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**What Makes an Organisation's Corporate Identity Attractive to its  
Employees?**

**A Social Identity Perspective**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Corporate Identity provides the foundation for an organisation's Corporate Brand, and managers need to understand how they can align the behaviour of their employees with that identity.

In this thesis I argue that employees will align their behaviour with the identity of their organisation when they perceive that identity to be attractive and unique. This argument is supported by theory and research in the areas of Employer Branding and the Social Identity Approach to Organisational Identification. However, little is known about what makes an organisation's Corporate Identity attractive to its employees.

The objective of my research was to address this gap by conducting a comparative case study of six organisations.

The identity of each organisation was found to be comprised of five dimensions: Organisation, Employment, Product or Service, Reputation, and Stakeholder Relationships. The attributes that employees considered most attractive were different in each organisation, but when all six cases were considered at once, they encompassed all five dimensions.

These results suggest that current conceptualizations of the Employer Brand, which focus solely on employment, may be overly restrictive. They also indicate that the strategy of becoming an Employer of Choice, though widely considered a 'business imperative', is unlikely to have the desired effect on employee behaviour; this strategy is based on the assumption that organisations should conform to an 'ideal blueprint of employment', but the results clearly indicate that this blueprint does not exist.

In order to align the behaviour of their employees with the identity of their organisation, managers should seek to understand the unique identity of their own organisation and to determine what makes that identity attractive to their employees. This may be achieved in an efficient and cost-effective manner by following the methodology outlined in this thesis.

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Dedicated to Kira

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

Corporate Branding involves the clear and purposeful communication of an organisation's Corporate Identity to its external stakeholders (Ingenhoff and Fuhrer, 2010). This can be done through a wide range of media (Balmer, 2001). However, the one medium that has the potential to make or break the Corporate Brand is the behaviour of employees (Roper and Davies, 2006).

Employees have been described as the 'face of the organisation' (Karaosmanoglu and Melewar, 2006). They represent the organisation to external stakeholders and, through their behaviour, they play a critical role in communicating Corporate Identity (Brexendorf and Kernstock; Brown et al, 2006; de Chernatony and Harris, 2000; Kiriakidou and Millward (2000). Therefore, managers need to understand how they can align the behaviour of their employees with the identity of the organisation.

In my thesis I argue that managers can achieve this objective by ensuring that employees perceive the identity of their organisation to be attractive and distinct. However, researchers have not previously explained what makes an organisation's Corporate Identity attractive to employees, and this is the question that I sought to address through my research.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND IN THE LITERATURE**

### **1.2.1 Corporate Identity**

There is increasing consensus within the academic literature that corporate branding begins with identity (Hulburg, 2006). This is defined by Albert and Whetten (1985) as

‘that which is most central, enduring, and distinctive about the organisation.’ It has been conceptualized in a number of different ways (Cornelissen et al, 2006) and there is considerable debate regarding the ‘specific elements’ of the construct (Melewar and Jenkins, 2002). However, theory clearly indicates that the identity of an organisation provides the foundation for a corporate brand that is credible, distinctive, and almost impossible for competitors to copy. Therefore, de Chernatony and Harris (2000), argue that corporate branding may be described as the process of ‘narrowing the gap’ between identity and reputation.

One way that managers can narrow the gap between identity and reputation is to communicate the identity of their organisation to its external stakeholders. This may be done through symbolism and conventional communications, such as advertising and PR (Hulberg, 2006; van Riel and Balmer, 1997). However, corporate marketing also involves ‘multiple stakeholders interacting with numerous staff in multiple departments across an organisation’ (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). As a result, the behaviour of employees is an important component of the corporate marketing mix (Hulberg, 2006); it is ‘the non-verbal, intangible aspect to communication... the “body language” of the organisation’ (Melewar and Jenkins, 2002), and it has the potential to undermine all other forms of communication. In order to successfully manage a corporate brand, managers must therefore understand how the behaviour of employees can be aligned with the identity of their organisation.

This aspect of corporate branding presents a particular challenge for marketers, who have traditionally focused on the behaviour of their customers and left the management of employees to Human Resources (HR). However, it also presents new challenges for those working in HR. As explained by Henkel et al (2007), it is not sufficient to focus on generic measures such as friendliness or competence; employees must be motivated to align their behaviour with the organisation’s unique identity, and to act as ambassadors for the corporate brand (Hulberg, 2006). Therefore, many authors advocate a multi-disciplinary, cross-functional approach to corporate

marketing (Brexendorf and Kernstock, 2007; Balmer, 1995; King, 1991). More specifically, they argue that corporate marketing theory should encompass both Marketing and Organisational Theory (Schultz and de Chernatony, 2002) and that, in practice, Marketing and HR 'should be more fully integrated in order to recruit, train and develop people who are accordant with the brand' (Hulberg, 2006).

### **1.2.2 Employer Branding**

The notion of Employer Branding, as described by Ambler and Barrow (1996), addresses both the challenges outlined above. It provides a strategic framework that incorporates both Marketing and HR (Moroko and Uncles, 2008, Ambler and Barrow, 1996) so that an organisation can attract, retain, and motivate those employees 'who can add value to the company and are able to deliver on the company's brand promise' (Uncles and Moroko, 2005). It also synthesizes theory from a range of academic disciplines (Uncles and Moroko, 2005; Ambler and Barrow, 1996), and has therefore been described as a 'significant evolution in the quest for corporate brand integrity.' (Mosley, 2007) However, it is not clear whether current practice is actually helping firms to achieve these objectives.

Theorists agree that in order to achieve all the objectives described above, an employer brand should meet three criteria: it should be consistent with the realities of the organisation, different from those of competing employers, and attractive to members of the target audience (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Ambler and Barrow, 1996). Since the first two criteria are self-evident, researchers have focused their attention on understanding what makes an employer brand attractive. For example there have been several academic studies of employer brand attractiveness (e.g. Knox and Freeman, 2006; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003) and Best Employer Studies are regularly published in the business press (Joo and Mclean, 2006).

Based on the results of these studies, many organisations are now striving to conform to an 'ideal blueprint of employment' (Mosley, 2007), benchmarking their own practices against those of firms that have already been recognized as Best Employers. In fact Martin et al (2005) argue that benchmarking is now seen as a 'central HR and business imperative.' However, this strategy is problematic for two reasons. First, an employer brand that conforms to an 'ideal blueprint' cannot reflect the distinct identity of a particular organisation. As a result, it provides no obvious basis for aligning the behaviour of employees with that identity. Second, the research on which this blueprint is based has focused almost exclusively on the attributes sought by *potential employees*.

Since the objectives of corporate branding can only be realized through the behaviour of *current employees*, further research is needed to understand what makes an organisation's employer brand attractive to people in this group. Before this question can be addressed, however, it is important to consider how the employment relationship may change an individual's evaluation of his or her organisation's employer brand, and one theory that addresses this issue is Social Identity Theory.

### **1.2.3 A Social Identity Perspective**

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) is a well-established social-psychological theory that explains how perceived membership in a social group can shape an individual's cognition and behaviour. It was first applied to the study of organisations by Ashforth and Mael (1989), who argued that the organisation could be seen as a particular kind of social group, that organisational identity was analogous to group identity, and that organisational identification occurred when an individual incorporated that identity within his own self-concept. Since then, Social Identity Theory has been extensively researched in the context of organisations, and the literature in this area has come to be known as the Social Identity Approach to Organisational Identification.



By incorporating theory and research from the literature in this area, it is possible to show that a unique and attractive employer brand can motivate employees to align their behaviour with the identity of the organisation, and to act as ambassadors for the brand. This makes it a useful lens through which to address the research question. However, the principles of Social Identity Theory directly contradict two of the fundamental assumptions that underlie theory and practice in the area of Employer Branding.

First, one of the central insights of Social Identity Theory is that employees do not compare and rank organizations in the hierarchical manner suggested by Best Employer Studies (Turner, 1987). Instead, they seek to construe their own organisation as positively distinct from comparable organisation by strategically adjusting the value (attractive or unattractive) and importance assigned to specific attributes (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996). Since each organisation has its own unique or distinctive identity (Balmer and Greyser, 2006, Albert and Whetten, 1985), and since employees seek to construe their organisation's distinctive attributes as attractive and important, this means that the attributes employees consider most attractive are likely to be different in each organisation (Turner, 1987). Therefore, the principles of Social Identity Theory provide theoretical support for Mosley's (2007) contention that the benchmarking approach to employer branding is 'unlikely to deliver on the more distinctive fit for purpose requirements of the brand and business strategy.'

Second, Social Identity Theory suggests that employees have a personal stake in the successes and failures of the organisation as a whole (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). In fact research has shown that perceived membership in a group or organisation can motivate individuals to make personal sacrifices for the good of the collective (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Therefore, employees are unlikely to evaluate the attractiveness of their organisation based solely on the individual benefits of employment. This argument conflicts with previous definitions of the Employer Brand, which have

focused solely on employment (Ambler and Barrow, 1996), and suggests that a broader conceptual viewpoint may be required. In fact, when seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory, the internal component of an organisation's Employer Brand is conceptually identical to its Corporate and Organisational Identity. (This claim is justified in further detail in Chapter 3.)

#### **1.2.4 A Note on Terminology**

All three of these terms – Employer Brand, Corporate Identity, and Organisational Identity - refer to employees' cognitive image of their organisation. Therefore, it seems expedient to refer to them by the same term; except in the literature review and the contribution to knowledge, the term used in this thesis is 'Corporate Identity.' This term was chosen over the other two because the primary contribution of my research is in the area of Corporate Identity. Therefore it seems appropriate to adhere to the language used by scholars in this area.

In addition, it is important to distinguish between the internal component of the Employer Brand (which exists in the minds of current employees) and the external component (which exists in the minds of potential employees). The term 'Employer Brand' can refer to either or both components. However, this study is specifically concerned with the internal component. Therefore, using the term 'employer brand' throughout my thesis could be construed as ambiguous or confusing.

To avoid confusion – among the three areas of literature or between the two components of the Employer Brand – the research question addressed in this thesis may be restated as follows:

'What makes an organisation's Corporate Identity attractive to its employees?'

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY

In order to explain what makes an organisation's corporate identity attractive to its employees, I conducted a comparative case study of six organisations. These included three schools within my University (the School of Science and Technology, the School of Management, and the School of Engineering), as well as a television production company (TV Inc), a film distribution company (Film Inc), and a non-profit sports organisation (Sports Inc).<sup>1</sup>

Since each organisation was expected to have a unique or distinctive identity, and since employees were expected to value those attributes that were perceived to be distinctive, each case was conducted in two stages. The objective in stage 1 was to elicit the key attributes of the organisation's identity. This was done by asking at least twelve employees to fill in an adapted version of Brickson's (2005) identity questionnaire; their responses were coded according to the principles laid out by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and frequency count was used to identify the twenty five key attributes. The objective in stage 2 was to measure the relative importance that employees assigned to the twenty five key attributes of their organisation's identity, and this was achieved by conducting a quantitative survey; respondents were asked to allocate a hundred points among the twenty five key attributes, in proportion with their perceived importance.

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<sup>1</sup> TV Inc, Film Inc, and Sports Inc are all fictitious names. These names are used because managers in each organisation insisted on confidentiality; in order to gain access, I had to agree not to identify any of these organisations by name.

#### **1.4 KEY FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

The results of this research contribute to theory, in the areas of Employer Branding and Corporate Identity, and to practice.

They contribute to the literature on Corporate Identity in two ways. First, they provide a detailed view of the Corporate Identity construct, as seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory. More specifically, they indicate that Corporate Identity is comprised of five dimensions – Organisation, Employment, Product or Service, Stakeholder Relations, and Reputation – and that these dimensions can be further divided into twelve sub-dimensions. The results also reveal that these dimensions and sub-dimensions are bound together by an intricate web of connections, and that each connection can be described in terms of importance, direction, and content. Second, the results of this study help to address the ‘uniqueness paradox’ (Martin et al, 1983) in Corporate Identity research by revealing two aspects of Corporate Identity that are distinctive in each organisation: the collection of attributes and the pattern of connections among those attributes.

The results of this research also contribute to the literature on Employer Branding. Above all, they show that the attributes employees consider most attractive are specific to each organisation. This finding is consistent with the principles of Social Identity Theory, and suggests that current practices in the area of Employer Branding are unlikely to have the desired impact on employee behaviour.

Finally, this thesis contributes to practice by describing a methodology that practitioners can use to study and measure their organisation’s distinctive corporate identity.

## **1.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have argued that a critical aspect of corporate brand management involves motivating employees to align their behaviour with the identity of the organisation. I have also argued that managers may achieve this objective by ensuring that the identity of their organisation is considered unique and attractive by their employees. However, little is known about what makes an organisation's identity attractive to employees, and the objective of my research was to address this gap by conducting a comparative case study of six organisations. Finally, I have argued that the results of this study make a significant contribution to both theory and practice. The following chapters elaborate and build on these arguments.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This thesis incorporates theory and research from three separate but complementary areas of literature: Corporate Identity, Employer Branding, and the Social Identity Approach to Organisational Identification. These three areas of literature have developed in relative isolation from one another. However, they all provide valuable insights into the relationship between an organisation's identity and the behaviour of its employees.

Corporate Identity explains why managers need to align the behaviour of their employees with the identity of their organisation. Employer Branding offers a prescriptive framework that may help managers to achieve this objective, and suggests that managers should seek to ensure that the identity of their organisation is considered unique and attractive by their employees. The Social Identity Approach to Organisational identification provides a clear theoretical explanation of the link between corporate identity and employee behaviour, as well as extensive evidence that supports the employer branding framework.

By incorporating insights from all three areas of literature, it is therefore possible to develop a more complete understanding of this relationship than would be possible based on any one of them alone. The purpose of this chapter is to review key insights from all three areas of literature, thereby providing the foundation for the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3.

TERM	WORKING DEFINITION OR DESCRIPTION <sup>2</sup>
Corporate Identity (Term used in the Marketing literature)	That which members perceive to be most 'central, enduring, and distinctive' about the organisation (Albert and Whetten, 1985)
Organisational Identity (Term used in the Organisational Behaviour literature)	That which members perceive to be most 'central, enduring, and distinctive' about the organisation (Albert and Whetten, 1985)
Organisational Identification	'the perceptions of oneness with or belongingness to the organisation' (Ashforth and Mael, 1989)
Social Identity Theory (SIT)	A social-psychological theory of inter-group behaviour that was first outlined by Tajfel and Turner (1979)
Self-Categorization Theory (SCT)	A social-psychological theory, developed by Turner (1987), that builds on and extends Social Identity Theory
Social Identity Approach to Organisational Identification (SIA)	A theoretical approach to organisational identification that is based on the principles of Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory
Employer Brand Image	Employees' collective mental image of their organisation

**Table 1: Table of Key Terms**

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<sup>2</sup> In the academic literature, some of these terms have been defined or conceptualized in a number of different ways. The definition or description provided in this table reflects the way in which each term is used in my thesis.

## **2.2 CORPORATE IDENTITY**

### **2.2.1 Defining and Conceptualizing Corporate Identity**

#### 2.2.1.1 Albert and Whetten's (1985) Statement of Identity

Although Corporate Identity has been subject to many different definitions, the definition adopted in this thesis is based on Albert and Whetten's (1985) statement of identity. Their definition of identity is typically summarized as 'that which is most central, enduring, and distinctive about the organisation.' However, their stated intention was not to provide a straight-forward, conceptual definition, but to make the notion of identity 'scientifically tractable' at the level of the organisation. They do this by outlining three criteria that are 'each necessary, and as a set sufficient' to describe the identity of the organisation. The term they use in their paper is 'Organisational Identity.' However, these three criteria are equally applicable to Corporate Identity, and are often applied in this context (for example Balmer, 2008; van Rekom, 1997).

#### *Criterion of Claimed Central Character*

The first criterion is that identity must be a 'statement of central character.' In other words, an organisation's identity captures something that is important to the organisation. However, Albert and Whetten (1985) argue that particular attributes become important in particular contexts. This makes it impossible develop a universal list of attributes that constitute identity; the construct can only be precisely defined 'for a given organisation, a given purpose, and from a given theoretical viewpoint' (Albert and Whetten, 1985).



### *The Criterion of Claimed Distinctiveness*

The second criterion is that identity must 'distinguish the organisation from others with which it may be compared' (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Since the attributes that distinguish the organisation depend on the attributes of the other organisations with which it is compared, this criterion is also context-specific. For example, an organisation may be 'unique in a certain region, or within a certain group of competitors, but perhaps not nationwide or worldwide' (van Rekom, 1997). This means that particular attributes can be distinctive without being absolutely unique.

This criterion has received particular attention in the literature on Corporate Identity because the distinctiveness of identity is often seen as a potential source of differentiation (Wheeler et al, 2004, Melewar, 2004, Marwick and Fill, 1997). However, researchers in the area of corporate identity have been confounded by the 'uniqueness paradox.'

'Uniqueness paradox' is the term coined by Martin et al (1983) to describe organisational claims to uniqueness that are not actually unique. Their study focused on the organisational myths that employees use to communicate what they believe is unique about their organisation, but they found that the themes conveyed in these myths were often very similar from one organisation to the next. Since then, the same lack of uniqueness has been repeatedly observed in the context of organisational mission statements (Ingenhoff and Fuhrer, 2010; Chun and Davies, 2001; Leuthesser and Kohli, 1997) and espoused organisational values (van Rekom, 1997), both of which are generally expected to convey something distinctive about the organisation.

This has led some to argue that capturing the distinctive identity of an organisation is 'problematic' (van Rekom, 1997). However, these findings may be partially attributed to the difficulty of studying a phenomenon that is, by its nature, organisation-specific. As a result, van Rekom (1997) argues that the methods used to study Corporate

Identity 'must have the potential to reveal truly organization-specific results,' and he suggests that they should begin with 'a qualitative stage in which organization-specific elements are gathered in a completely open-minded way.'

#### *The Criterion of Claimed Temporal Continuity*

The third criterion is that identity must 'exhibit some degree of sameness or continuity over time.' Authors who cite Albert and Whetten's (1985) definition of identity typically paraphrase with the term 'enduring', leading many to take issue with this criterion. For example, Gioia et al (2000) argue that 'identity is not, and indeed cannot be, enduring in any strict sense.' These authors interpret 'enduring' to mean 'relatively permanent,' and they emphasize the importance of 'reconceptualising identity as dynamic' (Gioia et al, 2000). However, Albert and Whetten (1985) do not claim that identity is fixed or permanent. In fact they explicitly acknowledge that the identity of an organisation does change over time; they argue that,

'An identity distinctive framework underscores the need to examine how new roles come into existence, how organisations choose (or back into) one role rather than another, and how that action affects the organisation's internal and external identity.'

They further argue that, over time, an organisation's identity changes in predictable ways, and they give the following example.

#### Example of Time Dependent Changes in Identity:

Albert and Whetten (1985) argue that a newly formed organisation may have a 'pure' identity. However, over time and with increasing growth most organisations become hybrids. They define a hybrid organisation as one 'whose identity is composed of two or more types that would not normally be expected to go together,' such as normative and utilitarian.

A utilitarian organisation is one that is 'governed by the values of economic rationality'; success is judged on the basis of economic profit and employees are assumed to act in accordance with their own self-interest. Therefore, the primary means of controlling employees is financial remuneration. The two examples given by Albert and Whetten are a business and a bank. On the other hand, the primary function of a normative organisation is typically cultural, educational, or expressive. Employees tend to be highly committed to the organisation's ideology and can therefore be controlled through 'the internalization of organisational directives that are accepted as legitimate.' (Albert and Whetten, 1985)

#### 2.2.1.2 Balmer's AC<sup>3</sup>ID Test of Identity

Balmer (2001) argues that there are five distinct types of identity that must be in alignment with one another if the organisation is to thrive over the long term. He labels these five identity types Actual, Communicated, Conceived, Ideal, and Desired. Actual identity refers to 'the current attributes of the corporation'; Ideal Identity refers to 'the optimum positioning of the organisation in its market' (Balmer, 2002); Communicated Identity refers to the identity that the organisation purposefully communicates to external stakeholders; Conceived Identity refers to the perceptions that external stakeholders hold of the organisation; Desired Identity refers to the vision that managers have for the organisation.

Balmer and Gray (2003) argue that the corporate brand promise should also be seen as a 'distinct identity type,' and Balmer et al (2009) label this 'Covenanted Identity'. Therefore, the AC<sup>3</sup>ID Test framework (Balmer et al, 2009) incorporates six types of identity.

### 2.2.1.3 Corporate versus Organisational Identity

Corporate and Organisational Identity have traditionally been treated as distinct concepts with their own theoretical and disciplinary roots. Corporate Identity originates in the marketing literature, and more specifically in the literature on graphic design. Organisational Identity originates in the organisational behaviour literature, where it has been conceptualized from various theoretical perspectives. However, in recent years, marketers have begun to focus more and more on the organisation itself, and on the relationship that exists between the organisation and its external stakeholders. This has led to a convergence between the two fields. As a result, many authors argue for a multi-disciplinary perspective that incorporates insights from both areas of literature. In fact Cornelissen et al (2007) argue that if the two concepts continue to be studied in isolation from one another, 'we run the risk of propagating a highly fractionated Babel-esque view of intra- and extra-organisational identity processes and their manifestations.' Nonetheless, there are some important differences between the two concepts.

He and Balmer (2007) argue that traditional treatments of Corporate and Organisational Identity differ in three ways. First, Corporate Identity is generally assumed to have 'traits that are substantive and whose effects are observable' (Balmer, 2008), while Organisational Identity tends to be closely associated with cognition. Second, Corporate Identity is typically studied at the level of the organisation, while Organisational Identity resides with the individual members. Third, Corporate Identity has typically been associated with the concerns of marketers while Organisational Identity is associated with organisational behaviour.

### **2.2.2 Communicating Corporate Identity**

Based on their review and synthesis of existing models, Otubanjo and Melewar (2007) argue that the Corporate Identity Mix is composed of three parts: symbolism,

corporate communications, and behaviour. 'Behaviour' refers to the 'activities, actions, mannerisms, etc of the internal members of an organisation,' (Otubanjo and Melewar, 2007) and it is through this behaviour that an organisation's 'unique characteristics' are communicated to external stakeholders (Kiriakidou and Millward, 2000).

## **2.3 EMPLOYER BRANDING**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

Employer Branding is a relatively new field of academic study that applies the well-established principles of Consumer Branding to the practice of HR management. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) Because branding of any kind is essentially a strategic tool, these principles take the form of prescriptive statements (Edwards, 2010); they describe the steps that a firm should take in order to create a unique and attractive employer brand image. This image, which exists only in the minds of current and potential employees, is believed to influence a wide range of individual behaviours and organizational outcomes. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Collins and Stevens, 2002) However employer brand theory is essentially grounded in the context of Consumer Branding, and little is yet known about how Employer Branding may differ. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005) In this section I therefore distinguish between the theory of Employer Branding, which has yet to be fully tested and validated, and research which has been conducted in the context of employment or recruitment.

## **2.3.2 Theoretical Foundations**

### 2.3.2.1 Foundations in the Marketing Literature

When Ambler and Barrow (1996) first introduced the notion of employer branding, they grounded it firmly in the marketing literature. They argued that a 'marketing approach to HR' could improve recruitment outcomes and internal relationships, and that this would ultimately increase the value of a firm's external brands. More specifically, they suggested that the principles of consumer branding were applicable 'mutis mutandis' to the development of an employer brand. This was defined as 'the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company.' While their definition has not been universally accepted, their theoretical arguments still represent the foundation of employer branding.

In essence, Ambler and Barrow (1996) viewed employer branding as the 'reciprocal' of Customer Relationship Marketing. This analogy mirrored a recent shift in marketing thinking, away from customer attraction and short term economics toward customer retention and long-term relationship building. Marketers had already found that it was 'easier, cheaper, and more profitable to keep existing customers than to recruit new ones' and this appeared to be equally true for employees; Ambler and Barrow saw recruiting and training new employees as a costly enterprise that could only be profitable if those employees stayed long enough for the company to see a return on its investment. Therefore a strong employer brand had to be relevant to both current and potential employees. More specifically it had to deliver benefits that both groups considered important and could not obtain from a competing employer.

Ambler and Barrow also referred to three other areas of marketing literature. The first was Corporate Identity, which they described as a visual representation of the firm's culture. They considered culture to be important because it captured the

organizational values that could motivate employees to support the firm's consumer brand. Second they highlighted those aspects of Dowling's (1994) work on corporate reputation that overlapped with employer branding, namely the firm's image and reputation in the minds of employees. Together, they argued, these represented the internal component of a firm's employer brand equity. Therefore Dowling's (1994) framework of influential factors (shown below) was directly relevant to the study of Employer Branding. However their paper did not expand on this argument.

Finally, they discussed the parallels between employer branding and internal marketing. Quoting Kotler (1990) they defined internal marketing as 'the task of successfully hiring, training and motivating able employees to serve the customer well.' This definition was almost identical to the objectives associated with Employer Branding. In order to explain how employer branding might be carried out within the firm, Ambler and Barrow also cited Foreman and Money's (1995) 2X2 matrix of internal marketing strategies. They suggested that the process of Employer Branding would be closest to type IV, with the whole organization taking on both roles. Clearly, they saw important similarities between internal marketing and employer branding. The main difference, they argued, was that unlike employer branding, 'internal marketing does not make the direct brand/employee management comparison' (Ambler and Barrow, 1996).

In short, Ambler and Barrow described employer branding as a field that brought together several different areas of marketing thought and 'synthesized' them within a single framework. This implied that a fuller understanding of the Employer Branding concept might be developed through a more thorough review of the literature in each of these areas. Some progress has been made in this direction (E.g. Miles and Mangold, 2004; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004), but much remains to be done. In fact nine years after Ambler and Barrow published their original paper the same argument was made more explicitly by Uncles and Moroko (2005):

“To establish what may constitute the employer branding process, a broader review of the literature is required. A number of general marketing concepts would appear to be relevant, including relationship marketing, corporate branding, culture and identity, internal marketing, and corporate reputation.”

