceptions of Nigerian journalists. *African Communication Research*, 3(3), 497-521.
- Nworgu, B. G. (2006). Educational research: Basic issues and methodology. *Nsukka: University Trust Publishers*, 45-49..
- Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2001). Media ethics and professionalism in Cameroon. *Handbook on journalism ethics: African case studies*, 65-86.
- Oberiri, A. D. (2016). Journalists' Perception of News Commercialization and its implication on Media Credibility in Nigeria. *World Scientific News*, 55, 63-76.
- Okoro, N. M., & Ugwuanyi, J. C. (2006). Brown envelope syndrome and mass media objectivity in Nigeria. *African Journal of Communication and Development*, 1(1), 123-148.
- Okoye, C. (2007). Looking at ourselves in our mirror: Agency, counter-discourse, and the Nigerian video film. *Film International*, 5(4), 20-29.
- O'leary, Z. (2004). *The essential guide to doing research*. London: Sage.
- Olsen, O. K., Eid, J., & Larsson, G. (2010). Leadership and ethical justice behavior in a high moral intensity operational context. *Military Psychology*, 22(S1), S137.
- Onyebadi, U., & Alajmi, F. (2014). Gift Solicitation and acceptance in journalism practice: An assessment of Kuwaiti journalists' perspective. *Journalism*, 1464884914557924.
- Pang, A. (2010). Mediating the media: a journalist-centric media relations model. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(2), 192-204.
- Parahoo, K. 1997. *Nursing research: Principles, process and issues*. London: MacMillan Press.
- Parsons, P. J. (2008). *Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practice*. Kogan Page Publishers.
- Pettifor, J. L., Estay, I., & Paquet, S. (2002). Preferred strategies for learning ethics in the practice of a discipline. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 43(4), 260.
- Pinsonneault, A., & Kraemer, K. (1993). Survey research methodology in management information systems: an assessment. *Journal of management information systems*, 10(2), 75-105.
- Pratt, C. (1991). PRSA members' perceptions of public relations ethics. *Public Relations Review*, 17, pp. 145-159.

- Quansah, J., Ako-Gyima, E., & Boateng, A. D. (2012). *Brown envelope journalism in Ghana* (BA dissertation).
- Randall, D. M. (1989). Taking stock: Can the theory of reasoned action explain unethical conduct?. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 8(11), 873-882.
- Reinard, J. C. (1998). *Introduction to communication research*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Rest, J. R. (1986). *DIT: Manual for the defining issues test*. Center for the Study of Ethical Development, University of Minnesota.
- Ristow, B. (2010). *Cash for coverage: Bribery of journalists around the world*. A report to Center for International Media Assistance. Retrieved from <http://www.hirondelle.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/CorruptiondesjournalistesrapportCIMA2010.pdf>.
- Romano, A. (2000). Bribes, gifts and graft in Indonesian journalism. *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, 94(1), 157-171. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1329878X0009400115>
- Rubin, R. B., Rubin, A. M., Piele, L. J. (2005). *Communication research: Strategies and sources* (6th ed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Salant, P., & Dillman, D. A. (1994). *How to conduct your own survey*. Wiley.
- Sallot, L. M., & Johnson, E. A. (2006). Investigating relationships between journalists and public relations practitioners: Working together to set, frame and build the public agenda, 1991–2004. *Public Relations Review*, 32(2), 151-159.
- Sanders, K. (2003). *Ethics and Journalism*. London: Thousand Oaks.
- Shafer, R. (1990). Greasing the Newsgate: Journalist on the Take in the Philippines. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 5(1), 15-29. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s15327728jmme0501_2
- Sinaga, S. T., & Wu, H. D. (2007). Predicting Indonesian journalists' use of public relations-generated news material. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(1), 69-90.
- Singhapakdi, A., Vitell, S. J., & Franke, G. R. (1998). Antecedents, consequences and mediating effects of perceived moral intensity and personal moral philosophies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27, pp. 19-36.
- Skinner, C., Mersham, G., & Valin, J. (2004). Global protocol on ethics in public relations. *Journal of Communication Management*, 8(1), 13-28.
- Skjerdal, T. S. (2010). Research on brown envelope journalism in the African media. *African Communication Research*, 3(3), 367-406.