This statement seems to suggest that the same theories identified by Ambler and Barrow (1996) are still the most relevant, at least from a marketing perspective, but nine years later the connections and implications have yet to be fully explored.

#### 2.3.2.2 Foundations in the Human Resources Literature

Subsequent authors recognized that some of the issues associated with employer branding fell outside the traditional boundaries of marketing, and they filled this gap by incorporating theories from the literature on HR management.

Miles and Mangold (2004) argued that the key to effective employer branding was an understanding of the relationship between an organization and its employees. In order to describe this relationship and to explain its importance in the context of employer branding, they turned to the theory of psychological contracts. This was defined by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) as a set of ‘subjective beliefs regarding an exchange agreement between an individual... and the employing firm and its agents’. According to this theory an employee’s perception of and response to the employment experience is significantly influenced by his prior expectations. The recruitment process can therefore be seen as an important first step in establishing the employment relationship.

In order to justify the study and practice of employer branding from an HR perspective, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) also incorporated the Resource-Based View of the firm. This theory states that ownership or control of resources that are scarce, valuable, non-substitutable, non-transferable, and difficult to copy can provide the firm with a



source of sustained competitive advantage. (Barney, 1991) Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) argued that a firm's human resources, if well managed, could meet all five criteria. Therefore employer branding was not just a support for the consumer brand but an effective strategy for creating sustained competitive advantage through the management of a firm's human resources. In other words the Resource-Based View could be used to explain how employer branding brought together 'strategy, engaged employees, and financial performance' (Joo and McLean, 2006).

### **2.3.3 Theoretical Principles**

#### **2.3.3.1 Employer Brand Management**

The employer branding process has been defined by Uncles and Moroko (2006) as 'the operation of mechanisms at the firm and individual levels that shape and perpetuate the employer brand.' Though little is known about this process, employer brand theory provides a set of principles through which it may be partially managed. These may be described as the principles of employer brand management.

##### *2.3.3.1.1 Employer Value Proposition*

Execution of an employer branding strategy begins with the development of an employer value proposition (EVP). It specifies the key benefits of employment with a particular organization and captures, in one succinct statement, 'the holistic sum of everything people experience and receive while they are part of the company'. (Michaels et al, 2001) If the employer brand is to be effective in attracting and retaining top talent, this EVP should be attractive to members of the target audience, different from those of competing employers, and consistent with the realities of the organization. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) In other words the EVP should explain why 'a smart energetic ambitious individual would want to come and work with you rather than with the team next door.' (Chambers et al, 1998) However the EVP does not

directly influence organizational outcomes; it is a 'brand concept developed by managers' (McEnally and de Chernatony, 1999) that must then be communicated to members of the target audience, including both current and potential employees (Ambler and Barrow, 1996).

#### *2.3.3.1.2 Types of Benefit*

The benefits offered by the EVP are analogous to those associated with a consumer brand and may be broadly divided into two categories. (Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003) Instrumental benefits are based on tangible job and organizational attributes that can be objectively verified. Described by Ambler and Barrow (1996) as 'functional' and 'economic', their appeal is essentially utilitarian. (Katz, 1960) Examples include wealth (through the receipt of a salary), leisure time (through shorter working hours), and improved job skills (through training). Symbolic benefits, on the other hand, are based on each employee's subjective perception of the job or organization's intangible attributes. (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003) Described by Ambler and Barrow (1996) as psychological, their appeal is expressive or emotional. (Aaker, 1997; Katz, 1960) Examples include a sense of belonging, direction, and purpose. (Ambler and Barrow, 1996)

#### *2.3.3.1.3 Marketing Mix*

The marketing mix includes all the variables that a manager can use to communicate the EVP to members of the target audience. With respect to potential employees, these may include recruitment advertisements, sponsorships, campus presentations, job interviews, and job previews. (Miles and Mangold, 2004) With respect to current employees, these may include company newsletters, training guides, internet sites, and other materials that have been developed specifically for the firm's existing staff. (Miles and Mangold, 2004) These formal channels of information are useful because they are directly controlled by managers. As a result they can be manipulated to reach

and attract particular segments of the target audience, but they may not always be perceived as credible.

#### 2.3.3.2 Employer Brand Image

The purpose of employer brand management is to create a unique and attractive 'employer brand image' in the minds of current and potential employees. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) It is this mental image, often described simply as 'the brand' (E.g. Uncles and Moroko, 2005; Ambler and Barrow, 1996), which influences individual decisions and behaviour (Collins and Stevens, 2002) and ultimately contributes to the organizational outcomes described below.

Employer brand image is defined in different ways by different authors. For example Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) cite Keller's (1993) definition of brand image as 'an amalgamation of the perceptions related to the product-related/non-product related attributes and functional symbolic benefits that are encompassed in the brand associations that reside in consumer memory,' and they argue that employer brand image can be defined in essentially the same way. Knox and Freeman (2006), on the other hand, define employer brand image as 'the image associated with an organization uniquely in its role as an employer.' Ruch (2002) does not use the term employer brand image, but they define the employer brand as 'the company's image as seen through the eyes of its associates and potential hires' (cited in Martin et al, 2005).

#### **2.3.4 Organizational Outcomes**

The ultimate purpose of employer branding is to influence collective behaviour in ways that create value for the firm's shareholders. (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) This value may be described as 'employer brand equity' (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Ewing et al, 2002; Collins and Stevens, 2002) and it is generated, broadly speaking, in two ways.

#### 2.3.4.1 Marketing perspective

From a marketing perspective, the objective of employer branding is to enhance the value of a firm's corporate and consumer brands. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005; Miles and Mangold, 2004; Ambler and Barrow, 1996) It can do this in two ways. First, a strong employer brand can help the firm to attract and recruit potential employees who have the necessary characteristics to consistently represent the organisation in the manner desired by managers. For example their personal values and beliefs may reflect those associated with the corporate or consumer brand. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005) Second, an employer brand can motivate current employees to behave in specific ways. For example they may project the desired brand image 'through their demeanour, appearance, and manner of interaction with customers' (Miles and Mangold, 2004) or they may generally deliver a higher level of customer service. These behaviours contribute to increased consumer satisfaction and loyalty, and ultimately higher profits (Uncles and Moroko, 2005; Miles and Mangold, 2005).

#### 2.3.4.2 HR perspective

From an HR perspective, employer branding creates value by enhancing the value of a firm's human capital (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Backhaus, 2004). This is viewed as a scarce and valuable resource that can improve a firm's productivity and financial performance, increase its stock price, and provide a source of sustained competitive advantage, independently of the firm's consumer brands. (Miles and Mangold, 2004; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Ewing et al, 2002; Priem and Butler, 2001) However it can only do so if the behaviour of individual employees is aligned with the firm's wider interests and for as long as they remain with the firm. (Coff, 1997) Therefore the objectives of employer branding are threefold. First, an employer brand should help the firm to attract and recruit the best employees, where 'best' may be defined in terms of skills or fit. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005) Second, it should improve employee retention rates. Third, it should motivate employees to support the firm and its wider

interests. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) In short, employer branding should increase the value of a firm's human capital by helping to attract, retain and motivate the best employees. (Conference Board, 2001)

#### 2.3.4.3 Integrated perspective

Most authors subscribe to both views and argue that the two sets of objectives describe above are 'mutually reinforcing.' (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) For example, according to Ambler and Barrow (1996) a strong employer brand engenders positive attitudes, loyalty, and trust among the firm's employees. This translates to higher levels of customer service, which enhances the firm's relationships with its customers and increases the value of its consumer brand. At the same time customers who have received good service are more likely to offer positive feedback, and this feedback reinforces employees' positive attitudes toward the firm. (Miles and Mangold, 2004)

Uncles and Moroko (2005) expand this argument to the recruitment of new employees. If a firm recruits the best employees, meaning those who can support the brand promise made to consumers, this will ultimately strengthen the consumer brand, make the firm more profitable, and enhance its external reputation. This reputation then helps the firm to attract and retain the best employees because these individuals 'want to share in and be associated with the company's success.' Therefore the two sets of objectives are not only complementary, but when considered together they appear to create a virtuous circle. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005)

#### **2.3.5 Academic Research**

To date there have been very few empirical studies published in the area of employer branding (Lievens, 2007), and most of these have focused on the external market. However there are three studies which have looked at the issue of employer brand image within the firm.

Based on Dutton and Dukerich's (1991) three part model of organizational identity, Knox and Freeman (2006) compared the internal, external, and construed external images associated with an employer brand. They found that perceived attractiveness of a firm's employer brand image was positively correlated with application intentions, but there was a significant difference between the three images. This finding highlights the difficulty and importance of aligning the perceptions of current and potential employees.

Lievens et al (2007) used the same three-part model in order to determine whether the instrumental-symbolic framework could be used to predict both organizational attraction among potential recruits and organizational identification among current employees of the Belgian Army. With respect to potential employees, they found that both components of the army's employer brand image combined to predict a greater degree of variance in organizational attraction than either one alone. With respect to current employees, the symbolic components of its organizational identity and construed external images were found to be significantly correlated with organizational identification, but the instrumental components were not.

Finally, Lievens (2006) measured the relative importance of instrumental versus symbolic attributes as predictors of organizational attraction for potential applicants, actual applicants, and current employees of the Belgian army. He found that both instrumental and symbolic components were significant predictors of organizational attraction for members of each group, and that both together accounted for more variance than the instrumental component alone. Consistent with Knox and Freeman (2006), he also found significant differences between the images held by actual applicants and current employees.

### **2.3.6 Practitioner Views**

Articles in the practitioner press have defined and conceptualized employer branding in several different ways. (Miles and Mangold, 2005) While this has arguably created a lack of focus, there are several themes which have received consistent attention.

#### **2.3.6.1 Recruitment**

Recognizing the increasing 'war for talent', many articles proclaim the benefits of employer branding as a tool for attracting attention in the employment marketplace. For example Clegg (2004) describes employer branding as 'a consumer-style approach to recruitment' and an article in Harvard Management Update (2000) recommends the use of employer branding when recruiting on campus 'to make sure your company "registers on students' radars"'.

#### **2.3.6.2 Employer of Choice thesis**

Most of the articles that are primarily concerned with recruitment also discuss the benefits of becoming an 'employer of choice.' (E.g. Kaliprasad, 2006) This term refers to a company that is included in one or more of the many 'best employer lists' that are published in the popular press. Examples include Fortune Magazine's '100 Best Companies to Work for in America,' Hewitt Associate's 'Best Employers in Asia,' and Computer World's '100 Best Places for IT Professionals to work.' (Joo and Mclean, 2006) These lists are based on 'best employer studies' (Joo and Mclean. 2006) that compare and rank different organizations on those attributes that are thought to be most valued by current and potential employees. The underlying assumption, therefore, is that the same evaluative criteria may be applied to different firms. As a result, firms that seek to become employers of choice are likely to benchmark their own practices against those that already have this status; in other words they seek to become more attractive by conforming to the standards set by others.

### 2.3.6.3 Authenticity

The term authenticity is used here to describe the balance between the firm's internal reality and its external brand communications; many authors argue that effective employer branding has to start from within (E.g. Miles and Mangold, 2005). For example IOMA's (2004) human resource department's management report states that employer branding is 'not about what people want to hear. It's about figuring out the realities of your organization and getting to its essence.' Although there are strengths and weakness associated with this inside-out approach to employer branding, it appears to be popular within the practitioner press.

## **2.4 THE SOCIAL IDENTITY APPROACH TO ORGANISATIONAL IDENTIFICATION**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

Ashforth and Mael (1989) describe organizational identification as a particular form of social identification. They argue that the organization can be seen a social group or category, and that members who identify with the organization incorporate its identity within their own self-concepts. This 'Social Identity Approach' provides a bridge between the literature on Organizational Identity and Organizational Identification; it suggested that together they can predict a wide range of individual and collective behaviours. (Haslam et al, 2003)

### **2.4.2 Theoretical Foundations**

#### 2.4.2.1 Social Identity Theory

The Social Identity Approach to organizational identification is essentially an extension of Social Identity Theory (SIT). This theory was first developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), and it is based on three assumptions. The first assumption is that an individual



will strive to enhance his self-esteem, which is largely dependent on his self-concept and more specifically his social identity. The second assumption is that a person's social identity is determined by his perceived membership in particular social groups and by the characteristics that he ascribes to those groups; by defining himself as part of the group he also ascribes those characteristics to himself, and incorporates them within his own self-concept. The third assumption is that he evaluates each group in relation to relevant out-groups. (Van Dick et al, 2005) Therefore, an individual may strive to enhance his self-esteem through membership in groups which he perceives to have relatively positive characteristics, and once he becomes a member he will seek to maintain and accentuate those characteristics that make the group positively distinct from other groups within the relevant social environment.

#### 2.4.2.2 Self Categorization Theory

SIA also incorporates aspects of Self-Categorization Theory (SCT), which is based on the same three assumptions as SIT and 'can be seen to include the former as a derivation.' (Turner, 1987) Instead of describing the consequences of group membership, however, self-categorization theory is 'a cognitive (or social-cognitive) elaboration of the nature of social identity as a higher order level of abstraction in the perception of self-and others.' (Turner, 1987)

#### 2.4.2.3. Organizational Identity

Ashforth and Mael (1989) adapt these theories to the study of organizational identification by incorporating the notion of organizational identity. Defined by Albert and Whetten (1985) as that which is 'most central, distinctive, and enduring' about the organization, this term captures the essential characteristics of an organization that might be incorporated within an individual's self-concept. Therefore, organizational identification was later defined by Dutton et al (1994) as 'one form of psychological

attachment that occurs when members adopt the defining characteristics of the organization as defining characteristics for themselves.'

### **2.4.3 Antecedents of Organisational Identification**

#### 2.4.3.1 Based on Social Identity Theory

The three most frequently cited antecedents of organization identification are based on Social Identity Theory. These are described by Ashforth and Mael (1989) as 'distinctiveness,' 'prestige', and 'salience of out-groups.' Because identification is a matter of degree, these three antecedents may affect not only the occurrence but also the strength of an individual's identification. This has been defined by van Dick and Wagner (2002) as 'the extent to which the group membership is incorporated in the self-concept.' It is also important to note that, according to Social Identity Theory, identification is based on individual perceptions. Therefore the terms 'distinctiveness' and 'prestige' are used here to describe subjective impressions that may bear little resemblance to objective reality or to the impressions of other members.

#### *Distinctiveness*

Distinctiveness refers to those characteristics which set the organization apart from other comparable groups (Oakes and Turner, 1986) and give it a unique identity. This enhances identification because it separates 'figure from ground' (Ashforth and Mael, 1989), so that categorization is more likely to occur. (Pratt, 1998) People are also naturally driven to enhance their distinctiveness in social contexts (Tajfel and Turner, 1985), and membership in a distinctive organization helps them to achieve this. (Dutton et al, 1994) The relationship between distinctiveness and organizational identification has been supported by research (Mael, 1988) and appears to hold true even when the distinction is perceived by outsiders to hold a negative connotation;

group members may emphasize this distinction, particularly in response to a perceived threat, but re-construe it in a more positive light. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989)

### *Prestige*

Prestige refers to those characteristics which may enhance the self-esteem of individual members. The meaning of this term as used in the literature is significantly broader than that implied by common usage, and it is generally interpreted in one of two ways.

Some authors consider prestige to be dependent on the perceived opinions of other people. For example Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) describe organizational prestige as 'the perception that a member of the organization has that other people, whose opinions are valued, believe that the organization is well regarded (e.g. respected, admired, prestigious, well-known).' Smidts et al (2001) adopt a similar approach but use the term 'perceived external image.' They argue that membership in an organization that is well-regarded allows a person to 'bask in the reflected glory' (Cialdini et al, 1976) and therefore enhances his self-esteem. Several studies have supported this perspective, showing that perceived external prestige is significantly correlated with organizational identification. (E.g. Smidts et al, 2001; Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000; Bhattacharya et al, 1995; Mael and Ashforth, 1992)

Others interpret the term more broadly to include those factors which enhance a person's sense of self-worth, regardless of other people's opinions. For example a study by Olkkonen and Lipponen (2006) showed that two types of organizational justice, distributive justice and procedural justice, were significantly correlated with organizational identification. The first was defined as 'the perceived fairness of the outcomes and the allocation of resources in the workplace' and the second as 'the perceived fairness of the formal decision-making procedures used in the organization.' They argued that perceived organizational justice signals to organizational members

that they are valued and respected, thus enhancing their self-esteem. A study by Bamber and Iyer (2002) also showed that for auditors in the 'Big 5' accounting firms, perceived effectiveness of a firm's audit process was directly related to organizational identification. They argued that the ability to perform high quality work contributed directly to each member's self-esteem. In both of these studies it was members' perceptions of the organization's characteristics, not their perceptions of other people's opinions, that strengthened their identification with the organization.

### *Salience of out-groups*

According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), salience of out-groups causes members to enhance their estimations of the organization's distinctiveness and prestige. The most commonly cited cause of out-group salience is inter-group competition. Therefore out-group salience and, by extension, inter-group competition should both increase the strength of members' identification with the organization. The first supposition has generally been supported by research. (E.g. Allen et al, 1983; Turner, 1981) However the impact of inter-group competition is less clear. For example Brown and Ross (1982) and van Knippenberg (1984) both found that group boundaries are strengthened and group differences emphasized in the context of inter-group competition, but Mael and Ashforth (1992) found that organizational identification was not significantly correlated with intra-organizational competition.

#### 2.4.3.2 Based on Self-Categorization Theory

According to SCT (Turner, 1987), identity salience is a necessary prerequisite for organizational identification to occur. An organization's identity is most likely to be salient when out-groups are salient, when members of the organization are perceived to share similar characteristics, and when those characteristics are perceived to be very different from those possessed by members of other organizations. However

these three antecedents have received little attention in the organizational identification literature.

#### 2.4.3.3 Individual level Variables

Ashforth (1998) argues that strong organizational identities can 'serve as salient beacons or reference points, attracting some people and repulsing others.' This suggests that the identification with a particular organization is likely to vary significantly from person to person. Neither social identity theory nor self-categorization theory can fully explain these individual differences, but subsequent theorists and researchers have attempted to fill the gap.

March and Simon (1963) suggested that frequency of interpersonal interaction should increase organizational identification. Although their model is no longer a frequent point of reference in the literature, this suggestion has received indirect empirical support. (Dutton et al, 1994) It is also consistent with the finding of Wiesenfeld et al (2001) that individuals who have a greater need for affiliation are more likely to identify with an organization; if organizational identification is essentially an interpersonal phenomenon, individuals who receive greater satisfaction 'from harmonious relationships and from a sense communion with others' (Murray, 1938) should be more inclined to identify. However this argument appears to be inconsistent with the principles of social identity theory.

Brewer and Gardner (1996) distinguish between interpersonal identities which are based on 'personalized bonds of attachment' and collective identities which are based on 'impersonal bonds derived from common identification with some symbolic group or social category'. Social identity theory relates to the latter. (Glynn, 1998) In fact, Ashforth and Mael (1989) state explicitly that interpersonal interaction is not required for an individual to identify with the group. In order to provide an explanation that is consistent with social identity theory, Glynn (1998) proposes the hypothetical

construct 'need for organizational identification' (nOID). This describes an individual's propensity to identify with the 'more impersonal, general social category of a particular collective'. A study by Kreiner and Ashforth (2004) found that nOID is a significant predictor of organizational identification.

Mael and Ashforth (1995) also argued that an individual's propensity to identify may be influenced by his life experience. They argued that 'every experience that conceivably categorizes a person has the potential to shape the person.' (Mael and Ashforth, 1995) A person's memberships in particular groups at one point in his life can therefore influence his choice of group memberships later in life. Their study of U.S. Army recruits found that four biodata factors were significant predictors of identification. These were (1) perceived congruence of personal interests and organizational activities (2) internalization of or conformity to institutional expectations (3) a preference for group attachments and (4) cognitively ambitious, achievement-oriented pursuits. Although these four factors may not be generalizable outside of a military context, their findings provide support for the use of biodata in predicting organizational identification.

Dutton et al (1994) provided further theoretical support for the role of individual difference in determining a person's propensity to identify with a particular organization. They argued that people are driven to maintain the continuity of their self-concepts and to express those values and beliefs which they consider important. Both can be achieved through organizational identification, but only if the identity of the organization is consistent with the person's pre-existing self-concept. This self-concept is likely to be a product of the individual's unique history, experience, personality.

#### **2.4.4 Consequences of Organisational Identification**

According to the principles of SIT, the consequences of social identification are ubiquitous. They can occur in any group setting, even if the group members have nothing in common, do not like each other, and never interact. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) However, they are likely to be particularly pronounced in an employment context because a person spends more time at work than with other groups and is personally invested in the organization's success. (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000)

##### 2.4.4.1 Cognitive

According to SIT, the mere perception of membership in a particular social group creates a cognitive bias toward that group and toward its individual members. (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) This causes the individual to prioritize the interests of the group over his own, and to be more trusting of in-group members. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Weisenfeld et al, 1998) It also motivates him to accentuate the positive distinctiveness of the organization, and he may do so in three ways. First, he may change the attributes on which he compares different organizations. Second, he may reassess the value assigned to particular attributes. Third, he may re-frame the comparison to include a different group of organizations. (Tajfel and Turner, 1979)

Two of these three potential manipulations are illustrated by Elsbach and Kramer (1996), who studied the way in which top American Business Schools responded to the publication of the Business Week rankings. In all cases, including the top-ranked schools, they found employees perceived the rankings to be a threat to their school's identity; because the rankings were based on a standardized set of criteria, they either devalued the organization's 'highly valued, core identity attributes' or called into question its 'standing relative to other schools.' The study also revealed that employees responded to this identity threat in one of two ways; some attempted to highlight different attributes as the basis for comparison and others tried to reframe

the reference group. Apart from this study, however, the cognitive consequences of identification have not yet been fully tested in an organizational context.

#### 2.4.4.2 Affective

Organizational identification has been shown to influence employees' affective response to their jobs, to the organization, and to the actions of organizational leaders. (Van Dick and Wagner, 2002; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) The attitude that has received most attention in the organizational identification literature is job satisfaction. For example van Dick et al (2004) found that the two variables were significantly correlated. Their study confirmed the findings of van Knippenburg and van Schie (2000) and Mael and Ashforth (1992). In the last case, however, job satisfaction was classified as an antecedent rather than a consequence of organizational identification. Dutton and Dukerich (1991) also found that individuals who identified with the organization expressed emotions that were shaped by the organization's perceived identity; when the organization's leaders took actions that were consistent with this identity, employees expressed positive emotions, but when leaders' actions were inconsistent with the organization's perceived identity they triggered negative emotions.

#### 2.4.4.3 Behavioural

Social identification can influence an individual's attitudes and behaviour, even when there are no changes in his job or material benefits. (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) For example the minimal group studies showed that the mere knowledge of shared membership in a group can increase cooperation and cohesion within the group. (Tajfel and Turner, 1985) Organizational identification, as a particular kind of social identification, can also affect behaviour in more specific ways.



Organizational identification motivates individuals to act, and be seen to act, in accordance with the organization's perceived identity. (Haslam et al, 2000; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) Employees who identify with the organization will therefore 'feel most authentic when they are conforming to role expectations, including display roles'. (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993) For such people their work provides an opportunity to express a valued identity, and this creates a sense of psychological well-being. However employees who must conform to the same display rules and do not identify may experience emotive dissonance. This creates a need to resolve the dissonance, which can be done by realigning their identity. Emotional labour, particularly deep acting, can therefore enhance organizational identification. (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993)

Individuals who identify with the organization are also motivated to pursue its goals, even at great personal cost. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) Organizational identification has therefore been shown to have a significant impact on organizational citizenship behaviour. (van Dick et al, 2005; Dukerich et al, 2002; Tyler and Blader, 2000) This is defined by Morrison as 'behavior that is beneficial for an organization but falls outside of formal role requirements such that it is difficult to formally specify or reward'. (Morrison, 1996) A study by Lee (2004) showed that organizational identification motivated employees to engage in continuous improvement, defined as 'the propensity to pursue incremental and innovative improvements of its process, products, and services,' and he argued that this was another form of extra-role behaviour. According to Dutton et al (1994) employees who identify with the organization are also more likely to engage in impression management; because the organization's construed external image affects each member's self-concept, employees are motivated individually and collectively to promote a positive image of the organization's identity.

Finally, organizational identification motivates an individual to remain with the firm, even when it may seem rational to leave, because leaving 'means losing a part of

himself' (Haslam 2001) and is psychologically painful. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) Several studies have therefore shown that organizational identification is negatively correlated with both turnover intentions and actual turnover. (Cole and Bruch, 2006; Tyler and Blader, 2000) Van Dick et al (2005) also found that it was positively correlated with employee satisfaction, which further reduced turnover intentions.

#### 2.4.4.4 Caveats

Organizational identification has also been associated with group think and resistance to change. (Haslam et al, 2006; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993) According to Janis' (1971) influential model of groupthink, highly cohesive groups tend to make 'defective and irrational decisions' in crisis situations. (Haslam et al, 2006) Organizational identification exacerbates this tendency because it causes members to subordinate their individual identities to that of the group, thereby reducing the likelihood of dissent. It also creates an irrational commitment to the group's identity and goals. Because this commitment is 'synonymous with self-definition, self-expression, and self-preservation' it prevents group members from changing their line of thought or action, even when failure is inevitable. (Haslam et al, 2006)

In short, an individual who identifies strongly become dependent on his identity as a member of the organization. (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993) This dependency can enhance his psychological well-being, 'providing a source of belongingness, empowerment and meaningfulness' (Ashforth and Mael, 1989), and allows him to function more effectively as a member of the group. However it can also limit his creative thinking, increase his susceptibility to work-related stress, and eventually lead to burn-out. (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993) These negative outcomes are not insignificant and are inextricably linked to the potential benefits of organizational identification.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

The three areas of literature reviewed above are fundamentally different from one another, and each one has its own strengths and weaknesses:

The theoretical foundations of the Corporate Identity literature are rich and diverse. However, the same term has been used to describe a number of fundamentally different phenomena, and many scholars use the term without explicitly stating their interpretation (van Rekom, 1997). As a result, there is considerable confusion surrounding the nature and consequences of the construct.

The literature on Employer Branding has a strong practical emphasis. It provides a useful prescriptive framework for managing the behaviour of current and potential employees, but the theoretical foundations of this framework have yet to be fully explored (Uncles and Moroko, 2005). In addition, the framework suggests that an organisation's employer brand should be attractive to both current and potential employees, but studies of employer brand attractiveness have focused almost exclusively on the perspective of employees. As a result, little is known about what makes an organisation's employer brand attractive to current employees.

The Social Identity Approach to Organisational Identification has a clear and well-established theoretical foundation, and has been supported by extensive research. Moreover, it predicts and explains a range of behaviours that 'play a major role in determining key organisational outcomes' (Haslam et al, 2003a). However, these insights have yet to be fully translated into practice (Haslam et al, 2003b).

By incorporating theory and research from these three areas of literature within a single framework, it is possible to build on the strengths and compensate for the weakness of each one. In the following chapter, I explain how this can be done.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I develop and discuss a theoretical framework that shows how a unique and attractive Corporate Identity can motivate employees to align their behaviour with that identity. This framework incorporates theory and research from all three areas of literature reviewed above. In doing so, it demonstrates the utility of addressing the research question through the lens of Social Identity Theory. Therefore, this chapter is divided into two parts; the first part explains how Social Identity can help to bridge the gaps between these three areas of literature, and the second part discusses the theoretical implications of addressing the research question through this lens.

#### **3.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SOCIAL IDENTITY PERSPECTIVE**

By incorporating theory and research from all three areas reviewed above – Corporate Identity, Employer Branding, and the Social Identity Approach to Organisational Identification – it is possible to provide an empirically valid account of the relationship between a unique and attractive corporate identity and the behaviour of employees. However, in order to do so, it is necessary to first identify the points of intersection between the three areas of literature.

##### **3.2.1 Links between the Three Areas of Literature**

(1) When seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory, Organizational Identity is conceptually identical to Corporate Identity and to the internal Component of Employer Brand Image.

### *Organisational Identity versus the Internal component of Employer Brand Image*

Like organisational identity, employer brand image is a 'perceptual phenomenon' (Knox and Freeman, 2006) that exists in the mind of the individual employee. More specifically, both terms represent a set of shared beliefs about the essential characteristics of an organization. One apparent difference between the two concepts is that employer brand image has typically been associated with issues related to employment, while organisational identity relates to the organisation as a whole. This distinction rests on the assumption that employees mainly care about issues related to employment. However, Social Identity Theory suggests that employees also have a personal stake in the successes and failures of the organisation as a whole (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). This means that the scope of the employer brand is as wide as the scope of organisational identity, so that the two concepts are one and the same.

### *Corporate Identity vs. Organisational Identity*

As explained previously, corporate and organisational identity may be distinguished on the basis of conceptualization (substantive versus cognitive), locus of analysis (organisation versus individual), and research focus (marketing versus organisational behaviour). However, Social Identity Theory helps to bridge these differences.

#### Conceptualization:

According to Social Identity Theory, employees' perceptions of their organisation's identity shape their behaviours in such a way that those perceptions become self-fulfilling. As a result, the cognition of employees 'more or less directly reflects' the substantive attributes of the organisation. (Turner, 1987) As discussed in the Methodology chapter, this does not necessarily mean that the two are identical. However, since it is impossible to directly experience objective reality (Turner, 1987), it

is neither necessary nor useful to distinguish between the substantive attributes that constitute Corporate Identity and employees' perceptions of those attributes.

#### Locus of Analysis:

A fundamental premise of Social Identity Theory, as well as the more recent Self Categorization Theory, is that employees can incorporate the identity of the organisation within their own concept. This identity is a 'socially structured field within the individual mind' (Turner, 1987) which allows employees to think and act as 'exemplars or representatives' of the group. Therefore, Turner (1987) argues that 'psychologically speaking, they do not "represent," they "are" the organisation.

#### Research Focus:

Social Identity Theory describes the cognitive and behavioural consequences of perceived membership in a social group. In doing so it directly addresses a variety of issues related to organisational behaviour. It also explains how employees can be motivated to align their behaviour with the identity of the organisation and to communicate that identity to external stakeholders, which has been acknowledged as a critical challenge in the context of corporate marketing. Therefore, a conceptualization of identity that is based on the principles of Social Identity Theory should be relevant to the interests of Organisational Behaviour theorists as well as marketers.

(2) Organisational Identity is the foundation for organisational identification. Since organisational identity is conceptually identical to both Corporate Identity and the internal component of Employer Brand Image are conceptually identical, it follows that either one of these constructs can also influence organisational identification.

(3) According to Social Identity Theory, the two main antecedents of organizational identification are perceived attractiveness and differentiation. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Dutton et al, 1994) This prediction is based on extensive experimental evidence and has been repeatedly confirmed in an organizational context.

(4) Research has shown that organizational identification can have a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviour of employees. For example it has been shown to promote organizational citizenship behaviour (van Dick et al, 2005; Haslam et al, 2000), which may be considered an extreme example of employee motivation; employees go beyond the requirements of their jobs in order to support the goals of the organization. It has also been shown to improve employee retention (Cole and Bruch, 2006; Tyler and Blader, 2000) and, most importantly, to align the behaviour of the employee with the objectives and identity of the organization. (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991)

(5) The behaviours associated with organizational identification can have a direct impact on marketing outcomes. For example employee motivation may enhance employee performance, and therefore improve customer relationships. (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) Employee retention allows the firm to maintain the pool of human skills and knowledge which are needed to co-create customer value. (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), and as long as the firm's consumer brand is aligned with the identity of the organization, behaviours that reflect the identity of the brand will also be consistent with the brand promise made to consumers.

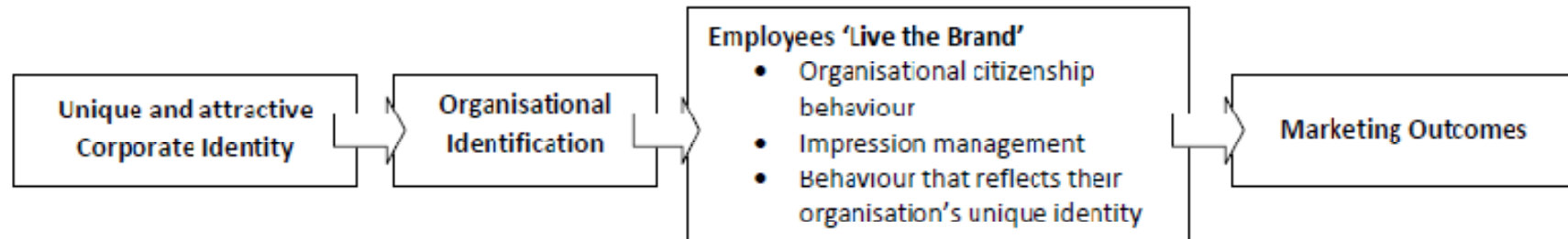


Figure 1: Conceptual model of relationship between a unique and attractive Corporate Identity and marketing outcomes



### **3.2.2 Summary of Links**

In short, research shows that a unique and attractive organisational identity, as seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory, can strengthen organisational identification. Research also shows that organisational identification motivates employees to align their behaviour with the identity of their organisation and promotes a range of behaviours that may support the corporate brand. Since Corporate Identity and the internal component of the employer brand are identical to organisational identity, in this theoretical context, it follows that a unique and attractive corporate identity or employer brand should also shape employee behaviour in the same way.

## **3.3 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The framework described above provides a theoretically valid account of the relationship between a unique and attractive corporate identity and the behaviour of employees. However, in order to maintain the integrity of the framework, it is necessary to operationalize all the relevant terms and concepts – including identity and attractiveness – through the lens of Social Identity Theory.

### **3.3.1 Conceptualizing corporate identity**

Although the antecedents and consequences of identification have been studied extensively, very few researchers have applied this lens to the study of corporate identity. Therefore, in order to develop a preliminary view of the construct, it is useful to refer to the original statements of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and Self-Categorization Theory (Turner, 1987).

When viewed through the lens of Social Identity Theory, corporate identity is a cognitive construct that exists in the minds of employees. More specifically, it refers to their 'psychological representation' of the organisation as a whole, and may be

described in terms of 'shared social norms of fact and value' (Turner, 1987). 'Facts' refer to the substantive attributes of the organisation, which are objectively real and readily apparent to people inside and outside the organisation. 'Values' refer to the judgements employees make about those objective attributes. These are entirely subjective and susceptible to in-group bias. As a result, the perceptions of insiders and outsiders are likely to be similar, but their evaluation of the organisation's identity may be very different; since identity is defined in terms of 'fact' and 'value,' the construct can only be understood by studying the perspective organisational insiders – in other words, employees.

Social Identity Theory suggests that the views of individual employees are likely to be very similar to one another, but they need not be identical. For example, Tajfel and Turner (1979) describe a social group as:

'a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share *some* emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve *some* degree of consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of it' (emphasis added).

Therefore, identity appears to be a complex and somewhat paradoxical phenomenon; Scott and Lane (2000) explain that 'organisational identity, although variously perceived, has a reality independent of individual members' and they go on to say that 'its significance depends on a collective audience, among whom there is some level of consensus – albeit how much remains in question.'

In short, Social Identity Theory suggests that corporate identity is an *organisation* level construct that exists in the minds of *individual* employees. This seemingly paradoxical view of identity helps to explain how individual employees are able to think and act in similar ways (Dutton and Ducherich, 1991). However, from a research standpoint it also raises two important questions. First, when studying corporate identity as an organisation level construct, how should variations in individual perception be dealt with? For example, does a particular attribute need to be perceived by every

employee in order to be considered part of the organisation's identity? If not, is it sufficient for an attribute to be perceived by one employee, by two employees, by the majority of employees? Second, what level of variation can be accepted within a particular organisation before it can no longer be considered a single 'social group'?

### **3.3.2 Understanding how current employees evaluate the identity of their own organisation**

The original statement of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) suggests that current employees will seek to frame the comparison with other organisations in such a way that their own organisation may be construed as 'positively distinct' from comparable organisations, and it specifies three ways in which they can do this.

First, employees can strategically select the attributes on which the organisations are compared; by using their organisation's strengths as the basis for comparison, they can maximize the probability of a favourable outcome. This does not mean that the choice of attributes is entirely determined by the preferences of employees. In fact Turner argues that such comparisons must be made 'on the dimensions and in terms of the values deemed as relevant and important by society.' However, Social Identity Theory suggests that employees will seek to assign greater 'evaluative significance' (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) to the strengths of their own organisation.

Second, employees can change the value (positive or negative) assigned to a specific attribute; if one of the organisation's defining attributes is construed as unattractive by people outside the organisation, employees may collectively re-construe it as attractive, thereby enhancing the perceived attractiveness of the organisation's identity.

Third, since evaluation is determined through comparison with other organisations employees may change the 'comparative frame of reference' (Tajfel and Turner, 1979);

this allows them to define the frame in such a way that it only includes organisations with which their own organisation will compare favourably (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996).

As a result, the attributes that employees consider most attractive are likely to be different in each organisation. From a practical standpoint this implies that efforts to become an 'employer of choice' are unlikely to have the desired effect on employee behaviour or on their willingness to support the corporate brand. From a research standpoint it suggests that each organisation must be studied separately. Therefore, the organisation becomes the primary unit of analysis rather than the individual employees.

### **3.3.3 Deconstructing the research question**

In order to explain what makes an organisation attractive to its employees, it is necessary to address the following three questions:

- (1) What are the dimensions (and sub-dimensions) of corporate identity, when seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory?
- (2) What are the dimensions (and sub-dimensions) of corporate identity that employees consider attractive?
- (3) What makes an organisation's corporate identity distinctive or unique?

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

The framework developed in this chapter shows that a unique and attractive Corporate Identity can motivate employees to align their behaviour with that identity. It is rooted in the well-established principles of Social Identity Theory, supported by extensive research, and directly relevant to the challenges faced by corporate brand managers. However, before this framework can be applied in practice, it is necessary to explain what is meant by a 'unique and attractive corporate identity' in the context of Social Identity Theory. In the following chapter I describe and justify the methodology that I used to do this.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In order to address the research question through the lens of Social Identity Theory, it was necessary to develop a methodology that was consistent with the principles of this theory. This methodology also had to be consistent with the philosophical assumptions on which the theory is based, and with the objective of the proposed research. In this section I elaborate on these requirements, and describe the research design that was developed to meet them.

### **4.2 PHILOSOPHICAL POSITIONING**

By adopting Social Identity Theory as the theoretical lens, I implicitly adopted the philosophical assumptions on which this theory is based. These assumptions, described in detail by Turner (1987), are broadly consistent with the realist perspective. In this section I therefore position the realist perspective in relation to positivism and interpretivism. I then explain how the assumptions described by Turner (1987) relate to the basic principles of realism.

#### **4.2.1 Positioning the Realist Perspective**

Within the social sciences there are two opposing philosophies of research, positivism and interpretivism. According to positivism, the social world is objectively real. It is seen as 'a complex of causal relationships' between discrete, observable events, and the only way to discover these relationships is through direct observation. Scientific theories describe these relationships in a highly general form and are assumed to hold true 'without exception, across time and space' (Blaikie,1993). On the other hand, interpretivists take the view that reality is 'a complex of socially constructed meanings' (Blaikie, 1993). They reject the notion that social reality can be described in terms of

objective facts and they focus instead on explaining social phenomena from the perspective of those involved.

Realism balances the two perspectives by assuming that there are different domains of reality; the *empirical domain* is comprised of facts which can be directly observed, while the 'generative mechanisms' that underlie those facts are in the *domain of the real* (Outhwaite, 1987). These mechanisms may not be directly observable, even by the researcher, but they are assumed to be objectively real and they cause the social world to operate in predictable ways (Chia, 2002). Therefore, the purpose of scientific inquiry is to uncover these generative mechanisms.

#### **4.2.2 The Philosophical Underpinnings of Social Identity Theory**

Turner (1987) accepts the view that individuals actively interpret their social world. However, the purpose of inquiry, in the context of Social Identity Theory, is to explain the 'psychological aspects of society' (Turner, 1987). More specifically, Turner (1987) argues that 'this means understanding the structures and processes whereby society is psychologically represented in and mediated by individual minds.' These structures and processes are equivalent to the generative mechanisms described by Chia (2002). They cannot be directly observed, but it should be possible to understand them by studying the ways in which individuals interpret and respond to their social environment. Therefore, data relating to individual cognition and behaviour are equivalent to 'facts' that lie in the empirical domain.

This data can take many forms and may be collected in a number of ways. For example, Tajfel and Turner (1979) conducted a series of experiments to test their hypotheses about the effects of in-group bias. Elsbach and Kramer (1996) used interviews to understand how business school members maintained a positive evaluation of their school's identity when that identity was threatened. Mael and Ashforth (1992) used surveys to understand the relationship between demographics

and identification. In other words, the principles of Social Identity Theory are flexible enough to accommodate a diverse range of research methods; the choice depends mainly on the specific research objectives.

### **4.3 COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY APPROACH**

In order to address the research question, I conducted a comparative case study of six organisations.

#### **4.3.1 Rationale for the Case Study Approach**

The case study approach was chosen in accordance with the three criteria outlined by Yin (1994); the objective of the research was explanatory, there was no need to control the behaviour of participants, and the phenomenon of interest was contemporary rather than historical. However, it is important to acknowledge that the wording of the research question does not appear to conform to Yin's (1994) requirements for case study research.

Yin (1994) initially states that case studies are likely to be most appropriate when addressing research questions that begin with 'how' or 'why', while questions that begin with 'who', 'what', 'where', 'how many', or 'how much' should be addressed through surveys or archival research. Therefore, using case study research to address a question that begins with 'what' may appear to be inconsistent with Yin's arguments. However, his initial statement appears to reflect a narrow interpretation of the way in which these words might be used; he argues that questions beginning with 'how' or 'why' are generally explanatory while those beginning with 'who', 'what', 'where', 'how many', or 'how much' are generally descriptive. Since the objective of my research was explanatory, the case study approach was still consistent with Yin's fundamental logic.



### 4.3.2 Rationale for Case Selection

Following Yin (1994), cases were selected to produce literal replication (where the results are expected to be similar) and theoretical replication (where theory suggests that the results will differ in predictable ways). The primary selection criterion was identity type – normative versus utilitarian – because this dichotomy was expected to produce predictable differences in the types of benefits that were most valued by employees.

Albert and Whetten (1985) argue that one of the fundamental differences between normative and utilitarian organisations is the relationship between the organisation and its employees. In general, employees of a utilitarian organisation are driven by individual self-interest and controlled through financial rewards, while employees of a normative organisation tend to be highly committed to the organisation's core ideology and controlled through the 'internalization of organisational directives that are accepted as legitimate.' Therefore, the attributes that employees valued most highly were expected to differ according to the type of organisation in which they were employed. Employees of utilitarian organisations were expected to assign greater importance to functional and economic benefits because these benefits serve the self-interest of the individual. Employees of normative organisations were expected to assign less importance to functional and economic benefits and to place greater emphasis on the psychological benefits associated with commitment to the organisational ideology.

Following this logic, the study included three hybrid (normative-utilitarian) organisations, one organisation that was predominantly normative and two organisations that were predominantly utilitarian. The rationale for including three hybrid organisations was that employees of a hybrid organisation were expected to value both types of benefit - functional and economic, as well as psychological. Therefore, the results of these three cases were expected to reveal a wide range of

attributes that would overlap significantly with the attributes elicited in each of the other cases. The importance assigned to these attributes was expected to differ in the manner described above. However, the hybrid cases were expected to represent a point of intersection between the two extreme positions.

#### **4.3.3 Brief Description of the Six Cases**

The three hybrid organisations were schools within my university (referred to in this thesis as The University). These cases were chosen because Albert and Whetten (1985) describe universities as the quintessential hybrid (normative-utilitarian) organisations. Initially, the University was to be treated as a single case, but my discussions with employees across the campus revealed that each school had its own distinct identity, and that employees tended to identify more strongly with their own school than with the University as a whole. Therefore, the School of Management, the School of Engineering, and the School of Science and Technology were treated as three separate cases.

The organisation that was expected to have a predominantly normative identity was a non-profit sports organisation (referred to in this thesis as Sports Inc). This organisation was chosen because it met three important criteria suggested by (Albert and Whetten, 1985). First, the main function of a normative organisation tends to be cultural, educational, or expressive. Sports Inc met this criterion because it was established to host a sporting event that had great cultural significance. Second, normative organisations tend to develop hybrid (normative-utilitarian) identities over time and with increasing size. Therefore, an organisation is more likely to have a pure normative identity when it is newly formed and still small. Since Sports had been existence for less than two years and had only about 200 employees, it met both these criteria.

The two organisations that were expected to have predominantly utilitarian identities were both in the media industry. One was a TV production company (referred to in this thesis as TV Inc). This company arguably served an expressive purpose because it was involved in the production of TV programmes. However, it was 'oriented toward economic production,' which Albert and Whetten (1985) identify as the defining characteristic of a utilitarian organisation. The other organisation was a film distribution company (referred to in this thesis as Film Inc). This company had no role in the production process and had no influence over what films were made. Therefore, it served no expressive function; its main function was sales and it existed only for the purpose of generating a profit.

#### **4.4 TWO-STAGE RESEARCH DESIGN**

As explained in the preceding chapter, the research question can be divided three sub-questions.

- (1) What are the dimensions (and sub-dimensions) of Corporate Identity, when seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory?
- (2) What are the dimensions (and sub-dimensions) of Corporate Identity that employees consider attractive?
- (3) What makes an organisation's Corporate Identity distinctive or unique?

In order to address these questions, the research was conducted in two stages. Stage 1 focused on question 1. Stage 2 focused on questions 2. Rather than requiring an additional research stage, question 3 was addressed by analyzing the responses given in stages 1 and 2.

#### **4.4.1 Stage 1**

The objective in stage 1 was to elicit the list of attributes that employees used to describe their organisation's identity. Since little was previously known about the attributes that actually constitute identity at the organisational level (Brickson, 2005) this stage of the research was essentially inductive. As observed by Blaikie (1993), however, a purely inductive approach is impossible; every decision is inevitably guided by 'something in the nature of a theory' (Popper, 1961). The theory, in this case, was Social Identity Theory.

##### 4.4.1.1 Selecting a Method for Eliciting Key Attributes

In order to adhere to the principles of Social Identity Theory, the method used for data collection needed to fulfil several criteria. It had to provide direct insights into the perceptions of individual employees. It also had to be efficient enough to allow for the inclusion of multiple respondents from each organisation, thereby allowing for the identification of shared perceptions. Finally, it needed to be free from any theoretical assumptions that were incompatible with Social Identity Theory.

During the research design phase, I considered a large number of possible methods for eliciting the key attributes of each organisation's identity. However, most of these had to be rejected because they did not fulfil one or more of the three criteria described above. The following list, though not exhaustive, serves to illustrate.

1. Many of the cognitive mapping techniques that appear in the management literature are designed to elicit causal associations. (Huff, 1990) Examples include means-end analysis, critical incident technique, and the self-Q interview. According to Social Identity Theory, however, organisational identity is shaped by comparative rather than causal judgments. Therefore, the associations elicited by these techniques are not relevant to the theoretical context of the study.

2. Kelly's Repertory Grid is unsuitable because it is based on the assumption that individuals use the same set of criteria to evaluate different organisations. This assumption is consistent with the Employer of Choice thesis. However, as discussed earlier, Social Identity Theory directly contradicts the Employer of Choice thesis and suggests that the evaluative criteria used by employees are specific to each organisation. Therefore, the assumptions that underlie Kelly's Repertory Grid directly are fundamentally inconsistent with the theoretical principles on which this study was based.

3. Semiotics can be used to analyze existing texts, such as policy documents and press releases (Huff, 1990). According to Social Identity Theory, however, organisational identity exists only in the minds of organisational members and it refers to the *actual* attributes of the organisation. Since these pre-existing texts have typically been developed by managers to promote a *desired* image of the organisation, this method 'arguably sidesteps the issue of measuring identity itself' (Brickson, 2005).

4. In-depth interviews can be used to gain rich insights into the perceptions of individual employees, and this method is not inherently incompatible with the principles of Social Identity Theory. However, the time required to conduct in-depth interviews with multiple employees in each organisation would have put an unnecessary constraint on the number of cases that could be included in the study.

Therefore, after reviewing these and various other methods, I concluded that the only method of elicitation that would fulfil all three criteria was the open-ended questionnaire described below.

#### 4.4.1.2 Questionnaire Design

The stage 1 questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. (see appendix A)

Section A included four open ended questions about the characteristics of the organisation. These were taken directly from Brickson's (2005) Organisational Identity questionnaire, which was designed to elicit respondents' 'most salient perceptions of their organisation' (Brickson, 2005) without requiring them to adopt the language or theoretical framework of the researcher. These questions were chosen because they were expected to produce 'multifaceted descriptions of organisational identity', but in a form that could be readily quantified (Brickson, 2005). Therefore, the answers were expected to provide rich insights into the nature of the construct, as well as the quantifiable data that was required in order to identify the twenty five key attributes of each organisation's identity. The original questionnaire included a quantitative measure of identity orientation. However, this measure was omitted because it was not relevant to the questions addressed in this study.

Section B included 3 open-ended questions about the relevant organisation's identity as an employer. The term 'identity as an employer' is taken from the literature employer branding (See Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Conference Board, 2001). Based on the results of the pilot study, employees did not appear to make a clear distinction between their organisation's identity and its identity as an employer. However, the three questions in section B were still included because they addressed issues that were considered particularly important within the literature on employer branding; their inclusion ensured that these issues would not be overlooked. All three questions were original, and the rationale behind them is outlined in table 1.

(In order to gain access to Sports Inc, it was necessary to make four minor changes to the stage 1 questionnaire. These changes are described and justified in appendix D.)

**Table 2: Rationale for each question included in Sections B**

Question	Issue Addressed	Importance for Employer Branding
B1	The Employment Experience	The employment experience is often described as the ‘product’ at the heart of the employer brand; it is communicated to potential employees and experienced daily by those who are already employed (Mosley, 2007). Therefore, in order fully capture employees’ psychological representation of their organisation, it is necessary to include some information about what they think it is like to work there.
B2	Person-Organisation Fit	Several authors argue that employer branding can be used to help a firm attract and recruit employees who are likely to ‘fit’ and succeed within that particular organisation (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). Therefore, a complete description of an organisation’s identity must include some information about the characteristics that can help a person to succeed, and this information was expected to have a direct impact on the question of what makes an organisation’s identity attractive to its employees.
B3	Unknown Issues	Since employer brand theory remains in its ‘infancy’ (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004), there may be issues that matter to employees but have not yet been addressed in the literature. The purpose of this question was to provide respondents with an opportunity to discuss these issues.