- Sonenshein, S. (2007). The role of construction, intuition, and justification in responding to ethical issues at work: The sensemaking-intuition model. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4), 1022-1040.
- Statistics Canada, & Statistics Canada. Social Survey Methods Division. (2003). *Survey methods and practices*. Statistics Canada.
- Sterne, G. D. (2010). Media perceptions of public relations in New Zealand. *Journal of Communication Management*, 14(1), 4-31. Available at <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/13632541011017780>
- Supa, D. W., & Zoch, L. M. (2009). Maximizing media relations through a better understanding of the public relations-journalist relationship: A quantitative analysis of changes over the past 23 years. *Public Relations Journal*, 3(4), 1-28.
- Temo, S. (2013). Media freedom in Ghana: The repealing of the criminal libel law. The GJA Code of Ethics. Retrieved from <http://www.gjaghana.org/index.php/code-of-ethics>
- Theaker, A. (2004). *The public relations handbook*. Routledge.
- Ting Lee, S. (2012). A knowledge management approach to understanding ethical knowledge in public relations. *Journal of Communication Management*, 16(2), 185-203.
- Tlou, E. R. (2009). *The application of the theories of reasoned action and planned behaviour to a workplace HIV/AIDS health promotion programme* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Trevino, L. K. (1986). Ethical decision making in organizations: A person-situation interactionist model. *Academy of management Review*, 11(3), 601-617.
- Tsetsura, K. (2005). Bribery for news coverage: Research in Poland.
- Tsetsura, K. (2005). Bribery for news coverage: Research in Poland. *Institute for Public Relations Online: International Research*. Retrieved from <http://www.instituteforpr.org/topics/bribery-poland-2005/>
- Tsetsura, K. (2015). Guanxi, gift-giving, or bribery? Ethical considerations of paid news in China. *Public Relations Journal*, 9(2). Available online: <http://www.prsa.org/Intelligence/PRJournal/Vol9/No2/>
- Tsetsura, K., & Grynko, A. (2009). An exploratory study of the media transparency in Ukraine. *Public Relations Journal*, 3(2), 1-21.
- Tsetsura, K., & Kruckeberg, D. (2009). Truth, public relations, and the mass media: A normative model to examine media opacity. In *Annual Meeting of the International Public Relations Research Conference, Miami, FL*.

- Turk, J. V. (1985). Information subsidies and influence. *Public Relations Review*, 11(3), 10-25.
- Vallerand, R. J., Deshaies, P., Cuerrier, J. P., Pelletier, L. G., & Mongeau, C. (1992). Ajzen and Fishbein's theory of reasoned action as applied to moral behavior: A confirmatory analysis. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 62(1), 98.
- Vanderstoep, S. W., & Johnston, D. D. (2009). Research methods for everyday life. *Matching numerals with corresponding number of objects (number value). Yes/No.*
- Waters, R. D. (2013). Tracing the impact of media relations and television coverage on US charitable relief fundraising: An application of agenda-setting theory across three natural disasters. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 25(4), 329-346.
- Waters, R. D., Tindall, N. T., & Morton, T. S. (2010). Media catching and the journalist–public relations practitioner relationship: How social media are changing the practice of media relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22(3), 241-264.
- Wehmeier, S. (Ed.). (2005). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English: AS Hornby*. Oxford University.
- Yoon, Y. (2005). Legitimacy, public relations, and media access: Proposing and testing a media access model. *Communication Research*, 32(6), 762-793.
- Zoch, L. M., & Molleda, J. C. (2006). Building a theoretical model of media relations using framing, information subsidies, and agenda-building. *Public relations theory II*, 279-309.

Appendix One

Questionnaire for Journalists

I am Ahmed Taufique Chentiba, an MPhil student of the Department of Communication and Media Studies (UEW) undertaking a research on the topic “Examining the Considerations of Public Relations Practitioners and Journalists in the Phenomenon of Cash for Coverage (*Soli*) in Ghana”. You are kindly requested to contribute to this research by filling this questionnaire. Respondents are assured that any information given would be used solely for academic purposes and treated as confidential.