#### 4.4.1.3 Number of Respondents

Each organisation was asked to identify a minimum of twelve respondents who would be willing to complete the stage 1 questionnaire. This number of responses was not expected to produce theoretical saturation in terms of specific attributes; since perceptions of identity are unique to each employee (Dutton et al, 1994), increasing the number of respondents would inevitably increase the total number of attributes elicited. However, this number of responses was expected to reveal enough attributes to identify all the theoretical dimensions that were relevant to the research question. This expectation was based on Zaltman's (1996)'s finding that just 3-5 participants are needed to generate all the constructs that make up a consensus map. (A consensus map, as described by Zaltman (1996), refers to a collectively held cognitive image of a brand or organisation. Since corporate identity is defined here as a cognitive image that is collectively held in the minds of an organisation's employees, corporate identity may be seen as a specific type of consensus map.) Zaltman's (1996) maximum number was doubled to allow for the inclusion of employees from various functional areas and from different levels of the organisational hierarchy, and an extra two were added to compensate for incomplete or very brief responses.

#### 4.4.1.4 Administering the Questionnaire

In every organisation (except Film Inc), the questionnaire was sent out by email and respondents were given the option of returning it by email or by post. The tone and wording of the introductory email was adjusted to suit the wishes of those coordinating the project in each organisation, but it always included the same three pieces of information. First, it stated that the study was being conducted through Cranfield School of Management in order to help the relevant organisation develop its employer brand. Second, respondents were assured that individual responses would remain confidential and that the results would only be reported to the relevant organisation in an aggregate form. Third, it provided information about how to return



completed questionnaires, including the options (email or post) and the address or email address to which it should be sent.

At Film Inc. the questionnaire was administered face to face, in the form of a structured interview. This was done at the request of managers in that organisation. Before the interview began, each respondent was provided with the same essential information as that included in the email. Respondents were also asked whether they would be happy for me to record their answers on a voice recorder and everyone gave their permission.

#### 4.4.1.5 Analysis of the Qualitative Data

Individual responses were coded according to the principles outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Open coding was used to produce a list of specific attributes that the individual employee associated with his or her organisation, and the individual lists were aggregated to produce a master list for the whole organisation. This master list was then analyzed in two ways.

##### *Identifying the Twenty Five Key Attributes*

A note was made of how many respondents mentioned each of the attributes on the master list; the twenty five attributes that were mentioned by the highest number of respondents were identified as the 'key attributes' of that organisation's identity, to be included in the survey. In some instances, many different attributes were mentioned by the same number of people. This meant that frequency count alone did not provide a clear indication of which attributes should be included in the survey. Therefore, I eliminated attributes as follows:

Focusing specifically on the group of attributes that had the minimum frequency count required for inclusion in the survey, I began by eliminating those that I thought

respondents would consider unattractive; since the survey was only designed to measure the relative importance of the attributes that respondents considered attractive, elimination of attributes that they considered unattractive was not expected to have a significant impact on the results. However, this approach required me to use my own judgement – rather than relying solely on the data – to determine the perceived attractiveness of each attribute.

In order to address this weakness, I sought to better understand the viewpoint of the organisation's employees, and I did this in two ways. First, I considered the language that respondents used to describe each of the relevant attributes. More specifically, I looked for words that conveyed a qualitative judgement (such as 'better than,' 'poor,' 'shocking')<sup>3</sup> or had emotive content (such as 'inspiring,' 'committed,' 'worthy')<sup>4</sup>. Second, I considered the context in which each attribute was mentioned. For example, if the attribute was used to illustrate the organisation's failings in a particular area, or if it was mentioned as a caveat to an otherwise positive statement about the organisation, then I inferred that respondents considered it unattractive.

Finally, I eliminated those attributes that were most closely related to other attributes that had received a higher frequency account, and I continued to do this until the list included exactly 25 attributes.

### *Further Analysis*

Selective coding was used to identify the categories and sub-categories of attribute that employees used to describe their organisation's identity. Axial coding was used to map the relationships among these categories.

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<sup>3</sup> These examples are taken from the actual responses given in stage 1

<sup>4</sup> As above

#### 4.4.1.6 Validating the List of Key Attributes

Because stage 1 involved less than twenty people from each organisation, it was important to ensure that the results were representative of the organisation as a whole. I did this in two ways.

(1) Before beginning stage 2, the list of twenty five attributes was sent out to 3-5 people in the relevant organisation. They were asked to read through the list in order to check that every attribute provided an accurate description of the organisation, and that the list as a whole provides a holistically accurate picture of the organisation. If anyone felt that a particular attribute did not provide an accurate description of their organisation, I reviewed the stage 1 responses to determine why the problem had occurred and whether the attribute should still be included in the list.

(2) During stage 2, respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed that each attribute provided an accurate description of their organisation. Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale. If less than 50% of respondents chose 'agree' or 'strongly agree' for a particular attribute – in other words, the majority of respondents were neutral or did not agree that the attribute accurately described their organisation - this was noted in the results section of my thesis, along with any apparent explanation.

### **4.4.2 Stage 2**

#### 4.4.2.1 Survey Design

The stage 2 questionnaire (shown in appendix C) was divided into three sections, A, B, and C.

Section A included multiple choice questions about the individual respondent. These related to the respondent's role in the company and his or her age or gender. However, the answers to these questions were mainly used to perform the statistical analysis requested by managers; for the purpose of this study, section A was only used to ensure that the sample represented a broad cross-section of the workforce.

Section B included two questions about the organisation's identity. The first question (B1) asked the respondent to indicate, on a five point Likert scale, whether he or she agreed that each attribute provided an accurate description of the organisation. The second question (B2) asked the respondent to indicate the relative importance that he or she attached to each of the key attributes by allocating points on a constant sum scale. The constant sum scale was used because it forced respondents to think about and clearly prioritize among the attributes.

Section C included Mael and Ashforth's (1992) organisational identification questionnaire. This questionnaire is well established in the literature on organisational identification and was chosen over other scales that measure organisational identification because it is the only one that is specifically based on the principles of Social Identity Theory.

#### 4.4.2.2 Administering the Survey

The survey was administered online through 'questionpro.com'. Employees were sent an email that included the following information: a brief explanation of the objectives of the survey, an invitation to participate, assurance that all responses would be kept completely confidential, and the survey link. In the School of Management and the School of Science and Technology, the email also stated that all survey participants would have the opportunity to be entered in a prize draw for a £50 Amazon voucher.

#### 4.4.2.3. Analysis of the Quantitative Data

As explained in the results section, the findings from the qualitative data suggested that the implications of the quantitative data were not as straight forward as expected. More specifically, the responses given in stage 1 revealed that individual attributes could be simultaneously considered both attractive and unattractive, even by the same employee. This meant that it was impossible to definitively classify attributes as attractive or unattractive. Since the survey was designed to measure the relative importance that employees assigned *to the attributes that they considered attractive*, this meant that the analysis of the quantitative data was limited.

Within each case, the average number of points allocated to each attribute was calculated and shown on a bar chart; this provided an indication of the attributes that were considered most important by employees in each organisation. I then counted how many people had allocated points to each attribute. Based solely on the top ten attributes in each organisation, I also identified the categories and sub-categories of attribute that respondents considered most important.

### **4.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **4.5.1 Choice of Cases**

A critical consideration in the development of theory is the extent to which that theory can be applied outside the specific research setting. Yin (1994) describes this as 'external validity,' and he argues that the external validity of case study research is based on analytic generalization. He further argues that analytic generalization is fundamentally different from statistical generalization because it relies on replication logic rather than numbers. This is critical in the context of case study research because it allows the researcher to generalize the results of his or her research based on a small

number of cases. However, the domain to which the results can be generalized is determined by the theoretical basis for case selection.

#### 4.5.1.1 Implications for Sub-Question 2

For this study, cases were selected on the basis of identity type: normative, utilitarian, and hybrid. This approach to case selection was directly relevant to the research question, and particularly the second sub-question, because identity type was expected to produce predictable similarities and differences in the types of benefits that employees considered most attractive (as explained above). These predictions were grounded in employer brand theory and confirmed by the results. Therefore, results pertaining to the second research question are applicable to all three identity types described above, and together these are likely to describe almost any employing organisation. However, since identity type is not directly relevant to the other two sub-questions, the external validity of the results pertaining to those questions is less clear.

#### 4.5.1.2 Implications for Sub-Question 1

Because Corporate Identity has not previously been conceptualized through the lens of Social Identity Theory, there was no clear basis for predicting similarities or differences in the dimensions of the construct. In this situation, Yin (1994) argues that the research design should be recursive, with the findings from each case study helping to determine the choice of subsequent cases. This recursive approach was not taken because I decided that the selection approach outlined above was more directly relevant to the research question. However, the consequence of this decision is that results pertaining to the dimensions of Corporate Identity must be interpreted as exploratory; they provide useful insights into the nature of the construct, but further research is needed in order to establish the domain to which they may be applied.

#### 4.5.1.3 Implications for Sub-Question 3

As explained above, the cases were chosen to represent opposite ends of a continuum – from predominantly normative to predominantly utilitarian – and three of the cases were located somewhere in between. This means that the cases included in the study were fundamentally different from one another. (Even the three schools, which I expected to be similar, were actually found to be very different.) Since it is relatively easy for an organisation to appear distinctive or unique when compared with organisations that are very different, this method of case selection ensured that differences would be observed among the six cases. However, it did not provide any basis for determining what made each organisation distinct from more comparable organisations, such as competitors or other organisations operating in the same industry.

In the context of the third sub-question, it would have been more useful to choose cases that were as similar to one another as possible. This approach was not taken because it was unlikely to provide useful insights with regard to the other two sub-questions. Therefore, care must be taken when interpreting the results as they pertain to this question; attributes that make one case different from the other five are not necessarily unique or distinctive outside of this comparative context.

#### **4.5.2 Attributes Included in the Survey**

Stage 1 was designed to elicit the distinctive identity of each organisation, as seen through the eyes of its employees, and to identify the twenty five key attributes that most fully capture that identity. Therefore, key attributes were selected on the basis of frequency count, without regard to the attributes or categories of attributes identified in other organisations. This ensured that the twenty five attributes selected in each case provided an undistorted view of the organisation's unique identity. However, it also meant that there was a lack of consistency across cases, and severely

limited the scope for cross-case comparison of the quantitative data. For example, it was impossible to measure and compare the importance assigned to a particular attribute in each of the six cases because the list of attributes was different in each organisation, and it was impossible to measure and compare the importance assigned to a particular dimension because the number of attributes associated with each dimension was different from case to case. This is a significant limitation, but it was considered justified in light of the inevitable trade-off between authenticity and consistency.

#### **4.5.3 Number of Respondents in Stage 2**

The crux of the survey was question B2. This question was designed to measure the relative importance that employees assigned to the attractive key attributes of their organisation's identity. However, in order to do this I asked respondents to allocate points on a constant sum scale, and many of them considered this task to be very onerous. As a result, many respondents chose not to complete the survey, and this meant that the number of usable responses was far lower than it might have been if I had used a simpler scale. This made it impossible to distinguish between groups within the organisation. Some of the responses given in stage 1 suggested that different groups may have different views and preference. However, in all cases except Film Inc, the number of responses collected in stage 2 was insufficient to consider each group separately.

#### **4.5.4 Lack of Attention to Unattractive Attributes**

Attractiveness may be measured on a continuum that has two ends – attractive and unattractive. However, the stage 2 survey was specifically designed to measure the relative importance that employees assigned to the *attractive* attributes of their organisation's Corporate Identity; unattractive attributes were deliberately



overlooked. Therefore, the survey only elicited information on one half of the continuum.

The survey was designed like this for two reasons. First, Social Identity Theory suggests that employees will seek to assign value (positive or negative) and importance in such a way that the defining attributes of their own organisation may be construed as both important and attractive. Therefore, I did not expect that any of the twenty five key attributes would be construed as highly unattractive. Second, when choosing the scale to be used in question B2, there was inevitably a trade-off in terms of the information that could be elicited. A five or seven point scale, such as that used by Knox and Freeman (2005), can measure both halves of the attractiveness continuum. However, this kind of scale can provide very little information about the relative importance assigned to different attributes. A constant sum scale can only measure half of the continuum, but it provides detailed information about relative importance. Since relative importance is particularly important in the context of Social Identity theory, I decided that it would more appropriate to use the constant sum scale.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

As explained earlier, the nature of the research objective and the theoretical perspective presented several methodological challenges. The research design described in this chapter addresses these challenges by combining a number of specific elements that had not previously been used in conjunction with one another – such as Brickson's (2005) identity questionnaire, Strauss and Corbin's (1990) coding techniques, and a constant sum scale. It also included elements that were developed specifically for this study – including the questions in section B of the open-ended questionnaire and section B of the survey. By combine these various elements, I was able to investigate an area that had previously been overlooked, and the results of this investigation are presented in the following chapter.

## 5. RESULTS OF THE MAIN STUDY

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study was to explain what makes an organisation's identity attractive to current employees. Based on the principles of Social Identity Theory, I assumed that each organisation would have a distinctive identity and that employees of each organisation would be attracted by different attributes. This led me to adopt the comparative case study design described in the preceding chapter, focusing specifically on the following three questions:

- (1) What are the dimensions (and sub-dimensions) of Corporate Identity, when seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory
- (2) What are the dimensions (and sub-dimensions) of Corporate Identity that employees consider attractive?
- (3) What makes an organisation's Corporate Identity distinctive or unique?

The purpose of the following six chapters is to report the results of the six case studies. In chapter 13, I compare the results from these six case studies and discuss the implications of my findings.

#### **Case Structure**

In order to facilitate cross-case comparison, the results of each case study are presented as follows:

**Section 1** provides a brief description of the organisation, including size, industry, and other relevant attributes. These provide the reader with the necessary background information to make sense of the results.

**Section 2** reports the response rates for stages 1 and 2, as well as the sample statistics for stage 2 and acknowledgement of any sample bias.

**Section 3** describes the organisation's identity, as seen through the eyes of its employees. This section is based entirely on the qualitative data collected in stage 1. The views reported here are not necessarily representative of the views held by all employees within the organisation; as explained in the previous chapter, perceptions of an organisation's identity are unique to each member. However, it does convey the views that were expressed by some or all of the respondents in stage 1.

This section begins with a discussion of the perceived connections among the five main dimensions of Corporate Identity – Organisation, Employment, Product or Service, Reputation, and Stakeholder relationships. These five dimensions were derived inductively from the data; each dimension was observed in every organisation and every attribute was relevant to one of the five dimensions. Therefore, the pattern of connections among these five dimensions provides a broad overview of each organisation's identity, and allows for direct comparison across cases.

The rest of the section provides a description of the organisation's corporate identity. The five dimensions described above are broken down into their constituent sub-dimensions, and I relate the attributes that respondents used to describe each of these sub-dimensions.

**Section 4** explains what employees found attractive or unattractive about their organisation's identity. This section begins with a discussion of the qualitative data, followed by a discussion of the quantitative data.

## **5.2 CASE 1: SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **5.2.1 Introduction**

#### **5.2.1.1 Description of the School of Science and Technology**

The School of Science and Technology is a post-graduate educational institution that focuses on a highly specialized area of applied science. It is one of the five schools that make up The University. However, it is located on a separate campus and has its own distinct roots.

The School of Science and Technology was originally run by a specific government organisation, referred to in this thesis as 'The Government.' It was privatized in 1984 and became part of The University, but it has continued in its role as training provider for The Government. As a result, the two organisations continue to have a very close relationship. The Government has a significant influence over much of what goes on within the School, including what classes are taught, and it provides almost all of the School's income.

In addition, employees of The Government make up a large proportion of the campus workforce. Their presence inevitably shapes the identity of the School, but the School is still a separate organisation with its own distinct identity. Since identity is seen here as a cognitive construct in the minds of an organisation's employees, and since employees of the Government are not employees of the School, these individuals were not included in the study.

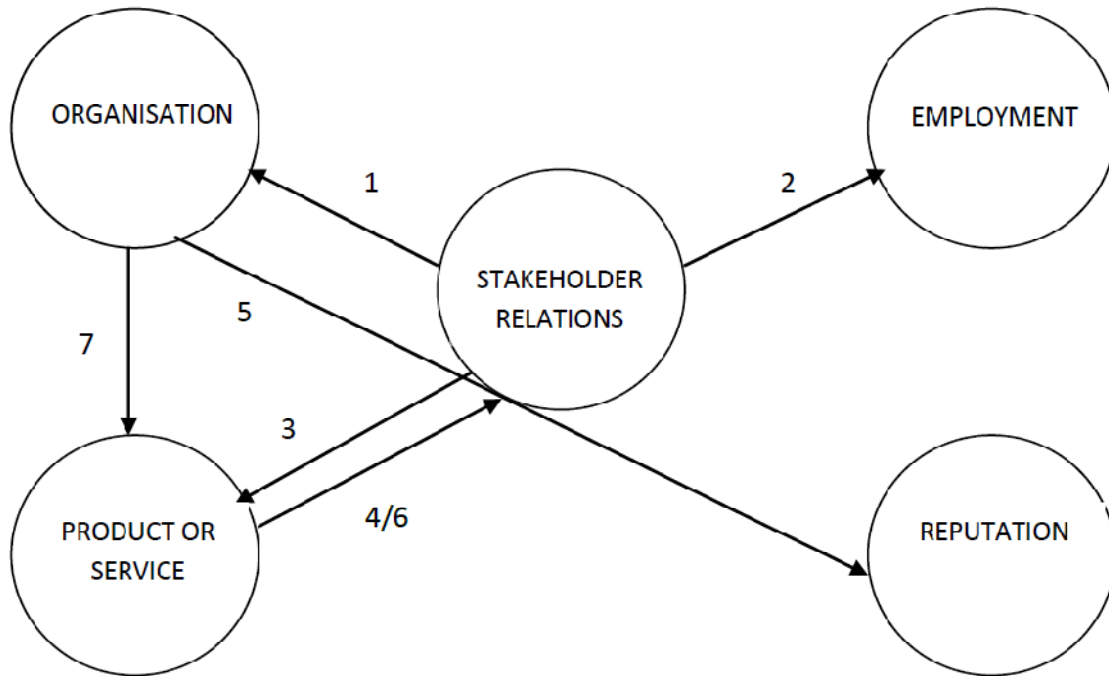
### 5.2.1.2 Statistical Overview of Results

The stage 1 questionnaire was sent out to 43 people, according to the protocol laid out in the Methodology chapter, and the total number of responses was 12. Therefore the response rate was 28%.

In stage 2, 397 people were invited to participate and the total number of responses was 52. However, 4 respondents' answers to question B2 were unusable. One of these respondents did not answer the question. Another stated that the question was too difficult and allocated 37 to 'other' in order to make the points add up to 100. The remaining two allocated points to 'other' but provided no explanation, suggesting that they too may have had difficulty making the total add up to 100. Because these 3 respondents had allocated less than 100 points to the attributes listed, their responses were not scaled in the same way as the others and could not be used. Therefore the total response rate, based on the number of usable responses, was 12%. In terms of functional areas, the make-up of the sample was 58% academic staff, 25% administrative staff, 15% other, and 2% unknown (one respondent chose not to answer this question). In terms of gender, the make-up of the sample was 38% female and 62% male. These percentages were roughly consistent with the make-up of the workforce of the whole, so there was no apparent sample bias.

## 5.2.2 Perceptions of the School of Science and Technology's Corporate Identity

### 5.2.2.1 Connecting the Five Main Attribute Categories



**Figure 2: Connections between the five main attribute categories (School of Science and Technology)**

The focal point of the School's identity was its relationship with The Government. This relationship was important to the School because The Government provided almost all of its income; as explained by one respondent, termination of this relationship 'would cut off our main source of revenue and force us to relocate and reassess our activities and direction.' As a result, the School worked extremely hard to meet the needs of The Government ('the School of Science and Technology seemingly does whatever its main sponsor wants at the time that it wants it'), and this critical relationship had a direct impact on every other dimension of its identity.

## Influence of the School's relationship with the Government

### *Links 1 and 2*

Due to the nature of this relationship, most of the students and many of the people working on campus were employees of The Government. In fact one respondent argued that the School was unique because it was 'the only place where academia and (employees of The Government) work together.' Therefore, this relationship had a direct impact on the School's culture, which was described as a combination of '(The Government's) way - which privileges a sense of humour above knowledge - and academic striving.' It also had an impact on the type of people who were most likely to fit in. As explained by one respondent, 'If you have (Government) connections, you are likely to fit in well with the students and the majority of the staff.' In other words, the School's relationship with its main client had a direct impact on attributes of the organisation as a whole (link 1), as well as attributes related to employment (link 2).

### *Links 3, 4 and 5*

Respondents also described a direct connection between the School's relationship with The Government and the focus of its research and teaching. However, in this instance the causality of the relationship went in both directions. On the one hand, it was the focus of the School's research and teaching that made The Government its 'natural customer,' and it was the School's degree of specialization that made it dependent on income from this one source. (Link 4) As explained by one respondent,

'Much of what the School does is so very specialized that significant components of its business may suffer sudden drops in demand for its services as the result of changes in the way (The Government) does business.'

On the other hand, the School's relationship with the Government had a significant impact on the scope and quality of both its teaching and its research. (Link 3) It

affected the scope of the School's research because resources were generally focused on areas that were relevant to the Government's activities ('the vast majority of what it does is based on a narrow range of Government activities). It affected the scope of the School's teaching because the School was contracted to act as 'academic provider,' and was therefore required to deliver whatever courses the Government required.

This relationship between the needs of the Government and the content of the School's taught courses was considered problematic for two reasons. First, respondents felt that the School's efforts to accommodate the needs of The Government could have a detrimental impact on the quality of its teaching (link 3):

'The Government increasingly treats The School as a training provider rather than an educator. Considering just how different training and education are, it is worrying that the sponsor has such a profound degree of influence over how The School does business.'

Second, the quality of the School's teaching was perceived to have a direct impact on its reputation, which could not be completely separated from the reputation of the university: 'By accommodating the needs and desires of (The Government), the School is in danger of developing a reputation for lowering the educational standards of the University as a whole.' Therefore, the School's relationship with the Government was perceived to have an indirect impact on the reputation of the School (link 5) and of the University.

#### Other Connections among the Five Main Attribute Categories

##### *Link 6*

Respondents did not identify any attributes that directly influenced the School's relationship with the Government. However, they did argue that the School's relationship with its main competitor, A and B Learning, and its relationship with the University's main site, could both be adversely affected by the courses that it chose to



teach (link 6). This was due to an overlap in expertise, which created a sense of competition between the different organisations; as explained by one respondent,

‘A and B teach at the basic level, but in some areas their expertise is much less than ours. The University main site believe that in some areas they should hold the monopoly. This makes generating courses difficult.’

As a result, respondents felt that the choice of courses could cause problems and needed to be carefully considered:

‘For example, if we were to set up a basic course that covered material supposedly taught by A and B Learning at the University main site, then we would be attacked by both of them (it has happened in some areas, incidentally).’

#### *Links 5 and 7*

Respondents also focused particular attention on the School’s name. The School had recently changed its name and, even though they recognized that nothing else had changed (‘a re-branding, not a reinvention... the label has changed but the contents have not’), respondents expressed considerable irritation about the name change. Some respondents complained that the new name was not as well known as the old name (‘the change in title from (The University) has damaged our brand awareness’). (Link 5) However, the most common complaint by far was related to the lack of alignment between the School’s new name and its status as an educational institution (‘is not a dodgy consultancy firm, whatever the name might imply’ ‘Just look at it. There’s no mention of education in the title. It’s a poor choice’). (Link 7)

### 5.2.2.2 Describing the Five Main Attribute Categories

#### Organisation

##### *Demographics*

The most frequently mentioned attribute of the School's identity was its new name. Respondents explained that the School had recently changed its name, but in most other respects it was the same as it had been before ('It was a re-brand, not a re-invention'). Respondents also explained that the School was 'a specialist technology education centre' and 'a research centre in Defence and Security.' As for the history of the organisation, one respondent provided a detailed timeline, but most respondents simply described the School as 'well-established.'

##### *Organisational Ethos*

The School was perceived to be conservative and old-fashioned. For example, one respondent described it as 'quite old fashioned and regimented and a world-away from the paperless office.' However, it was also perceived to be 'a positive organisation' with a 'very upbeat and positive' outlook.

##### *Organisational Success*

Respondents generally defined success in terms of academic excellence; they felt that the School should seek to undertake 'high quality teaching and research,' to be an institution of 'high academic calibre,' and to 'be the best there is' within the field of Defence and Security. However, there was some disagreement as to how successful the School had been in achieving these objectives. Some described it as 'a world-class institution,' 'a centre of excellence,' and 'the pre-eminent university in its field.'

Others felt that the School was ‘following not leading,’ and one respondent claimed that the most accurate motto for the School would be ‘try, try, try again.’

### *Strategic Outlook*

Although respondents claimed that the School was ‘always on the alert for business opportunities,’ they felt that there was little sign of ambition and ‘no effort made to excel.’ They also argued that the School was ‘overly confident’ about its status and ‘not readily adaptable to changing circumstances.’

### *Management of the Organisation*

Respondents generally agreed that the School’s decision makers were primarily concerned with balancing the budget, rather than achieving academic excellence (‘the bureaucracy of the university privileges income over academic excellence’). However, they disagreed about the quality and ambitions of the School’s management. Some felt that the School was a ‘generally well run and customer-focused organisation’, with an ‘ambitious but wary’ approach to decision making. Others complained that the School was ‘weak at leadership’, with ‘not much evidence of positive leadership from the top.’ In addition, many respondents drew attention to the poor quality of communications between management and the rest of the School; they felt that management should have ‘a better idea of what’s happening below management level’ and that it was ‘not as effective as it should be about communicating with its staff.’

## Employment

### *Management of Employees*

The relationship between managers and employees was generally seen as distant; respondents claimed that managers tended to look after their own interests, rather than those of employees, and often provided employees with insufficient guidance or support. As a result, employees were expected to work 'in a largely self-directed way.' This meant that expectations for performance were often low ('there is no pressure to excel') and there was little support for those who wanted to excel ('hurdles are set by yourself not by your boss... You have to have self-motivation and self-belief because you won't get it from anywhere else'). However, it also meant that academics were allowed considerable freedom to develop their own research interests. ('you can work, within bounds, on any topic you like and you have the space to follow your own studies'). Although employees were not necessarily required to move beyond their own comfort zone ('we are your comfort zone') or to think outside the box, the lack of direct management meant that they had the space to do so:

'You are given the freedom to pursue your own agenda. If this involves pushing barriers, thinking out of the box, operating out of the envelope, then you are allowed to do that.'

Respondents also pointed out that showing initiative and developing a strong research record was the best way to progress within the organisation ('career progression is very heavily determined by your research record - here we are very blinkered'). However they felt that the School was generally slow to promote employees, even when they did all the right things:

'Promotion is very sticky – go in at the grade you want to have and do not listen to promises that promotion will pick you up if you do the right things.'

## *Benefits of Employment*

### Functional and Economic Benefits:

Respondents claimed that the School offered good terms and conditions of employment. Included in these terms was the right to earn extra income through consulting, though respondents felt that the School made it very difficult for them to do this. Respondents also felt that the School provided good opportunities for academics to advance their careers, but they acknowledged that there were few such opportunities for administrative staff:

‘As a lecturer or researcher the prospects for career development, improving research status and gaining experience at an international level are very good. However, in a support/admin role the career prospects and opportunities for personal development are very limited and not inspiring’

### Psychological Benefits:

Respondents described the School as ‘a close knit community,’ and claimed that being part of this community gave them ‘a strong sense of belonging.’

### Leisure Benefits:

Although there were clubs and activities on campus that anyone could join, respondents felt that the School offered very few social activities for non-Government employees (‘there are various sporting clubs/activities for anyone to join but little social life for (non-Government) personnel’). They also noted that the wildlife and horse riding facilities made the School’s campus ‘a good place for animal lovers’ and that Government personnel often brought their dogs to work, but they pointed out that ‘sadly, Cranfield does not allow their staff to take advantage of this.’

### *Work Environment*

The work environment was described as 'pleasant' and 'relaxed,' but with very little social interaction among employees. For example, one respondent described it as 'Kafkaesque – corridors of closed doors behind which silent people are working,' and another referred to 'isolated groups and individuals working alone.' Surprisingly, some respondents still claimed that it was a 'stimulating environment,' but others said exactly the opposite: 'If you think you are going to live in an academically stimulating atmosphere, go elsewhere.'

### *Workforce*

Respondents generally expressed a high opinion of their colleagues, describing them as 'good colleagues,' 'clever and entertaining,' and one respondent observed that the School employed 'some first division academics.' Despite the lack of social interaction, respondents also felt that there was a positive social dynamic among employees; they claimed that the School was 'a friendly organisation' where 'most people get on well together,' and they described the workforce as 'a close knit community.'

### Product/Service

Respondents identified three types of service provided by the School. These were teaching ('is the provider of taught postgraduate courses and short courses'), research ('is a centre of academic excellence in the fields of defence and security research') and consultancy ('a centre for defence science consultancy'). All three services were directly related to Defence and Security, and were seen as highly specialized ('we offer a specialist service at a premium price').

## Stakeholder Relations

The School was perceived to have three key stakeholder groups – The University, The Government and students.

### *The University*

Respondents described the School as a ‘wing of the University,’ but felt that the relationship was strained. For example, they argued that people on The University’s main campus saw their School as the ‘poor relation’ and they claimed that the School was ‘not proud of its association with The University.’

### *The Government*

Respondents described the School as a ‘provider of education for The Government.’ They recognized that this relationship was of the utmost importance because the School was dependent on The Government for almost all of its income (‘depends very heavily on one customer - The Government - for its funds.’) As a result, they explained that the School worked hard to maintain a positive relationship. In fact, one respondent complained that the School was ‘more concerned with the relationship it has with The Government, rather than its own employees.’

### *Students*

Most of the students at the School were employees of The Government. They were perceived to have their own specific ‘expectations, foibles, etc.’ However, respondents said that they enjoyed teaching the students, and claimed that ‘interaction with students is good.’

## Reputation

Most respondents agreed that the School was 'relatively unknown' among the general public, and more specifically by members of its 'client base' ('unheard of among our client base'). However, this was generally attributed to the School's adoption of a new name. When referring to the organisation behind the name, one respondent described the School as a 'recognized centre of excellence in the UK and internationally.'

### **5.2.3 Evaluation of the School of Science and Technology's Corporate Identity**

#### **5.2.3.1 Qualitative Overview**

There were two dimensions of the School's identity that respondents considered particularly attractive.

The most attractive dimension of the School of Science and Technology's identity was Employment, and more specifically the workforce; as explained by one respondent 'the people are what make The School unique.' Respondents described the other people working at the School as 'nice colleagues,' 'clever and entertaining people,' and 'first rate academics.' They also claimed that there was a friendly dynamic among employees that created 'a feeling of community and 'a strong sense of belonging.'

The other dimension of the School's identity that respondents considered particularly attractive was its academic success. Some of them described the School as a 'world class institution' and drew attention to its 'high academic calibre.' However, attributes that were perceived to undermine the School's academic standards and ambitions were construed as highly unattractive. Examples included the name of the School, the

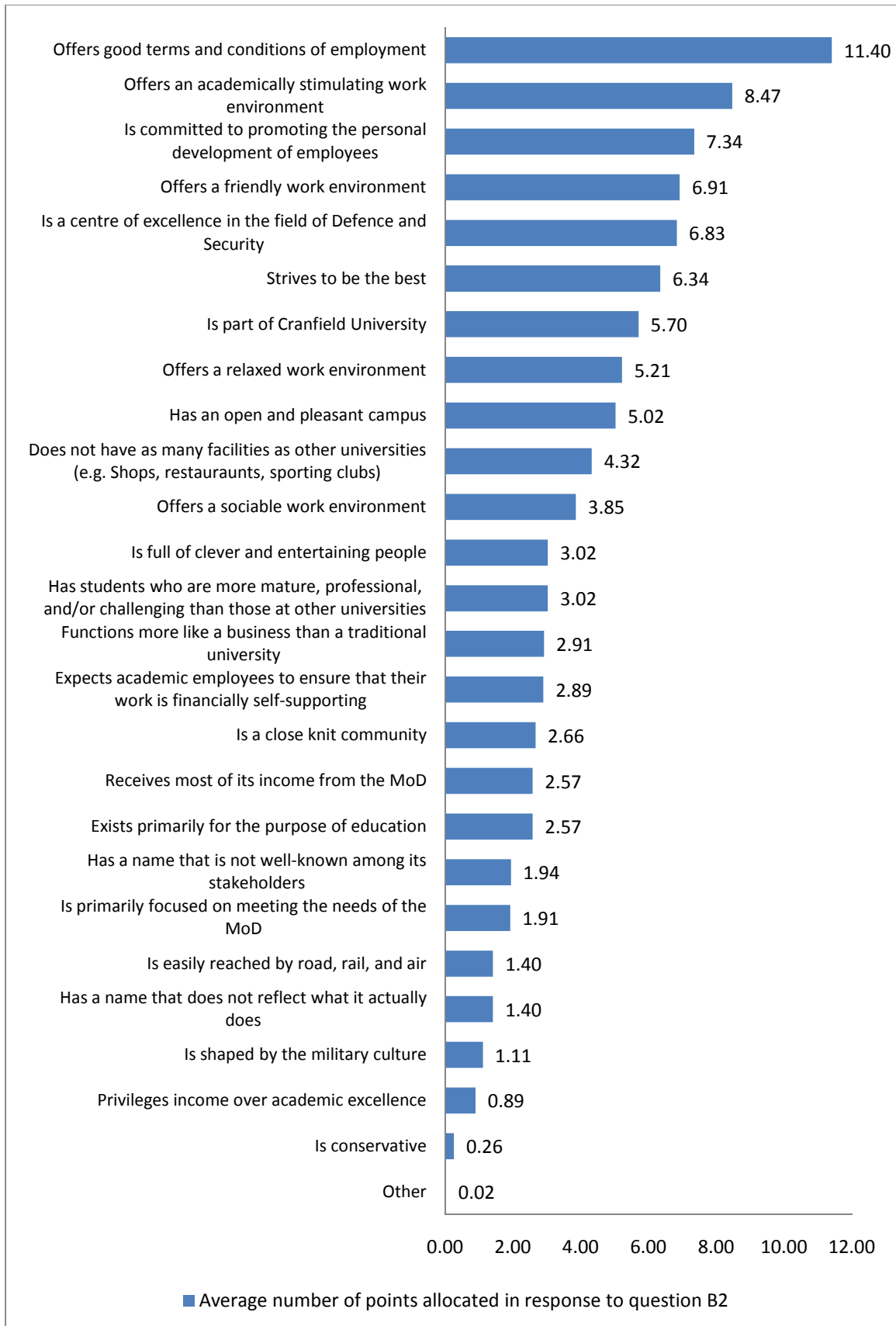


Government's influence on teaching standards, and the School's expectation that academic staff should help to generate revenue.

In addition, respondents recognized that a certain degree of fit was required between the individual employee and the attributes of the School's identity. For example, they described the School as 'good place for animal lovers' because 'there is a riding club on site and a lot of the military bring their dogs to work.' They also pointed out that 'if you have military connections, you are likely to fit in well.' Finally, respondents explained 'as long as you can bring in work to cover your costs the School of Science and Technology is a great place to work.'

#### **5.2.3.2 Quantitative Results**

Based on the 38 useable responses to the stage 2 survey, the attribute that employees considered most important was the School's terms and conditions of employment, and the attribute that they considered least important was its conservatism. The first attribute was allocated an average of 11.4 points while the second was allocated an average of 0.26 points, suggesting that the most important attribute was considered to be more than 20 times as important as the least important attribute. However, there was no clear cut-off between the attributes that respondents considered important and those they considered unimportant; instead there was a gradual change, with each attribute receiving just a few less points than the one before. This gradual change is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Average number of points allocated to each attribute (School of Science and Technology)**

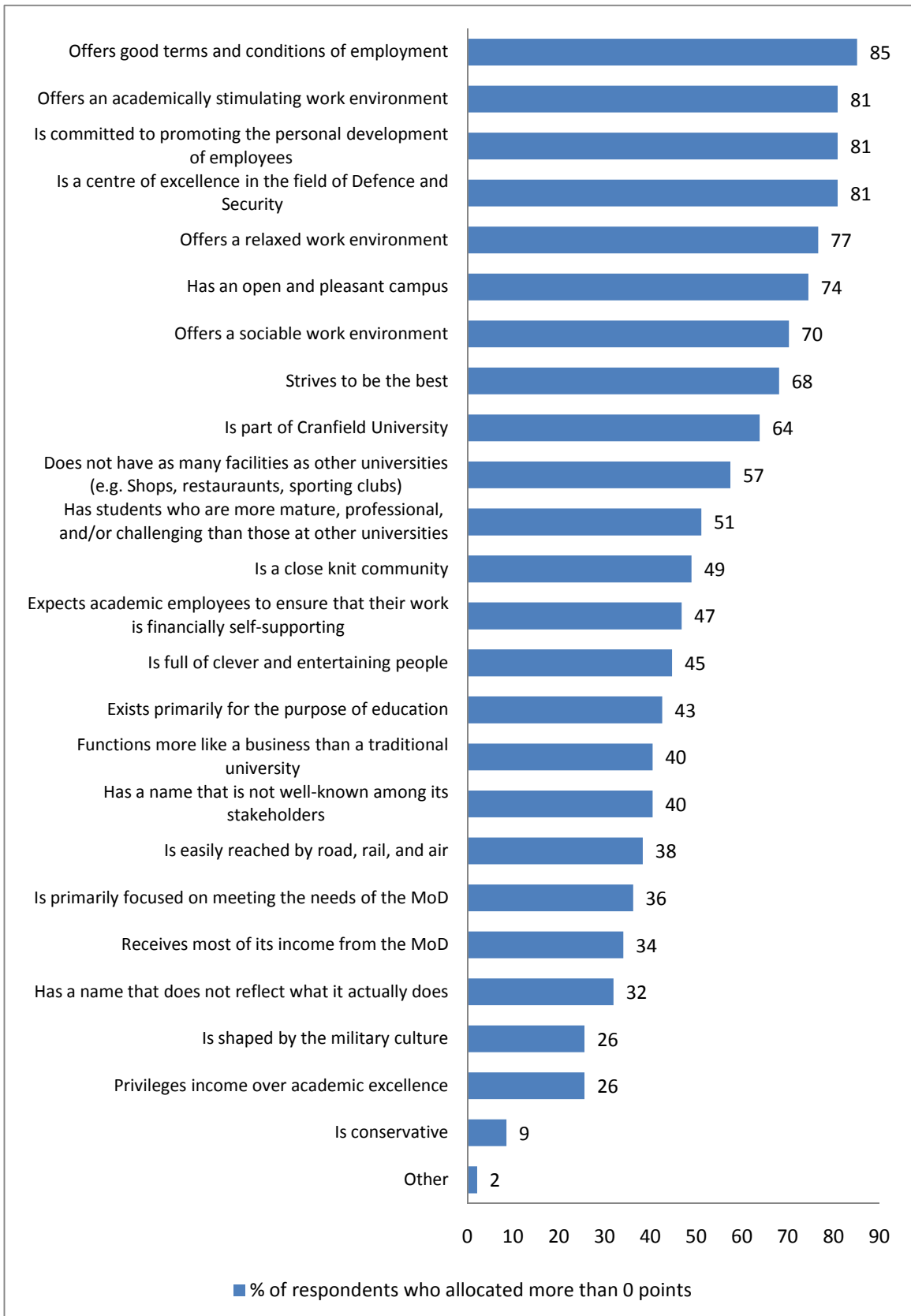


Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who allocated points to each attribute (School of Science and Technology)

## **5.3 CASE 2: SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**

### **5.3.1 Introduction**

#### **5.3.1.1 Description of the School of Management**

The School of Management is one of the UK's leading business schools. It offers a range of post-graduate degree courses, including an MBA programme that has been ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the UK, and its customized education has been ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the UK. The school also has a strong record in academic research, with 90% of its research activity rated as 'internationally recognised' or better by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. However, its official mission is to 'improve the practice of management.' Therefore, the School focuses on doing research that is both academically rigorous and directly relevant to managers. The School of Management is located on the University's main campus, which is in a rural location less than 30 miles outside London.

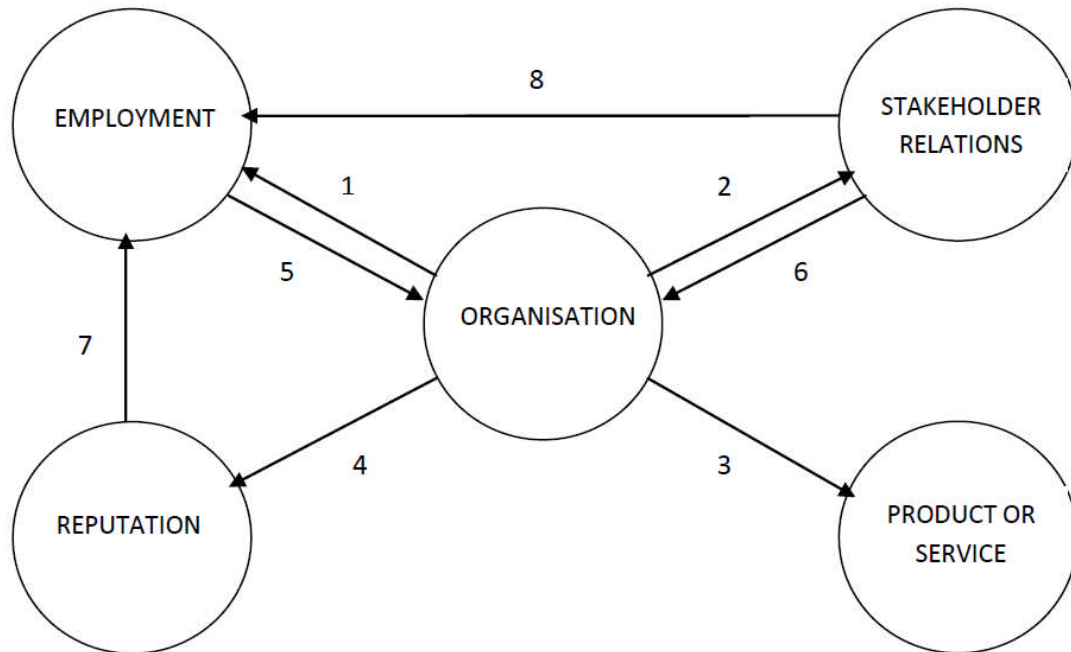
#### **5.3.1.2 Statistical Overview of Results**

The number of responses in stage 1 was 17. Since the questionnaire was initially sent out to all 217 employees, this represents a response rate of approximately 8 percent.

The stage 2 survey was also sent out to all 217 employees, and the total number of responses was 37. This represents a response rate of 17 percent. The sample represented a broad cross-section of the School's workforce, in terms of function and gender.

## 5.3.2 Perceptions of the School of Management's Corporate Identity

### 5.3.2.1 Connecting the Five Main Attribute Categories



**Figure 5: Connections between the five main attribute categories (School of Management)**

The core dimension of the School of Management's identity was the Organisation itself, and more specifically its commitment to improving the practice of management ('explicitly in the mission statement and implicitly in the culture, the School emphasizes immediately applicable research and teaching'). Respondents recognized that this emphasis on practice was not always compatible with the principles of 'pure' academic research, and that some kind of balance was needed:

'A good deal of the work the School does is immediately relevant to organisations. To a certain extent this is in conflict with research (at least 'pure research'), but a good balance appears to have been met.'

Nonetheless, they generally agreed that practical relevance took priority.

As a result, the School's mission had a direct impact every other dimension of its identity.

#### Influence of the School's Mission

Because the School's mission was to 'improve the practice of management,' the School had developed a close relationship with industry ('is married to industry' 'many corporate partnerships with top firms'), and it tried hard to address the needs of these firms ('does tend to go the extra mile to help clients') (link 2). Respondents also claimed that employees were more likely to succeed in the School if they had 'commercial experience' and 'a strong desire to contribute to practice' (link 1). In fact several respondents specifically stated that a potential employee who was only interested in doing 'pure' academic research would be better off elsewhere:

'If you are interested in managers and the problems they face, come to the School of Management. If you're just interested in being an academic and publishing your research in academic journals, go somewhere else!'

The Management School was involved in doing 'research that makes a difference in the practice of management' (link 3), this is what it was known for ('respected by practitioners ... by academics, for its closeness to practice') (link 4), and respondents felt that potential employees should to be aware of this before joining.

### Other Connections

#### *Links 5 and 6*

Two categories of attribute were perceived to have a direct impact on the Organisation as a whole: Employment and Stakeholder Relations. Respondents claimed that the people working in the School (Employment) had a significant influence on the general character of the Organisation (link 5). As explained by one respondent, 'Individuals in the School have a major influence on what the School is; its character, the work it does, and the feel of it.' In addition, respondents claimed that the School's financial dependence on industry (Stakeholder Relations), made the School vulnerable to any downturn in the economy; one respondent explained that 'the global recession is a

troubling event... Training and development budgets are cut in times of recession, so our income falls faster than we can react.' (Link 6)

#### *Links 7 and 8*

Two attributes categories were also perceived to influence Employment: Reputation and Stakeholder Relations. The school's close relationship with industry (Stakeholder Relations) provided employees with valuable opportunities to develop practitioner contacts, and had a significant impact on the employment experience (link 8). However, some employees also felt that the School's emphasis on meeting the needs of the client created additional work and pressure on employees:

'Demanding senior customers, one year courses, much company-specific work, plus the need to publish make the School of Management a frenetic place to work'

In addition, some respondents described the benefits of being employed by a school with such a strong reputation:

'You will have the respect of peers and managers – the Cranfield brand does help you make things happen in the UK.'

### **5.3.2.2 Describing the Five Main Attribute Categories**

#### Organisation

##### *Demographics*

Respondents described the School of Management as a 'long-established' school with a 'UK-centric' focus and a historical association with aerospace and military ('aerospace and military are part of our heritage'). Some described the School's location as 'rural,' 'isolated,' 'in the middle of a field,' while others pointed out its proximity to London ('It's close to the airport and London'). Although the buildings

were seen as dated, respondents also claimed that the School was ‘supported by hard-to-match facilities.’

### *Organisational Ethos*

Respondents argued that the School had a ‘managerially professional ethos (as opposed to an academically professional one)’. Some felt that the School was ‘set in its ways’ while others felt that it was ‘open to new ideas and suggestions.’ One respondent also described the School as ‘ethical.’

### *Organisational Success*

Respondents claimed that the School maintained a clear focus on doing work that was immediately relevant to practice (‘explicitly in the mission statement and implicitly in the culture, the School emphasizes immediately applicable research and teaching,’ ‘is concerned with practice... the real world’). They also recognized that the School was ‘financially driven.’ However, when assessing the School’s level of success, most respondents emphasized traditional indicators of academic success that had little to do with practice or finance, such as rankings and academic reputation. For example, one respondent described the School as ‘a leader in its field; just look at the rankings and the reputation it has.’

While they tended to agree that these were appropriate measures of success, employees disagreed about how well the School had performed against these measures. Some saw the School as highly successful. For example, one respondent described it as ‘one of the best schools in its field.’ However, other respondents took a very different view. For example, one respondent described the School as ‘satisfactorily underperforming.’



In addition, some respondents focused on the School's efforts to establish an international presence and an international brand. However, none of these respondents felt that the School had been successful on either front ('not building an international brand' 'UK-centric; it is not a truly global business school' 'has never developed a concerted integrated international strategy').

### *Strategic Outlook*

Those who felt that the School was not successful attributed this failing to a number of different factors. Some focused on its lack of ambition and reluctance to take risks. For example one respondent described the School's outlook as 'unambitious, conservative, safe' and, when asked to describe the School as if it were a person, another respondent described it as someone who 'knows they could be performing better but isn't prepared to take the personal risks to do so.' Other respondents focused on the lack of strategic direction ('lacking direction' 'hard to see a strategic plan or common goal either at the departmental or higher level'). Still others felt that the School did not move or respond to change as quickly as it should. For example one respondent simply described the School as 'slow.' Another respondent described the School as 'changing,' and explained that "'Dynamic" would suggest that we are rapidly reactive; "changing" reflects that we move at a slightly slower pace.'

On the other hand, some respondents took a far more positive view. For example, one respondent explained, 'we do not have the margin to fund strategic initiatives, so we implement our strategy slowly and inexpensively.' Another respondent described the School as 'aspirational.'

### *Management of the Organisation*

Employees did not feel that the School had a clear strategic focus ('lacking leadership' 'does not appear to have an agreed strategy). This was perceived to result in a lack of

clear priorities regarding the allocation of resources ('results in diffuse market messages and internal confusion about where resources should be focused') as well as an inability to make difficult decisions regarding which activities and departments were worth supporting. For example, one respondent suggested, 'maybe the School can shut some research centres that don't do any international research, as this affects the brand.' Another respondent likened the School to a person who feels that 'it's easier to get on with the day job and avoid the difficult questions.'

## Employment

### *Management of Employees*

#### Attitudes and Behaviour toward Employees:

While some respondents felt that employees were valued for their contribution ('I feel like I am valued,' 'everyone has their part to play and is valued for it'), others claimed that employees were left to look after their own interests. For example, one respondent described the School as 'unstable, unreliable – not a place that can be relied upon to look after you,' and another respondent likened it to the kind of person that is 'happy to help other people but sometimes assumes immediate family can look after themselves.' One respondent attempted to balance these two perspectives with the following argument: 'deliver results and you will (mostly) be valued.'

#### Expectations of Employees:

Most respondents felt that the School had high expectations for employees; they claimed that employees were expected to 'use their initiative,' 'take on new challenges,' and 'perform at a high level at all times and across all types of situation.' In fact one respondent warned that 'if you are afraid of challenges, or being challenged, then this might not be the place for you.' At a personal level, respondents

also felt that they were expected to be 'motivated, ambitious and self-starting,' and to look after their own interests ('don't expect the School to do it all for you - as some faculty do!'). However, some respondents also drew attention to what they saw as an unequal workload; they claimed that the School was over-working some employees and under-working others ('you can get away with a lot if you choose, because others will cover for the deficiencies to ensure that the student/client experience is good').

More specifically, respondents felt that they were expected to take on several different types of work. They talked about 'teaching' and 'working with students,' as well as the need to 'carry out research and publish it' and to generate funding for their research ('I need to bring in research funding in order to make my own role sustainable. After that I can pursue my own interests more freely').

Criteria for Career Progression:

Respondents identified three factors that could influence career progression. The first factor was rules: 'I feel like the rules are not too complicated in terms of how to progress, and I definitely feel like I am expected to progress.' The second factor was politics: the School 'expects employees to network in order to get ahead.' The third factor was individual achievement:

'Be incredibly focused on what you want to do/achieve personally, ignore all requests for co-operation outside your narrow field. You can get away with murder and be a personal success if you don't mind being disliked by the people you don't care about.'

### *Benefits of Employment*

Respondents generally agreed that the School was a 'fun' and 'rewarding' place to work, but they disagreed about the economic and functional benefits of employment. Some felt that the School paid its employees well ('the pay's good') while others took

the opposite view ('Depending on your job title or position, you may find the salary not that competitive'). Likewise, some respondents felt that the School offered 'good opportunities for self development', including opportunities to develop 'practitioner contacts' and 'teaching skills,' while others complained that 'the School does not develop its talent.' One respondent also pointed out that 'beside the Christmas party there aren't many occasions to meet the colleagues... There is nothing related to leisure time at Cranfield.'