Instruction: Tick all that apply:

Socio-Demographic Data

1. Sex: M F
2. Age: A. less than 30
B. 30-39
C. 40-49
D. 50 and above
3. Years of experience in the field: A. 1-5 B. 6-10 C. 10+
4. Sector of Employment: A. Public B. Private
5. Category of media organisation: A. Newspaper B. TV C. Radio
D. Online
6. Salary level: A. Less than 500
B. 500-1000
C. 1001-1500
D. 1501-2000
E. Above 2000
7. Have you had any journalism training? Yes No
8. In which institution were you trained?
9. Are you a member of GJA? Yes No

Awareness

10. Are you aware of the GJA code of ethics? Yes No
11. Are you aware of a provision of the GJA code on bribery or inducement?
Yes No
12. Are you aware of a phenomenon called *Soli*? Yes No
13. If yes kindly explain what *Soli* is
14. Do you believe journalists in Ghana should accept money or gifts from event organisers when they cover their events? Yes No
15. If yes why
16. If no why.....
17. Have you ever accepted money or gifts from event organisers for attending a press conference? Yes No
18. What influences your decision to accept money or gifts from event organisers (PR practitioners)?
19. How did receiving this money or gift affect how you reported the story you were covering?
20. Are you aware it is unethical to accept money or gifts from event organisers (eg. PR practitioners) when you cover their programme? Yes No
21. What factors do you think influences journalist to accept money or gifts from event organisers (eg. PR practitioners)?
22. Does accepting money or gifts from event organisers influence the way you write your report about an event? Yes No
23. Which of these come to mind when you are accepting or rejecting money or gifts from event organisers (eg. PR practitioners)? (select as many as applicable)
- A.GJA code of ethics on inducement
- B. My economic condition
- C. My audience (the general public)
- D. My media organisation.

Other specify.....

Perception

24. Do you think it is ethically acceptable to accept money or gifts from news sources (eg. PR practitioners)? Yes No

25. If yes why

26. If no why

27. Do you think those who receive money or gifts from event organisers (eg. PR practitioners) earn more income than those who do not? Yes No

28. Does poor economic condition influence your decision to accept *Soli*? Yes No

29. Does your knowledge and awareness of your professional code of ethics influence your decision to accept/reject *Soli*? Yes No



SD= Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; Sa/Sd=Somewhat Agree/Somewhat Disagree; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree;

| S/N | Item | SD | D | Sa/Sd | A | SA |
|-----|--|----|---|-------|---|----|
| 1 | I am a trained journalist | | | | | |
| 2 | I am aware of the code of ethics of GJA | | | | | |
| 3 | I have knowledge of GJA code of conduct which frowns on journalists accepting any form of payment from their news sources | | | | | |
| 4 | I am aware of a phenomenon called <i>Soli</i> | | | | | |
| 5 | Journalist in Ghana accept <i>Soli</i> | | | | | |
| 6 | It is alright for journalists to accept monetary incentives from news sources given the financial constraints they encounter in their work | | | | | |
| 7 | I accept money and gifts for attending a press conference | | | | | |
| 8 | I accept <i>Soli</i> | | | | | |
| 9 | It is unethical to receive <i>Soli</i> from news sources | | | | | |
| 10 | I accept <i>Soli</i> because event organisers offer it as a token of their appreciation for covering their event | | | | | |
| 11 | I accept <i>Soli</i> because my media organisation is not financially strong | | | | | |
| 12 | I accept <i>Soli</i> because I don't see anything wrong with accepting <i>Soli</i> | | | | | |
| 13 | I accept <i>Soli</i> because it is the norm of our profession | | | | | |
| 14 | I accept <i>Soli</i> because of the distance I travel to cover an event | | | | | |
| 15 | I accept <i>Soli</i> because my media organisation doesn't provide for my transportation when I go to cover events | | | | | |
| 16 | I accept <i>Soli</i> because reporters in private/public media houses are poorly paid. | | | | | |
| 17 | When I accept <i>Soli</i> , it negatively influence the way I report about the event I have covered | | | | | |
| 18 | When I accept <i>Soli</i> , it positively influence the way I report about the event of the organisation that paid the <i>Soli</i> | | | | | |
| 19 | When I accept <i>Soli</i> , I feel obliged to report positively about the event of the organisation that paid the <i>Soli</i> | | | | | |
| 20 | When I accept <i>Soli</i> , I find it difficult to report anything negative about the organisation that paid the <i>Soli</i> | | | | | |

Appendix Two

PR PRACTITIONERS QUESTIONNAIRE

I am Ahmed Taufique Chentiba, an MPhil student of the Department of Communication and Media Studies (UEW) undertaking a research on the topic “Examining the Considerations of Public Relations Practitioners and Journalists in the Phenomenon of Cash for Coverage (*Soli*) in Ghana”. You are kindly requested to contribute to this research by filling this questionnaire. Respondents are assured that any information given would be used solely for academic purposes and treated as confidential.