### *Work Environment*

Respondents generally agreed that the work environment was busy ('a frenetic place to work') and intellectually stimulating ('Stimulating; there is always lots going on', 'exhilarating; busy, busy, full of opportunities,' 'a pressure cooker'). They also agreed that the School was 'a friendly place to work', and one respondent pointed out that the layout of the building was 'structured to be reasonably conducive to meeting people informally to share ideas; open areas, multiple coffee stations, all supportive of good social relationships.'

### *Workforce*

#### Personal Characteristics:

Most respondents expressed a high opinion of their colleagues. They referred to the 'high academic calibre' of other academics, as well as their commitment ('If you want to be surrounded by driven and dedicated people, then this is a good place to work') and personal characteristics ('filled with great people... Staff I have worked with are not only very accomplished academics, but genuinely nice people as well'). However, they recognized that many employees had their own personal and political agendas ('we know about personal and organisational politics in organisations and we practice

it here all the time), and this was perceived to have a significant impact on the social dynamics in the workplace.

#### Social Dynamics:

On the one hand, respondents described the social dynamic as 'friendly,' 'collegiate,' and 'supportive.' ('People know and talk to each other and follow each others' personal lives.') Some even felt that it was 'a close knit community.' However, they also recognized that people's willingness to support and help one another was balanced by the pursuit of self-interest ('I feel that I could go to other members of faculty for support, and that *if they had time* they would help me out,' 'show kindness and interest and people will be kind to and interested in you: *as long as you have the presence to be worth knowing*' – emphasis added). Respondents also pointed out that while there was a positive social dynamic among academics, there was 'a divide between the faculty and professional staff.'

#### Product/Service

Respondents identified three types of service that were provided by the School - teaching, research, and consultancy - and all three were characterized by an emphasis on practical relevance ('works with real client business problems'). Some respondents pointed out that research quality varied significantly by subject area ('is strong in some subjects but weak in others'). However, the quality of all three services was generally considered to be high ('good at teaching,' 'pretty good in terms of our research quality'), and they felt that the School's research had significant impact on management practice ('does research which makes a difference in the practice of management').

## Stakeholder Relationships

Respondents identified three stakeholder groups: students and alumni, industry, and The University.

### *Students and Alumni*

Although they felt that the School charged high tuition fees ('it costs a lot to come here'), they claimed that the School went out of its way to meet the needs of its clients and students ('do tend to go the extra mile to help clients and students'). Respondents generally expressed a positive opinion of students at the School ('the clients and students are all first rate'). They also pointed out that students and alumni came from countries around the world ('we have people from a huge number of nations attending SoM courses' 'alumni network of 12,000 in 115 countries').

### *Clients/Industry*

The School was perceived to have a very close relationship with industry ('it's married to industry in many ways'), and more specifically with the for-profit sector ('while we touch non-business sectors, we primarily think of ourselves as serving the for-profit sector'). Respondents also explained that the School relied on industry for a significant proportion of its income ('a good deal of the income for the School is from industry'). As a result, they felt that the School worked hard to meet the needs of its clients ('customer focused; the customer always comes first' 'client focused; attempts to provide a quality experience').

### *The University*

Respondents explained that the School of Management was 'part of The University.' They generally expressed positive views of this relationship ('is embedded in a

supportive institution; my experience is that the other schools are a good fit with SoM'), but some felt that the School did not take full advantage of the opportunities it offered:

'The school can be better integrated into the university as a whole. There is a huge opportunity for the School to differentiate itself by becoming closer to other departments.'

### *Other Stakeholders*

One respondent also pointed out that the School's high ranking made it an attractive place for companies to recruit ('It has a high ranking that employers value').

### Reputation

Respondents generally felt that the School had a strong reputation ('is prestigious; it is very well known and considered' 'academic; has a great reputation'). They also claimed that the School was known for its emphasis on practical relevance ('is respected; by practitioners (in certain geographies); by academics, for its closeness to practice'). However, they disagreed about the scope of its reputation. Some claimed that the School was well-known internationally ('internationally renowned... highly regarded'), but the majority felt that it was only well known within certain circles. For example, one respondent described the School as 'a hidden gem; relatively small, not widely known amongst the general public, but an impressive centre of knowledge.' Outside of these circles they felt that the School was not well-known ('relatively unknown' 'not as well known as it should be) and argued that the brand needed 'to be worked on.'

### **5.3.3 Evaluation of the School of Management's Corporate Identity**

#### **5.3.3.1 Qualitative Overview**

The most attractive aspect of the School's identity, from the perspective of employees, was its emphasis on doing work that was relevant to practice. Respondents felt that this mission shaped the School in ways that could make it an almost uniquely attractive place to work ('If you are a Cranfield person there are probably only a few other academic institutions where you would be happy). However, they also acknowledged that the School's mission was only likely to be considered attractive by those who wanted to do this kind of work ('You must ... have a strong desire to contribute to business and management and collaborate with companies), and they felt that the fit between the School and individual was critical:

'If you are interested in managers and the problems they face, come to Cranfield. If you're just interested in being an academic and publishing your research in academic journals, go somewhere else!'

Respondents also drew attention to the importance of high quality outputs and a strong reputation. However, they disagreed as to whether the School actually possessed either one. For those who felt that it did, these were perceived to be two of the School's most attractive attributes ('I am proud to say that I work for one of the "best" schools in the field'; 'you will have the respect of peers and managers – the Cranfield name does help you make things happen in the UK'). On the other hand, weakness in either area was seen as something that should be corrected ('is weak in high impact world class research – the school needs to focus on publishing in top journals'; 'not as well known as it should be – the brand needs to be worked on'; 'perhaps the school can shut some research centres that don't do any international research as this affects the brand').

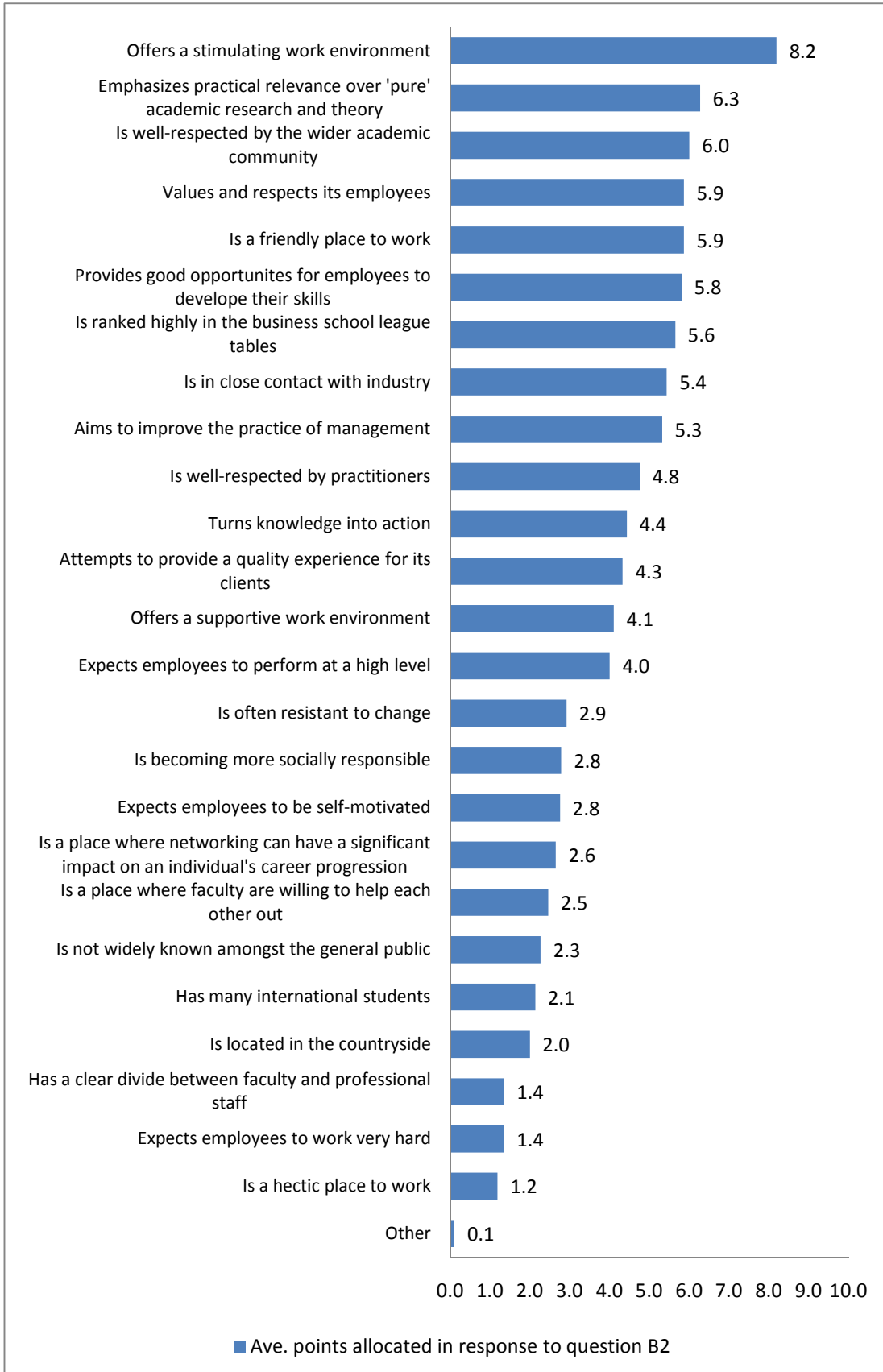


Finally, respondents drew attention to a number of more specific attributes relating to the work environment, the style of managing employees, and the location. Many respondents found the work environment attractive because it was exciting, challenging, and full of opportunities ('exciting, challenging'; 'a pressure cooker'; 'fun, rewarding, challenging, hard-work' 'exhilarating – busy, busy, busy, over-full of opportunities'). They were also attracted by the supportive style of management ('supportive and friendly'; 'I feel that I am valued'), but some felt that academic employees should have greater autonomy in their work ('the school gives much power to the hierarchy... in doing so it ignores the spirit of the university institution'). The School's location was considered attractive in as far as it was close to London ('It's close to the airport and London, which is great for consulting work'). However, respondents still complained that it was more isolated than they would like ('in the middle of nowhere... pretty isolated'; 'in the middle of nowhere and not connected to the buzz and culture of a global city.')

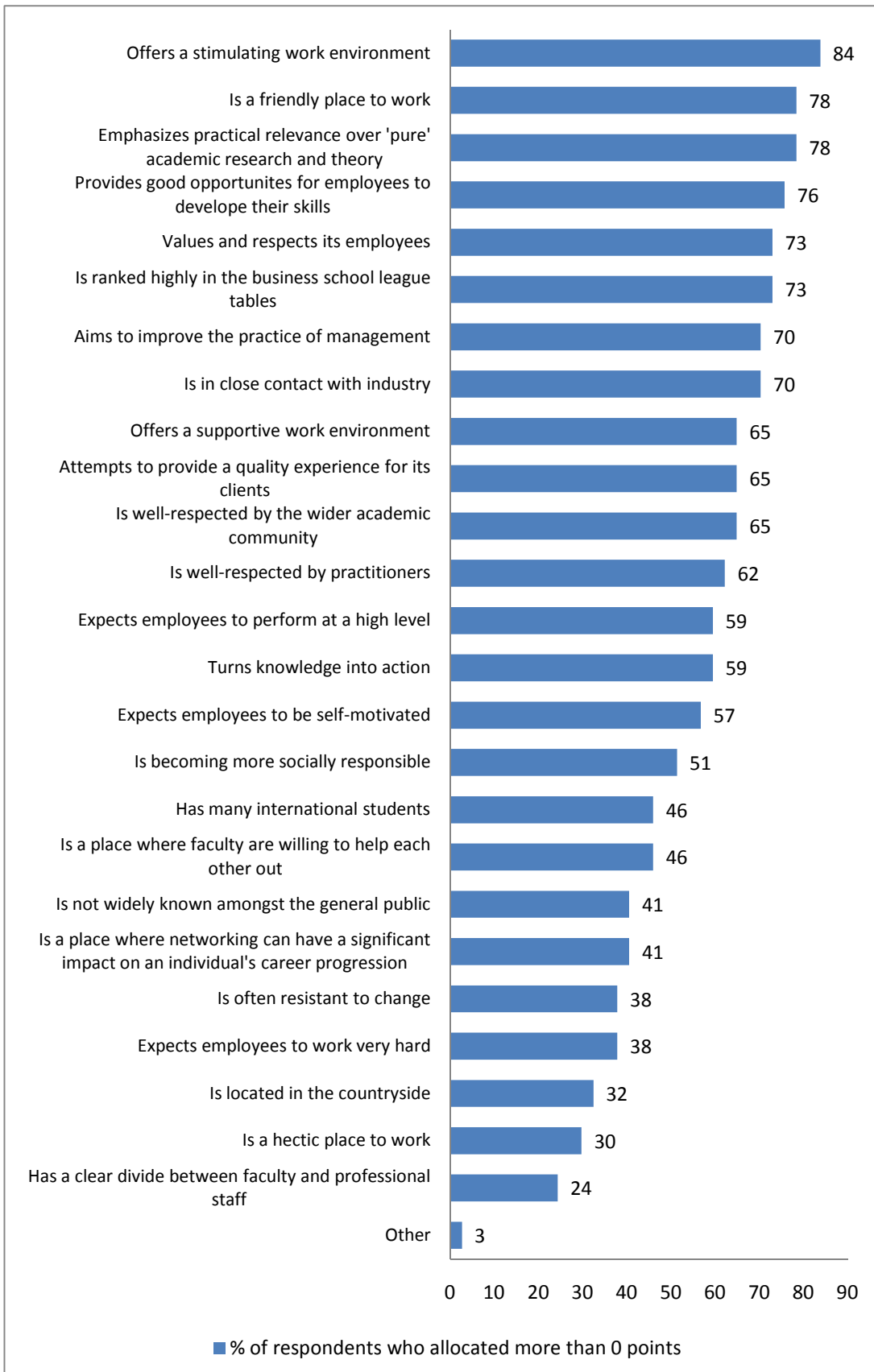
### **5.3.3.2 Quantitative Results**

The attribute that respondents collectively considered most important was 'Offers a stimulating work environment' (8.2 points) followed by 'Emphasizes practical relevance over 'pure' academic research and theory,' and 'Is well respected by the wider academic community.' These rankings are essentially consistent with the qualitative data. The attributes that respondents considered least important were 'Is a hectic place to work' (1.2 points). 'Expects employees to work very hard,' and 'Has a clear divide between faculty and professional staff.' The first two are surprising because they seem to be closely linked to the 'stimulating work environment,' which was considered very attractive. However, one explanation for this anomaly relates to the nature of the work; 'stimulating' implies intellectual challenge, while 'hectic' and 'hard work' may be related to more mundane aspects of the job.

The difference between the number of points assigned to the most important and least important attributes was 7 points. Since no attribute was assigned more than 8.2 points, this represents a huge gap. However, there was no obvious cut off point between important and unimportant groups; each attribute was assigned just a few points more than the one before. This gradual change is shown in figure 6.



**Figure 6: Average number of points allocated to each attribute (School of Management)**



**Figure 7: Percentage of respondents who allocated points (School of Management)**

## **5.4 CASE 3: SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

#### **5.4.1.1 Description of the School of Engineering**

The School of Engineering is one of the top Engineering Schools in the UK. Its research covers a wide range of disciplines, including aerodynamics, electronics, and software engineering. Like the School of Management, the School of Engineering is located on The University's main campus and it is committed to doing research that can be directly applied in industry.

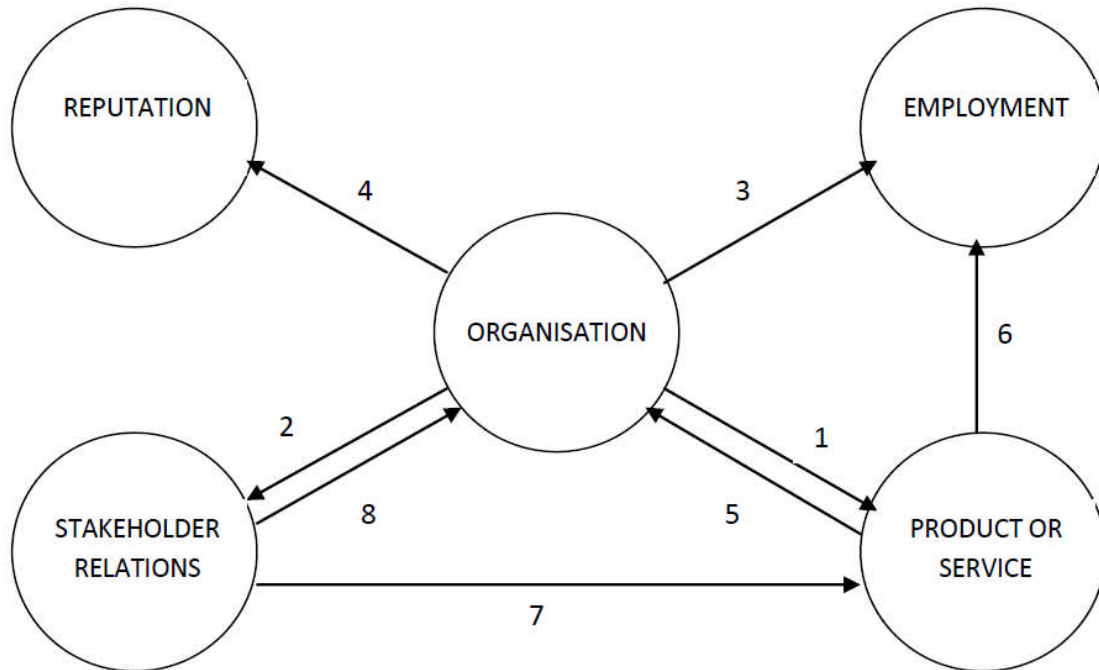
#### **5.4.1.2 Statistical Overview of Results**

In stage 1, a senior manager in the School of Engineering personally chose and invited 17 employees to complete the questionnaire. Of these, 11 chose to do so. Therefore, the response rate in stage 1 was 64.7%.

In stage 2, I went to the School of Engineering in person and invited people to complete the survey. Approximately half of the people that I asked agreed to do so, giving a total response rate of 21. However, two respondents chose not to answer question B2. This left 19 usable responses, of which 4 were from females and 5 were from males. The functional split was 12 academic, 3 technical, 2 administrative and 2 other.

## 5.4.2 Perceptions of the School of Engineering's Corporate Identity

### 5.4.2.1 Connecting the Five Main Attribute Categories



**Figure 8: Connections between the five main attribute categories (School of Engineering)**

The core dimension of the School of Engineering's identity was the organisation itself, and more specifically its commitment to solving 'real world problems.' This commitment reflected The University's mission to turn knowledge into practical application, and was essentially consistent with the views expressed by respondents in the previous two schools. However, this was the only school in which respondents did not perceive a tension or conflict between commercial and academic concerns. As a result, the School of Engineering had the most clear and coherent identity of the three schools.

## Influence of the School's Commitment to Solving Real World Problems

### *Link 1*

Because the School was committed to making a difference in industry, it focused on doing work that could be applied in a commercial setting ('is commercial; we have a commercial focus to our work'). Its research focused on developing new technologies ('we are developing and delivering new technologies'), and its courses were designed to provide students with skills that they could apply in industry ('the courses and projects are practical, almost strictly used in industry').

### *Link 2*

Because the School was committed to solving 'real world problems,' it had established close links with industry ('has close links with industry'). These links had helped the School to win important contracts, bringing in much needed income despite the recession ('the School is doing better than the other schools in the current climate. They have won a number of important contracts which is fortunate in a recession').

## Influence of other Organisational Attributes

### *Link 3*

One respondent described the School as 'extensive and splintered' because 'it includes a wide range of activities and interests, some of which don't seem to link with any of the others.' He then went on to explain, 'your boss will most likely be driving his/her "business" in a particular direction, and some of the decisions that are made can only be understood in the context of his/her business strategy.'

*Link 4*

Another respondent described the School as ‘anonymous’ because ‘we are not very good at promoting ourselves or our agenda.’

Influence of the School’s Research and Teaching

*Link 5*

Respondents felt that the School’s success was largely due to the quality of its research and teaching (‘is successful; it’s good at what it does - research, teaching, both of these in its “traditional” sphere of activity, and also moving into new opportunities, both technically and financially’).

*Link 4*

The research conducted in the School also helped to make it a rewarding place to work (‘rewarding – when projects work out well’).

Influence of Stakeholder Relations

*Link 3*

The School’s ability to continue winning contracts with industry was particularly important because the income these contracts provided had a direct impact on the quantity and quality of research conducted in the School; as explained by one respondent, ‘through more funding more research and hence greater proof of technical abilities and research potential.’



## *Link 6*

Stakeholder relations were also perceived to have an impact on the School ('the School collaborates with a number of other universities and it is interesting to see how these developments impact positively on the School').

### 5.4.2.2 Describing the Five Main Attribute Categories

#### Organisation

#### *Demographics*

The School of Engineering specialized in subjects relating to aerospace and engineering ('Built on its history; 60 years of aerospace and engineering activities'). It was described as a 'big' school that covered a range of more specific sub-disciplines ('multi-disciplinary; we offer many technology areas') and occupied several different buildings around campus ('different buildings, separated in the campus'). Some of the buildings were 'new' and 'modern.' However, they were 'tacked onto 2<sup>nd</sup> world hangers,' leading respondents to describe the School as 'a combination of old and new.' The School also had access to a wide range of campus facilities, including sports facilities (it's also nice to be able make use of the facilities on campus – i.e. Tennis courts/gym/badminton) Some facilities, such as flying labs, were perceived to be quite distinctive in the context of a university ('there are so many things that students would not find at "rival" universities.') Nonetheless, employees continued to be frustrated by a 'lack of facilities and out-dated equipment.'

### *Ethos*

Respondents described the ethos as practical and cost conscious ('solvent; this is what our main aim it seems to be' 'a try it and see kind of place; lots of things are made to work despite dated facilities and always with one eye on the budget').

### *Organisational Success*

Employees measured their school's success according to both academic and commercial criteria. For example, one respondent explained that the School was successful because it had 'excellent student recruitment figures and commercial and academic successes,' and another respondent claimed that the most accurate motto for the School would be 'reaching new heights in academia and industry.' In other instances, respondents did not explicitly state their criteria for measuring success. For example one respondent simply described the School as 'one of the top schools in the UK.' However, the results clearly indicate that employees perceived the School to be highly successful ('best in its field; best in Europe, amongst the top in the world').

### *Strategic Outlook*

In general, respondents described the School as 'forward thinking,' innovative ('encourages creativity and innovation'), and commercial ('we have a commercial focus to our work'). As a result, they felt that the School was able to respond quickly to new scientific developments, and to 'capitalize on new opportunities.' One respondent even claimed that the most accurate motto for the School would be 'the sky is the limit.'

### *Management of the Organisation*

The Head of School was 'well-liked and respected by people within the School', and he was credited with re-building the School after a 'very disappointing RAE assessment' in 2003/2004. In addition, respondents felt that the School's policies and procedures were 'streamlined,' so that it ran efficiently and there was 'less scope for chaos.' However, some respondents complained about a lack of coordination among different groups within the School ('departments and groups don't seem to collaborate much,' 'we don't know what other groups are doing let alone coordinate our activities').

### Employment

#### *Management and Expectations of Employees*

Respondents generally agreed that the School fostered a 'hands-off' style of management; employees were expected to reach certain targets, but were allowed to do so in their own way ('hands off; as long as you are achieving your targets it does not seem to matter how you got there'), at their own pace ('you can work at your own pace'), and in the hours that they chose ('they are flexible in the hours I work'). This meant that employees had a reasonable level of autonomy in their work ('I like being left to get on with my work and the feeling of trust and empowerment this gives me'), and were allowed to 'explore new ideas with some freedom.' However, it also meant that employees were often left to find their own way and to figure things out on their own ('don't expect any support to help you find your way, you will have to develop everything yourself').

The autonomy that employees enjoyed in their work was balanced by a need to bring in funding ('offers a great deal of freedom, provided one can keep the money rolling in'). This meant that employees were expected to work closely with industry, and some respondents even claimed that the School placed greater emphasis on industrial

collaboration than on academic publication ('There is more emphasis on working with other companies and meeting deliverable targets as opposed to publishing academic results in research journals'). In fact, one respondent claimed that the single most important attribute a person needed to possess in order to succeed with the School is 'an ability to win funding, from any source.'

### *Work Environment*

Respondents claimed that the School offered an 'excellent academic environment.' They felt that it was busy ('there's always lots going on!') but relaxed ('a busy but laid back atmosphere' 'A fairly relaxed atmosphere... A nice working environment'), and they described the atmosphere as 'welcoming.'

### *Workforce*

Although the majority of people working in the Engineering department were male ('male-dominated; high proportion of staff and students are male'), the workforce was still perceived to be highly diverse because it included 'people from many different backgrounds specializing in many subjects.' One respondent also pointed out that altogether the staff and students came from twenty six different countries. Nonetheless, there was a strong positive dynamic among employees; they showed respect for one another ('I feel respected by my colleagues') and respondents tended to perceive their colleagues as 'friendly and respectful,' 'supportive,' and 'hard working,' as well as very good at their jobs ('excellent faculty – great teaching staff who know their job). The one caveat is that, according to several respondents, employees only socialized with people in their own group or department:

'even though there is a large number of staff, not all staff were able or willing to interact on a more social level, which is a pity as it is a good opportunity to meet people from all walks of life.'

### *Benefits of Employment*

Respondents felt that the School was a 'good long term employer.' They were satisfied with the pay and benefits ('you will be paid well with excellent benefits and you will be treated well'), working hours ('working hours seem well adhered to, so a work-life balance is something that you can easily achieve here'), and the opportunities for personal development ('opportunities exist for staff to improve and expand their skills by attending workshops/courses and over events,' 'It is also nice .... to develop your career skills, through the attendance of various workshops and courses'). In addition, respondents emphasized the psychological benefits associated with their work ('the job is challenging and rewarding,' 'I enjoy my role and feel that it challenges me personally'). Finally, respondents described the 'positive sense of security' that they enjoyed through 'being part of such a large organisation,' and they argued that working for the School was 'a job for life.'

### Product/Service

The School placed particular emphasis on practical application; its research focused on solving 'real world problems' while its courses were designed to 'develop students with skills for industry.' There was a particular emphasis on Aerospace Engineering industry ('60 years of aerospace and engineering activities,' 'we... graduate more aerospace post grads than any other university in the UK). However, respondents still felt that the School was involved in a wide range of activities ('practical - design, build, operate, measure - and theoretical - analyze, model, compute, validate; they cover traditional engineering activities as well as "soft" disciplines - psychology, accident investigation').

## Stakeholder Relationships

Respondents identified three relevant stakeholder groups: students, industry (specifically engineering and aerospace), and other educational institutions (including other schools within the University). Students were described as being 'from many countries,' and respondents claimed that the School had a good working relationship with them ('students and staff work well together'). Respondents also argued that the School had 'close links with industry' which helped it to provide students with 'promising future job prospects.' In fact they described the School as 'industrially focused,' and they claimed that it did 'good, well rounded projects for external clients.' Respondents also claimed that the School was 'well connected with other schools' (within the university) and that it was 'keen on securing links with other educational institutions all over the world.'

## Reputation

Respondents expressed differing beliefs about the prominence of their School's reputation; some felt that the School was not well known ('anonymous; we are not very good at promoting ourselves or our agenda' 'one of the world's best kept secrets') while others felt that it was very well known. Nonetheless, they generally agreed that the School was well known within the Aerospace Engineering industry ('Is renowned in the aerospace sector,' 'Prestigious; is well known in Engineering and Aerospace') and that the quality of its reputation was excellent ('It has a worldwide reputation for excellence' 'We have a great reputation with industry').

### **5.4.3 Evaluation of the School of Engineering's Corporate Identity**

#### **5.4.3.1 Qualitative Overview**

The most attractive dimension of the School's identity, from the perspective of employees, was Employment ('a great place to work, I love working here!' 'an excellent place to work' 'a truly fantastic place to work'). They expressed a positive view of the working environment, and they enjoyed the high level of autonomy ('I like being left to get on with my work and the feeling of trust and empowerment this gives me' 'an opportunity to explore new ideas with some freedom') and intellectual challenge ('the job is challenging and rewarding').

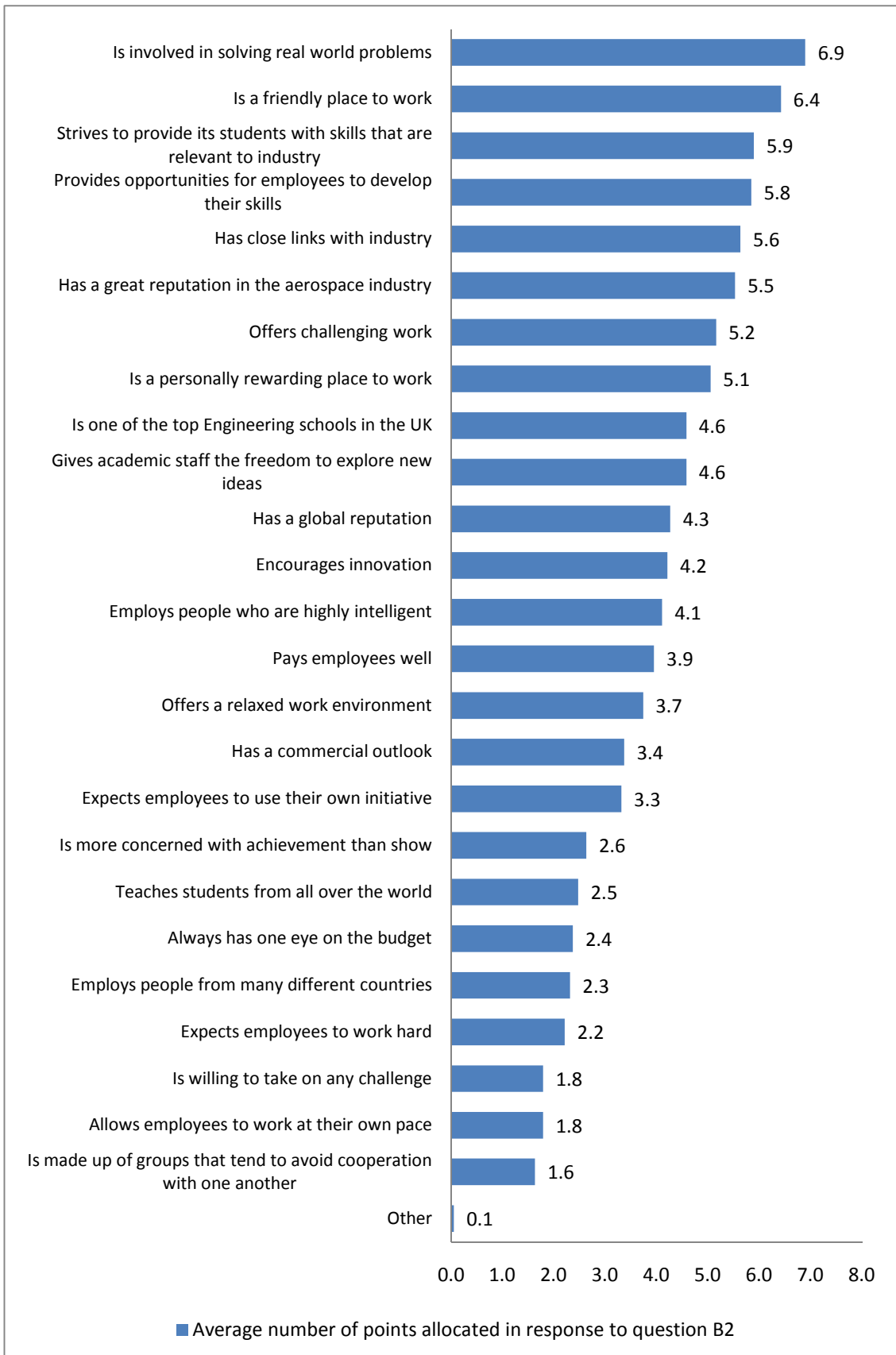
Two aspects of the School's identity that respondents considered particularly unattractive were the lack of collaboration ('isolating; departments/groups don't seem to collaborate much') and lack of up-to-date facilities ('frustrating; lack of facilities and dated equipment').

#### **6.4.3.2 Quantitative Results**

The attribute that respondents considered most important was 'Is involved in solving real world problems' (6.9 points), followed by 'Is a friendly place to work' and 'Strives to provide its students with skills that are relevant to industry.' The attributes that they considered least important were 'Is made up of groups that tend to avoid cooperation with one another' (1.6 points), followed by 'Allows employees to work at their own pace' and 'Is willing to take on any challenge.' The attribute that respondents considered most attractive was assigned more than four times as many points as the attribute that they considered least important, suggesting that there was a significant difference in the perceived importance of these two attributes. However, there was no clear distinction between the attributes that employees considered

important and the attributes that they considered relatively unimportant; no attribute was allocated more than 0.7 points more than the attribute directly before.





**Figure 9: Average number of points allocated to each attribute (School of Engineering)**

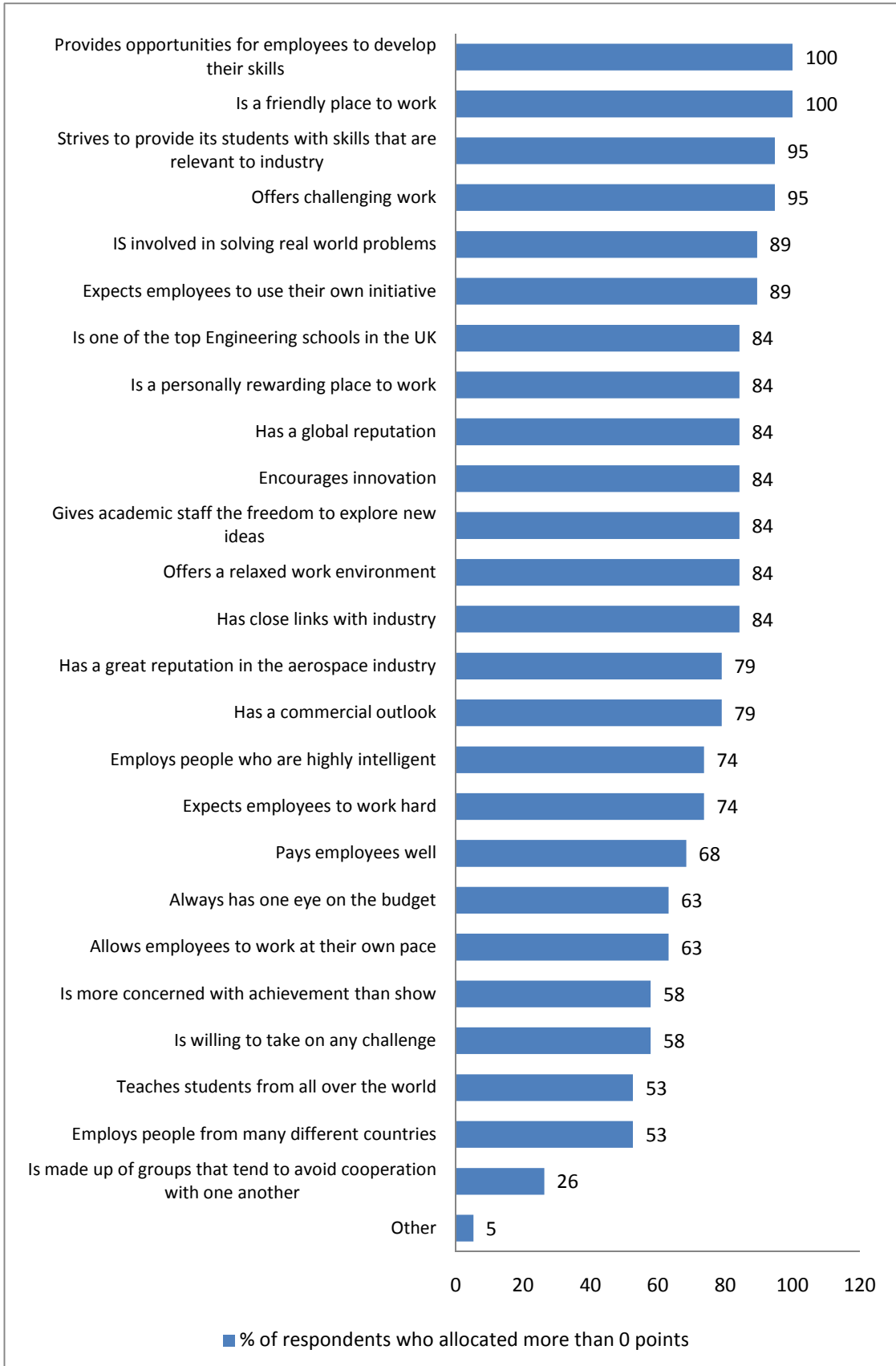


Figure 10: Percentage of respondents who allocated points (School of Engineering)

## **5.5 CASE 4: SPORTS INC**

### **5.5.1 Introduction**

#### **5.5.1.1 Description of Sports Inc**

Sports Inc is a non-profit organisation that was established for the sole purpose of hosting an international sporting event, described in this thesis as 'The Event.' Similar events have already been hosted under the same brand name, in different countries around the world. However, this is the first time in over sixty years that The Event has been held in the UK. It is expected to be a massive event that will ultimately involve more than two hundred thousand employees and volunteers. However, at the time this study was undertaken, Sports Inc was still in the planning stage; it had been in existence for just two years and employed approximately two hundred people. All of these employees were based at a single office in East London.

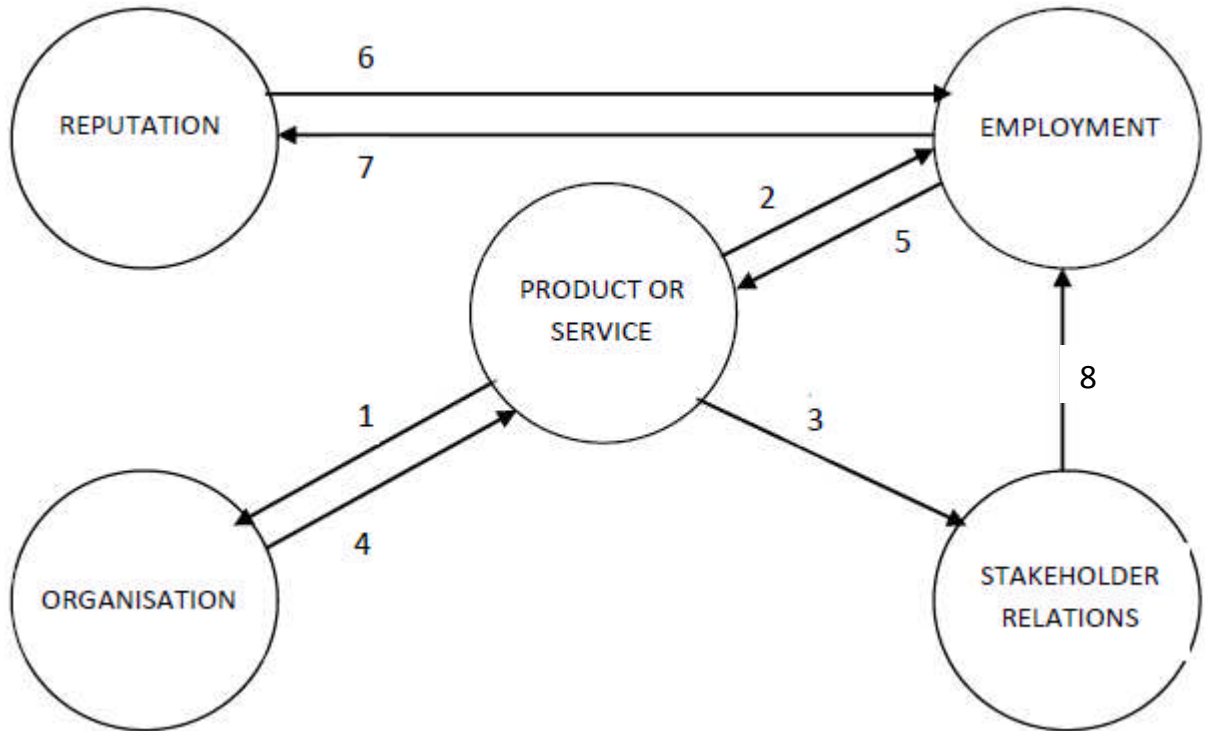
#### **5.5.1.2 Statistical Overview of Results**

In stage 1, approximately 30 employees were invited to fill in the questionnaire and 17 people chose to do so. Therefore the response rate was just over half.

In stage 2, all employees were invited to participate in the survey and the total number of responses was 30. Therefore the response rate was 15%. The sample included a broad cross section of the workforce in terms of gender, function, and job role level.

## 5.5.2 Perceptions of Sports Inc's Corporate Identity

### 5.5.2.1 Connecting the Five Main Attribute Categories



**Figure 11: Connections between the five main attribute categories (Sports Inc)**

The very core of Sports Inc's identity was 'The Event'; the organisation was established for the sole purpose of hosting this event, and it was seen to have a direct impact on almost every other dimensions of the organisation's identity. For example, many respondents claimed that Sports Inc provided a once in a lifetime opportunity for employees to be involved in The Event, and this was the reason why most people had joined the organisation. Respondents also stressed the need to ensure that other issues were not allowed to overshadow this objective. However, the event was not expected to be held for another three years. In the meantime, employees felt that the organisation had a responsibility to maintain the reputation of the brand, and that it should be seen to uphold the values associated with that brand.

## The Influence of the Event

Respondents claimed that The Event had a direct impact on the three of the four remaining dimensions of Sports Inc's identity. The organisation was dedicated to hosting the Event, and respondents felt that its ethos reflected this (link 1):

'we treat our responsibility to deliver The Event, and responsibilities to the UK with utmost respect – e.g. diversity and inclusion, sustainability'

The Event also had a direct impact on employment because it provided the primary motivation for employees to join and remain with the organisation (link 3). As explained by one respondent,

'You want to work for Sports Inc because you want to be involved in one of the most exciting events ever to happen in the UK, not because you want to further your own career or have something impressive to write on your CV.'

Finally, respondents argued that The Event influenced stakeholder relations (connection 4) because its scale and complexity created 'a significant interaction with a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders and agendas,' and the demands of all these groups had to be managed.

## Dimensions Affecting the Event

On the other hand, the only two dimensions that were perceived to influence The Event were Employment and Organisation. Employment was expected to influence the Event through the experience and expertise of the workforce (link 5):

'Is largely made up of employees with no sport or event experience... There are many opportunities being missed in the venue designs because there are not enough people with event experience to represent functional areas interests with the venue designers.'

Respondents also recognized that the quality of The Event would be dependent on the attributes and activities of the organisation as a whole (link 4), and this lead one

respondent to state that '(We) treat our responsibility to deliver the games, and responsibilities to the UK, with utmost respect.'

### The Link Between Stakeholder Relationships and Employment

Stakeholder Relationships was linked to employment (link 8) because the general public was Sports Inc's key stakeholder group, and respondents felt that every employee had a responsibility to manage public perceptions of the organisation. As explained by one respondent:

'You'll need to be able to take whatever comes at you especially when there is negative press coverage of The Event. You'll need to be able to tell friends and family what it is really like.'

In addition, the governing body made rules about how what employees could say and do, and employees had to follow these rules:

'The (governing body) have many rules and regulations regarding how The Event can be referred to, what people (be the sponsors, stakeholders etc) can do etc. As a result, Sports Inc employees need to be disciplined in what they do/adhere to the rules.'

### The Relationship between Employment and Reputation

Respondents felt that employees had the ability to shape the perceptions of those outside the organisation (link 7). As a result, they felt that it was very important that employees not say anything that was to the detriment of the organisation. For example, one respondent stated,

'I think one of the most troubling things would be if documents written by an off-message employee got leaked stating that Sports Inc doesn't actually care about community engagement, nations and regions etc.'

On the other hand, they claimed that the reputation of the organisation had a direct impact on employees. For example, one respondent explained that 'you need to be

able to take what comes at you especially when there is negative press coverage of the Event.'

### **5.5.2.2 Describing the Five Main Attribute Categories**

#### Organisation

##### *Demographics*

Sports Inc was described a 'young' organisation. However, respondents claimed that it had been growing rapidly ('We have gone from being a start-up to employing over 200 people in under 2 years') and would continue to do so ('growing – it will continue to grow in staff numbers'). It was also described as 'posh' ('Sports Inc is posh – the office accommodation gives that impression') and 'complicated' ('complicated – it has lots of different functions and activities').

##### *Organisational Ethos*

Respondents felt that the ethos of the organisation was defined by a respect for the Event and all that was entailed in hosting it:

'(We) treat our responsibility to deliver The Event, and responsibilities to the UK with utmost respect – e.g. diversity and inclusion, sustainability'

However, they felt that the atmosphere was 'politically charged' and complained about the lack of cross-functional cooperation ('is a collection of specialists in silos; all the world's experts in their area, little interest in other areas').

##### *Organisational Success*

Although the organisation's success in hosting the Event would not be clear until that event was actually held, employees believed that it would be successful:

‘People genuinely seem to believe that we can deliver the task ahead of us and overcome any challenges in doing so.’

### *Strategic Outlook*

Respondents felt that Sports Inc was ‘ambitious,’ ‘agile,’ ‘creative and bold.’ They also claimed that it was ‘growing in terms of new staff, profile and influence.’ However, respondents argued that the organization would face a unique set of challenges (‘the issues that arise are unique and will depend on the economic, political and sporting climate of the day,’ and they warned that ‘management must be careful not to over-promise and under-deliver.’

### *Management of the organisation*

Because Sports Inc was still a relatively new organisation, some aspects of management were still evolving (‘relationships, roles and accountabilities need to be tested and affirmed in almost every activity’; ‘unorganized by getting better’). However, respondents felt that the organisation was generally ‘bureaucratic and process driven,’ and they complained that ‘the internal systems are not as developed as they could be’).

### Employment

#### *Management and Expectations of Employees*

Employees were under no illusion that working for Sports Inc would be easy. For example, one employee stated that ‘working here demands a personal commitment; it’s not for 9-5-ers’, and another warned that employees had to be ‘tough to withstand the bloody world of Sports Inc.’ More specifically, respondents acknowledged that



they were expected to work extremely hard, to put in long hours, and to give their work priority over every other aspect of their life; in the words of one employee,

‘Very busy. Really busy. Be prepared for lots of work, and for your plans to be knocked sideways by events and by other people.’

Moreover, the level of commitment expected from employees was only expected to increase; ‘It’s busy now and will only get busier in the run up to the Event, so be prepared to put your personal life on hold at the very least for 2011 and 2012.’

### *Relationship between Management and Employees*

Respondents felt that Sports Inc. was ‘committed to looking after the welfare of its staff.’ In fact one respondent argued that the worst possible scenario for the organisation was ‘to not be able to protect the safety of those that we employ or those that take part in the Event.’ However the organisation’s style of managing employees was described ‘autocratic’ and ‘hierarchical’. The organisation’s style of management was described as autocratic because few employees were given the authority to make decisions. As explained by one respondent, ‘small spans of control leave most decision making to the (group of senior managers)’, leaving employees with ‘little empowerment’. Its style of management was described as ‘hierarchical’ because there was very little interaction between people at different levels in the organisational hierarchy, and such differences were continually reinforced. For example, one employee claimed that ‘management is unapproachable despite their claims’ and another pointed out that ‘the allocation of offices and seating is hierarchical, not needs based, even though it pretends to be the latter.’ There were some employees who disagreed with this view. For example one employee claimed

‘there isn’t a rigid hierarchy within the organisation... you’re listened to whether you an 18 year old school leaver, a PA, or a director with years of experience.’

However, respondents who expressed these views appeared to be in the minority.

### *Benefits of Employment*

Respondents generally expressed a positive view of the functional and economic benefits offered by Sports Inc ('good remuneration' 'the experience gained at Sports Inc will set everyone in good stead career wise once The Event is over/it is time to move on'). However, the most important benefits were psychological ('challenging, fun, exciting' 'it gives me a warm glow to think about the difference that the legacy and opportunity of the Event will make to people's lives' 'working for Sports Inc instils a great sense of pride in what the Event represents throughout the world'). In addition, several respondents talked about the opportunities for employees to meet world-class athletes and participate in various activities related to the Event ('you also get to meet current and former athletes and attend amazing events' 'there are unusual and distinctive opportunities to see and participate in many events, and meet many interesting people').

### *Workforce*

Employees felt that the workforce was very diverse, in terms of countries, cultures and skill-sets ('fantastic mix of experience and people from all different backgrounds' 'passionate, bright people from many backgrounds' 'the most diverse place I have worked'). They also felt that the people employed by Sports Inc were very good at what they did ('the quality of the people is good and many are inspirational' 'made up of experts from all over the world'). Because Sports Inc offered such a prestigious employment opportunity, they complained that many employees were driven by personal ambition ('is ego driven – there seems to be an overwhelming number of people that are working at Sports Inc because of the so-called "prestige" of working for the Event'). However, they felt that the organisation's workforce was united by a shared commitment to the Event ('everyone is ultimately striving to stage the best Games ever' 'the teams here are totally committed to giving 100%').  
'a community of passionate people... brought together to work on a fitting cause'

## *Work Environment*

Respondents expressed several seemingly divergent views of the work environment. Some respondents described the work environment as 'pressured', 'fast-paced', and 'ridiculously busy' while others described it as 'informal' and 'relaxed'. Similarly, some respondents described the work environment as 'social' and 'friendly' while others claimed that there was very little interaction among employees ('it is surprising how quiet the office environment is... It suggests that people are not communicating... Instead choosing to hide behind their computer screens'). However, respondents generally agreed that the environment had a very 'corporate' feel that was not consistent with the values of the Event ('very unorganised and corporate - feels like working in a bank' 'Is corporate.... the dress code, office layout and location, and organisational hierarchy all contribute to this').

## Product/Service

The Event was described as 'cool', 'inspirational', 'one of the most exciting events every to happen in the UK.' Respondents also referred to the massive scope of the Event ('the scope of what we are doing is huge' 'there is no project like it in terms of scale and complexity') and its potential impact ('international; we have the ability to touch nearly every nation in the world with what we do' 'a specific event which will have a huge impact on London').

## Reputation

Sports Inc was perceived to be a high profile organisation, under constant scrutiny by the media and the public at large ('whether it be good or bad, the world is watching' 'is often in the news' 'high profile. There is constant media attention to everything we do' 'most people know about The Event and have an opinion about it'). Respondents also believed that it was seen as a 'cool' and 'exciting' place to work ('many people find

the task of Sports Inc fascinating and would like to work there’ ‘all my friends and family are excited by the fact that I am working for Sports Inc’ ‘is thought of as a cool place to work’).

### Stakeholder Relations

Sports Inc was perceived to have relationships with ‘a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders.’ Many of these stakeholder groups had their own interests and agendas – for example some groups ‘had an interest in how the Event would benefit particular sectors of the community’ - but they had ‘no direct responsibility for delivering the Event.’ Moreover, the agendas of different stakeholder groups were often dependent on one another in ways that were not immediately clear (‘there is a significant interaction with a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders and agendas, some interdependencies (internal and external) are hard to identify’). This made stakeholder management a complex and potentially ‘confusing’ job that could end up taking a ‘disproportionate amount of time.’