Instruction: Tick all that apply: (eg. ✓)

1. Sex: M F
2. Age: A. less than 30
B. 30-39
C. 40-49
D. 50 and above
3. Years of experience in the field A. less than 5 b. 5-10 c. 10+
4. Sector of employment A. Public B. Private
5. Are you a member of IPR (Ghana)? Yes No
6. Are you aware of the code of ethics of IPR (Ghana)? Yes No
7. Are you aware of an IPR (Ghana) code of ethics that frowns on inducement of the media? Yes No
8. Are you aware of a phenomenon in Ghana called *Soli*? Yes No
9. If yes explain what *Soli* is
10. How often does your organization organise events at which journalists are invited?
a. Always
b. Very often
c. Quite often
d. Occasionally

e. Less often

f. Never

11. Do you ever give *Soli* to journalists at these events? Yes No

12. If yes, roughly state how much you offer per event

13. Do you give *Soli* to journalists when you invite them to events/programmes in your organisation? Yes No

14. How often do you give *Soli* to journalists?

a. Always

b. Very often

c. Quite often

d. Occasionally

e. Less often

f. Never

15. What do you give to journalists after they cover your event?

a. cash

b. souvenirs

c. free lunch

d. free trips

e. other (specify)

16. Do you willingly give *Soli*? Yes No

17. Are you compelled to give *Soli*? Yes No

18. If yes, how are you compelled?

19. Why do you think journalists accept *Soli*? (select all that apply)

A. Low salary of journalists

B. Financial stress of media organisations

C. Low level of professionalism

D. To cater for the cost of transportation to an event

E. Other (specify)

20. Do you think it is ethically acceptable to give *Soli*? Yes No

21. Do you think it is ethically acceptable for journalist to accept *Soli*?

Yes

No



SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Sa/Sd = Somewhat agree/Somewhat disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Disagree

| S/N | Item | SD | D | Sa/Sd | A | SA |
|-----|---|----|---|-------|---|----|
| 1 | I have knowledge of IPR (Ghana) code which frowns on inducement of the media | | | | | |
| | I give <i>Soli</i> to journalists when we invite them to cover our event | | | | | |
| 1 | I give <i>Soli</i> as part of my boundary-spanning role Agree | | | | | |
| 2 | I give <i>Soli</i> because it is part and parcel of my news management function | | | | | |
| 3 | I give <i>Soli</i> because of the interdependent relationship I share with journalists. | | | | | |
| 4 | I give <i>Soli</i> to journalists in order to obtain positive media coverage that would enhance the reputation of my client | | | | | |
| 5 | I give <i>Soli</i> to journalists in order to kill a story that would negatively affect the reputation of my client. | | | | | |
| 6 | I give <i>Soli</i> because if I don't, our event would not be reported in the media | | | | | |
| 7 | I give <i>Soli</i> because I want to establish and maintain good relationship with the media | | | | | |
| 8 | I give <i>Soli</i> because journalists in Ghana are poorly paid by their employers | | | | | |
| 9 | I give <i>Soli</i> because it is a norm in my professional line of work | | | | | |
| 10 | I give <i>Soli</i> because it is my organisations' policy to do so whenever we invite the media to our programme | | | | | |
| 11 | I give <i>Soli</i> as a token of our appreciation to journalists for attending our event | | | | | |
| 12 | I give <i>Soli</i> because journalists often demand for it when we invite them to our events | | | | | |
| 13 | I give <i>Soli</i> because if I don't, next time we invite the media to cover our events they won't come. | | | | | |
| 14 | I give <i>Soli</i> because I am compelled by my superiors to do so | | | | | |
| 15 | We make provision for <i>Soli</i> in our budget when planning for an event which needs media coverage. | | | | | |

Appendix Three

List of Media Stations where respondents work

| Radio Stations | TV Stations | News Papers |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Radio Gold | GTV | Daily Guide |
| Kasapa FM | TV3 | Daily Graphic |
| Adom FM | TV Africa | The Chronicle |
| Peace FM | | |
| Citi FM | | |
| Onua FM | | |
| 3 FM | | |
| Uniiq FM | | |
| Asempa FM | | |
| Joy FM | | |
| Montie FM | | |