### 5.5.3 Evaluation of Sports Inc’s Identity

#### **5.5.3.1 Qualitative Overview**

The aspect of Sports Inc’s identity that respondents considered most attractive was the organisation’s role in hosting The Event. This Event was repeatedly described as ‘exciting’ and ‘inspiring,’ and one respondent claimed that ‘if you can’t be motivated by working on The Event, there is something wrong with you.’ In fact most respondents felt such a strong commitment to The Event that they considered it a privilege to be involved. For example, one respondent described his attitude as follows:

‘I have not taken this job for the pay and benefits. It was a shock to have been successful and it is with my heart that I have taken the role. I feel

honoured to be part of the team and take seriously the tremendous impact a successful Event can have to the UK and society. I try not to get too scared by the responsibility to deliver a success!

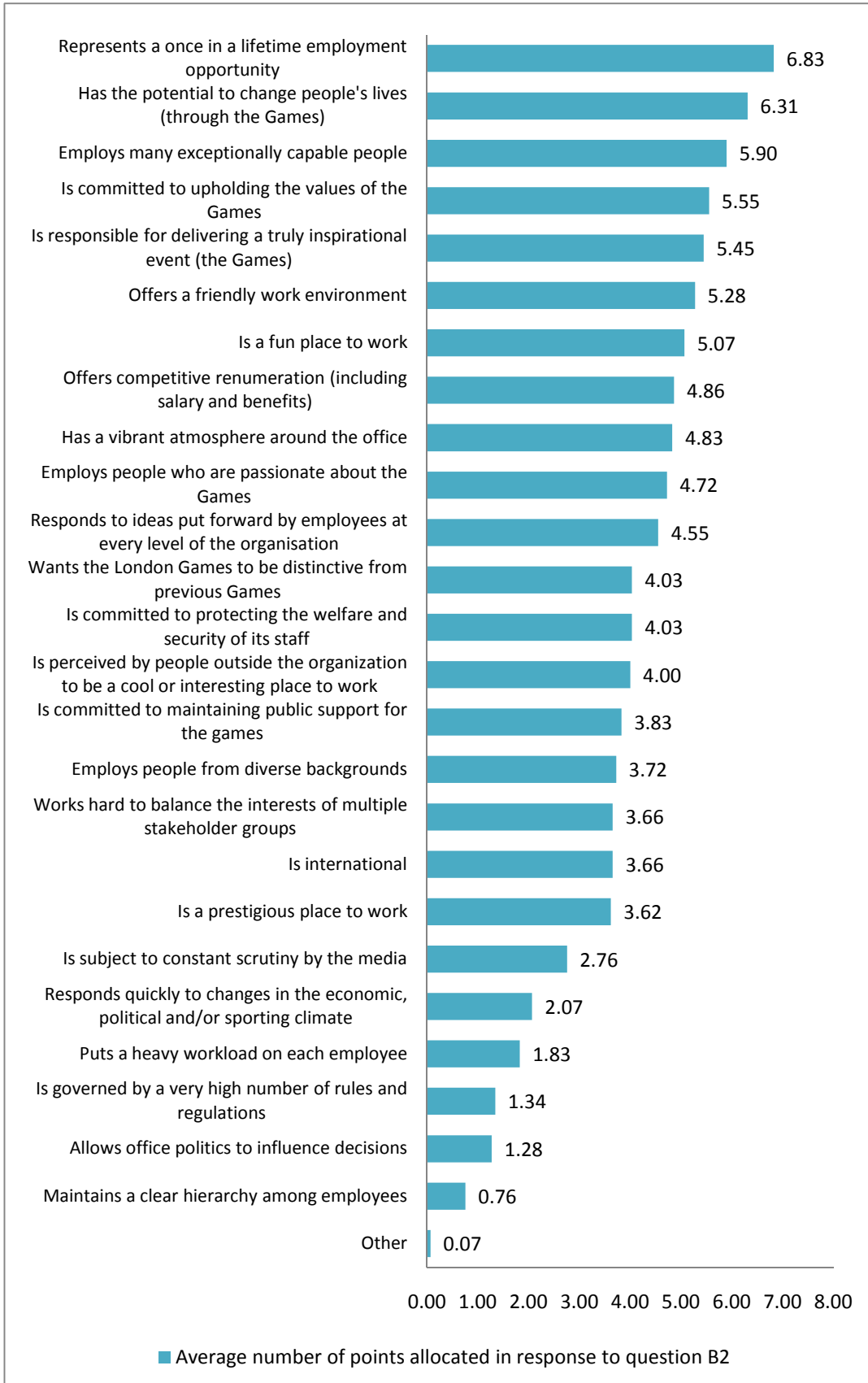
Another respondent simply stated, 'it's not about the job; it's about the cause.'

Because the Event was unlikely to be held again in the UK for many years, employees felt that Sports Inc offered a 'once in a lifetime opportunity.' This opportunity was so attractive that it outweighed the negative aspects of employment ('On balance it will be worth it.'). As a result, respondents felt that employment with Sports Inc was an opportunity that must not be missed ('It is an experience of a lifetime so grab it!').

#### **5.5.3.2 Quantitative Results**

The attribute that respondents considered most important was 'Represents a once in a lifetime employment opportunity' (6.8 points), followed by 'Has the potential to change people's lives (through the games),' and 'employees many exceptionally capable people.' The attributes that respondents considered least important were 'Maintains a clear hierarchy among employees' (0.07 points), 'Allows office politics to influence decisions,' and 'Is governed by a very high number of rules and regulations.'

The attribute that employees considered most important was assigned almost seven times as many points as the attribute that they considered least important. However, there was no clear cut-off between attributes that they considered very important and those that they considered relatively unimportant; all twenty five attributes were allocated at least some points, with each one receiving just slightly fewer than the one before. This gradual change is shown in Figure 12.



**Figure 12: Average number of points allocated to each attribute (Sports Inc)**



**Figure 13: Percentage of respondents who allocated points (Sports Inc)**

## **5.6 CASE 5: FILM INC**

### **5.6.1 Introduction**

#### **5.6.1.1 Description of Film Inc**

Film Inc is the international distribution arm of a major Hollywood studio. Although it is separate company, Film Inc is financially accountable to the studio, operates under the same brand name, and relies on the studio for most of its content. It also has close ties to a number of other companies within the Film Inc family. Therefore, Film Inc does not operate as a completely independent company; it functions as a part of a 'media conglomerate' encompasses a wide range of entertainment media and has one of the most recognizable brand names in the media industry.

Film Inc has offices around the globe. However, this study focused specifically on the company's UK office, which is comprised of two parts: Head Office for international distribution and the company's UK branch. These two parts of the company serve different functions, but they work together so closely that there was no reason to treat them as separate organisations. At the time this study was conducted, there were approximately 400 people working in the London office.

#### **5.6.1.2 Statistical Overview of Results**

20 people were invited to participate in stage 1<sup>5</sup> and 19 agreed. Therefore, the response rate was 95%. The one person who declined said that they were unexpectedly busy that day and could not spare the time.

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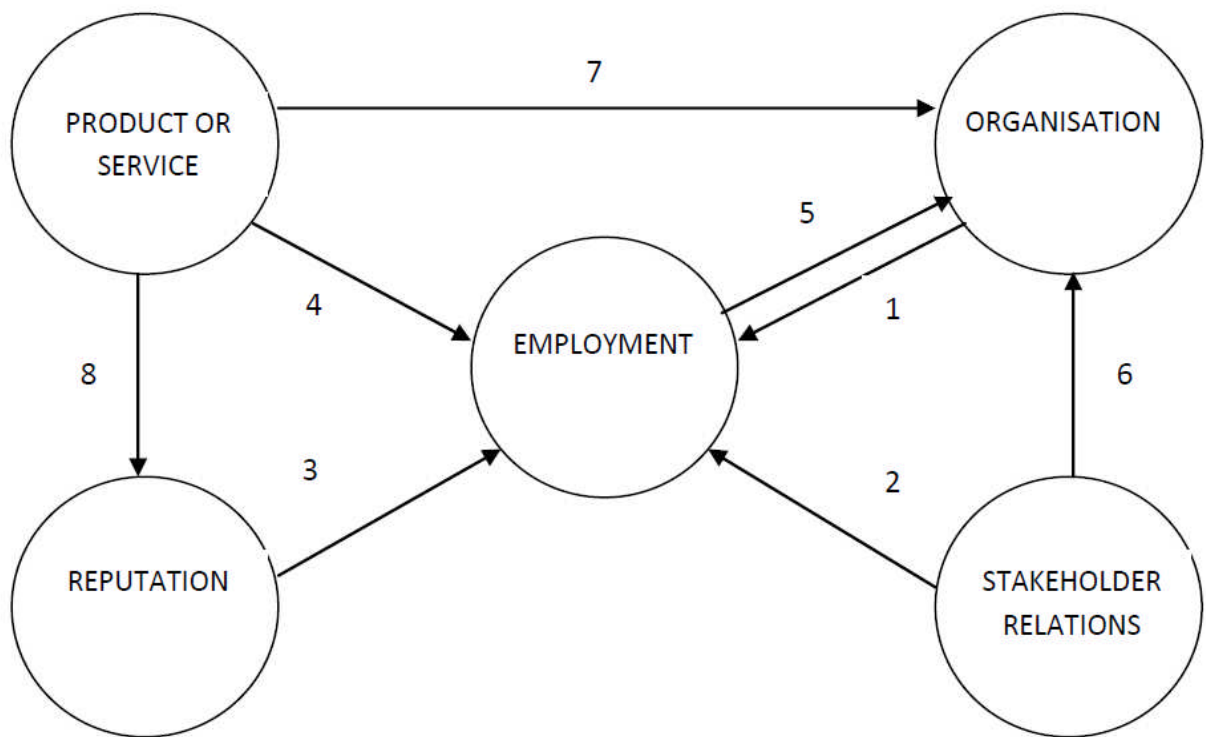
<sup>5</sup> As explained in the methodology section, managers at Film Inc asked that stage 1 be conducted face-to-face, in the form of interviews rather than paper-based questionnaires.



All employees were invited to complete the stage 2 survey and the number of responses was 99. Therefore the response rate was approximately 25%. Of these, 55 were female and 44 were male. 6 were Vice Presidents or above, 17 directors, 20 managers, 52 staff, and 4 other. The functional split was 30 Sales and Marketing, 10 Legal and Licensees, 9 Facilities and Operations, 14 Finance, 6 A&R, 9 Human Resources, 14 IT, 7 other. Therefore the stage 2 sample represented a broad cross section of Film Inc’s workforce, in terms of gender, job role level, and function.

**5.6.2 Perceptions of Film Inc’s Corporate Identity**

**5.6.2.1 Connecting the Five Main Attribute Categories**



**Figure 14: Connections between the five main attribute categories (Film Inc)**

The only attribute category that respondents explicitly connected to every other category was Employment. This seemed to suggest that Employment was the core of Film Inc’s identity, but in almost every instance the direction of influence was *toward* Employment; rather than shaping the other four dimensions of Film Inc’s identity,

Employment was shaped by them. The most obvious explanation is that Employment related attributes were considered very important by employees; as a result, this dimension was mentioned more often than the others, and this led to a correspondingly high number of connections being revealed. However, even if Employment did not play a critical role in shaping the other dimensions of Film Inc's identity, it did play an important role in tying those dimensions together (see Figure 14).

### Categories Influencing Employment

#### *Link 1*

Because the organisation was very big, and because it had been around for a long time, respondents felt that jobs with Film Inc were reasonably secure. As explained by one respondent:

'It feels very solid and even if there was a bad year – especially in the climate that we're in at the moment – you kind of feel like the company will get through. There could be casualties along the way, but all in all the company will get through. If you get your head down and do your best, you'll come through with it.'

They also felt that the size of the organisation created a variety of opportunities for employees ('there are so many areas that you could go into... It's a place that generates a lot of opportunities because of its size'). On the other hand, several respondents pointed out that one disadvantage of working for such a large organisation was the occasional feeling of anonymity ('because it's such a big company, you do feel a bit anonymous at times, a bit like a number').

### *Link 2*

Film Inc's relationship with the Studio was perceived to have a direct impact on the employment experience and on employees' prospects for advancement within the company. More specifically, respondents claimed that Film Inc was 'de-coupled' from the studio in the US; most employees had to report to the studio in some way, which meant that they had to keep track of what was going on there ('most people have a direct report and then a dotted line to someone in the States, so you've always got to keep an eye on what the States are doing'). However it was very difficult for anyone to move across to the US office ('you can't move that easily to the US office'). This meant that there were only limited opportunities for employees to move up within the company ('the prospects of moving up are relatively limited...there are prospects, but they're not huge because we're de-coupled from the US').

### *Link 3*

Respondents recognized that Film Inc was known around the world, and this made it a particularly attractive organisation to work for ('as an employee, it's nice to know that you work for Film Inc because people know the brand and know what it is').

### *Link 4*

Respondents claimed that the Product had a significant impact on the experience of working for Film Inc ('It's all about the product that appeals to me' 'it's a nice company to work for because of the product' 'It's always a really energizing environment, mainly due to the product that you're involved with'). Therefore, they felt that it was important for employees to like the product ('you have to like films and TV - you have to like the product. If you're not interested in any way, it's really obvious'). Respondents also claimed that people who liked the product were more likely to feel a sense of pride or belonging from their role within the organisation. For example, one

respondent explained that ‘the benefit or joy is when you see the product you’ve been working on in the shops and it looks good.’ Another employee explained in this way:

‘I went to the cinema to watch Mama Mia and I thought, “I’ve seen snippets of it and I’ve sent off things from reception, and Pierce Brosnan’s management team have phoned to ask for something,” and it’s stuff like that makes you feel like you’re part of something greater.’

### Other Connections

#### *Link 5*

The only attribute category to be influenced by Employment was the Organisation as a whole. More specifically, respondents felt that the youth of Film Inc’s workforce influenced the organisation’s culture (‘alot of young people and lot of young people in senior management positions as well... and that kind of breeds a culture of excitement and innovation’). They also attribute the organisation’s success to the hard work of its employees; one respondents claimed that if Film Inc were a person, ‘their success would definitely be due to the fact that they worked harder than all of their colleagues or classmates.’

#### *Link 6*

Respondents argued that Film Inc’s relationship with the parent company had fundamentally changed the way in which the company was run; as explained by one respondent,

‘(the parent company) is a well-structured, efficient organisation that makes money, is well-respected... they instil those values and beliefs and traits at Film Inc.’

As a result, the 'media essence' of the organisation had been largely replaced by the corporate ethos of the parent company so that the ethos of the organisation had become 'media, with corporate in the mix.'

Respondents also claimed that, because Film Inc was 'de-coupled' from the studio in the US, it had a reasonable degree of speed and agility:

'We're very leanly staffed because we're de-coupled from the US, so we don't take a lot of benefit from the US. We do, as an organisation, originate pretty much everything that we create. I think that goes from an operations/production point of view... through to marketing, which is great – it gives us a lot of agility.'

#### *Link 7*

Because the success of the organisation was determined by its ability to market and sell specific films, this is where managers focused their attention; strategic planning tended to centre on the product rather than the organisation as a whole. One respondent explained this as follows:

'We're very product focused. A lot of the work that we do and crafting strategy is based on the specific content that we have within a year.... For example, *Mama Mia* is a huge hit for us right now. So a lot of strategies are driven out of that, rather than crafting strategy for the whole business.'

#### *Link 8*

Respondents felt that Film Inc's reputation was shaped by the films that had been produced and distributed under the Film Inc brand. Because many of these films were very well known, and because Film Inc had been producing these films for over half a century, respondents claimed that 'people know what Film Inc does and they know that it is a well-established business with a great heritage.' In addition, one

respondent explained that ‘some bits of it have cult status because it’s a brand that goes back a long way, and it’s associated with names like Jaws and Jurassic Park.’

### **5.6.2.2 Describing the Five Main Attribute Categories**

#### Organisation

##### *Demographics*

Film Inc was perceived to be a global company (‘Truly global’ ‘Global – because it goes throughout the whole world’ ‘Global – in almost every single country of the world’) with a ‘great heritage’; as one respondent explained, ‘we’ve been real pioneers in the film industry.’ It was also perceived to be a ‘well-established business’ and, because it had been around for so long, respondents felt that it was ‘stable’ and ‘reliable’ (‘because it’s been around for a long time, you can’t imagine that it will go anywhere’).

##### *Organisational Ethos*

The Ethos of the organisation was described as a mix of media and corporate (‘mixed – it’s kind of like media, with corporate in the mix, but it seems to work’). The corporate aspect was associated with the parent company and with the changes that it had made since the takeover (‘corporate – because we are, after all, owned by (Parent Company). ‘It’s not a media company. They’re a corporate company’) while the media aspect was traced back to before the takeover; one respondent explained that,

‘It does sort of have that media essence to it. Even though people have heard that we’ve been taken over by (parent company) and it’s gone a little bit corporate, it’s still keeping it to a certain degree.’

Respondents felt that the two aspects were not necessarily compatible ('most people think of media companies as being not corporate'), and they perceived a clear distinction between them:

'When you first start, its required that you fill in an on-line learning thing about integrity and legal stuff... So that's where it stops being media and it's just totally corporate (parent company). Whereas, when someone's saying, "Here's a ticket to a screening," it stops being (parent company) and starts being Film Inc.'

However, they tended to agree that the corporate aspect was by far the stronger of the two ('most people think of media companies as being not corporate, but it's more corporate than any other company I'm aware of').

### *Organisational Success*

Success was defined in terms of financially returns ('financially driven, always interested in the bottom line, where the money is coming from'), and more specifically in terms of sales figures ('obviously, the goal is to make sure that we sell as many units as possible' 'very focused on the numbers' 'we notice our numbers but we're nice'). Based on these measures, respondents generally felt that the organisation was doing well ('It's doing very well at the moment' 'it's quite an inspiring place to work , just because they're doing so well').

### *Strategic Outlook*

Film Inc was repeatedly described as 'solid' or 'stable.' Respondents explained that because the company had existed for so long, and because it was so big, it could be expected to survive the economic downturn:

'it feels very solid and even if there was a bad year – especially in the climate that we're in at the moment – you kind of feel like the company will get through.'

As a result, they felt that the outlook for the future was generally positive. However, they also claimed that the organisation tended to move forward at a slow and steady pace, without being highly innovative or ambitious ('It's seeing what happening in the future and planning for the future, but it's not racing ahead,' 'I wouldn't rank it as really competitive,' 'I don't think we're at the forefront of doing anything innovative').

### *Management of the Organisation*

Respondents generally felt that the organisation was well managed and they expressed a positive view of the senior management team ('I think the management team are good' 'It's very well led – it's got very strong management team who are great to work for'). They felt that the parent company had a strong influence on the way in which Film Inc was run, but they generally approved of the structures and processes that had been put in place. For example, one respondent described Film Inc as a 'a well-organized company with a definitive structure' and another respondent described it as follows:

'Well-structured. Everyone knows what they're doing, it's a very well thought through process. Each department gets the best out of what they do and there's a lot of communication.'

The main attribute that respondents felt could be improved was the quality of internal communication ('what could be a little bit better would be the internal communication' 'the departments are very separate').

## Employment

### *Management of Employees*

Film Inc was repeatedly described as 'strict but fair.' On the one hand, respondents felt that they were expected to work extremely hard ('You don't come to Film Inc for an easy life because it's a lot of hard work'), to stay late when it was required ('you



have to work very hard and occasionally long hours... people who just do their 9-5 are not perceived favourably'), and to fall in line with the values and directives of the company ('You've got to be prepared to play the game – not in a bad way, but you've got to buy into the values of the company I guess,' 'you've always got to go through the right channels in order to do things – you can't be a loose cannon'). They described Film Inc as 'very structured/hierarchical' with 'definite levels of chain of command.' As a result, individual employees were more likely to succeed within the company if they were 'willing to accept what people want and then try to execute what they want.'

On the other hand, respondents felt that Film Inc valued its employees and recognized their contribution ('They do care more about their employees more than other companies,' 'Appreciates their staff... From higher up you do get a sense that you are helping, making a difference'). They also felt that managers were always available to answer questions ('All the senior management team have an open door policy... They can just walk in and have a chat') and to back them up if there was a problem ('You get management support and back up and that').

### *Benefits of Employment*

#### Functional and Economic Benefits:

Respondents generally felt that the salaries offered by Film Inc were average or below average for the industry ('Expect to work hard for a very average amount of money,' 'you've got to be prepared to kind of cut your salary in half'). However they argued that the low pay was balanced by particularly good perks and benefits ('the benefits from an employee's point of view are amazing, in terms of healthcare and general perks,' 'compared to other studios, it's not the best moneywise, but you get a lot of other benefits that other studios don't'). The perks that respondents mentioned most frequently were free DVDs ('obviously you get free product of all the big titles') and a

subscription to Lovefilm.com ('simple things like Lovefilm – we get a subscription for free'). Benefits included the company's pension and medical plans ('Benefits on the whole are quite good – pension, medical plans'). In addition, respondents drew attention to the opportunities for personal development and career growth. ('it's a place that generates a lot of opportunities because of its size... there are a lot of different areas that you could move into,' 'encourages individuals to grow,' 'there is definitely career progression if they were to stay here for a long time').

#### Psychological Benefits:

Respondents enjoyed the security that came from being employed by such a large, clearly structured organisation ('It's kind of a stable feeling. The structure of the company is very stable, which is quite reassuring'), and they expressed a sense of pride in being associated with the company's brand name as well as its films. For example, one respondent pointed to a movie poster on the wall and explained:

'Even if I've done something silly like hanging that picture or couriered an original of that to somebody, it does make you feel like you're part of things, versus a person working in a factory packing boxes. You feel like you're making your mark on the world – it doesn't matter how small it is – it is leaving a mark.'

They also felt that working for Film Inc was 'challenging,' 'rewarding,' and 'fun.'

#### Leisure Benefits:

One of the benefits that respondents considered particularly important was the opportunity to work summer hours; during the summer months, everyone was allowed to finish work at 1pm on Friday ('You get summer hours, which are great – finishes at 1 o'clock on Friday in June, July, August'). In fact, this one benefit was considered so important that for some respondents it potentially compensated for the low salaries paid to Film Inc employees ('Money's not that important. Obviously it is –

you've got to pay the bills – but you've got to take into account that sort of thing.')

Respondents pointed out that summer hours were not written in to their contracts. However, since everyone had been allowed to work summer hours for the last three years, they saw this as a reasonably predictable and unique benefit of working for Film Inc:

'It's not in our contract, but we've had summer hours for the last three or four years, and I don't know any other companies that do those sorts of benefits for an employee. So personally I think it's fantastic.'

### *Work Environment*

Film Inc was perceived to offer 'an excellent working environment.' Respondents described it as 'busy and hectic,' 'high powered,' 'ambitious,' and 'very, very corporate.' In fact one respondent argued that,

'The only thing that isn't corporate is that we come to work in our jeans and we don't come to work in a suit. I think that's the only thing that isn't corporate.'

The one aspect of the work environment that respondents did not like was the office itself. They described it as 'grim,' 'horrible,' and 'cramped.' One respondent claimed that,

'for somewhere that's inspiring on so many levels, the actual location... It could be in a nicer location... I think it's a bit drab and officey.'

### *Workforce*

#### Personal Characteristics:

The individuals working for Film Inc. were generally described as 'friendly,' 'straight forward and honest,' and 'really intelligent,' while the workforce as a whole was perceived to be young ('the age range is quite young' 'alot of young people and lot of

young people in senior management positions as well') and culturally diverse ('diverse...truly international' 'in terms of people from all over the world, it's very diverse'). They recognized that the diversity of the workforce brought with it certain challenges, but they felt that it could also be a positive attribute. For example, one respondent explained that she found it 'really exciting...to have different culture perceptions of "what do you think of that film?" and "is that the way we do things?"'

#### Social Dynamics:

The social dynamic among employees was also described in generally positive terms ('everyone's very nice and they do work well together,' 'the team are very welcoming and everyone gets on well together'). Film Inc was described as 'a very social company' with a 'family element to it,' but there was a strong emphasis on working rather than personal relationships. For example, one respondent explained that 'we all have goals and objectives and we work towards those as a team,' and another respondent explained that a person coming to work for Film Inc would 'have to get on with people that they wouldn't necessarily be friends with.'

#### Product/Service

Although Film Inc is a distribution company, the product that respondents focused on was the content that they had available to distribute ('we've got great content, in terms of the films we have available to distribute'). For example they pointed out that the organisation had 'films coming in from all over the world' in 'lots of genres,' and one respondent described the content as 'quite retro'. One respondent did acknowledge that Film Inc was a service provider, rather than a producer of content ('It is a service at the end of the day, a service provided'), but he said nothing about the characteristics or impact of that service.

## Stakeholder Relationships

Film Inc was part of a complex network of relationships. For example, one respondent explained that,

‘The industry that Film Inc is in is very confusing. You hear about a product that we’re going to be marketing and then you hear that another studio is making it and then you hear that we are going to be making it with them and they are our competitors.’

However, the organisation was perceived to have three main stakeholder groups: customers, the studio in the US, and the parent company.

### *Customers*

Respondents made frequent references to the customers, by which they meant the end consumer of the content that Film Inc distributed (‘the average person on the street’). They recognized that the success of the company was ultimately dependent on customer buying behaviour and felt that the organisation had a strong customer focus (‘Film Inc is very customer focused at the moment,’ ‘Marketing/customer focused, rather than internally focused’).

### *The Studio*

‘The studio’ refers to the US-based production house with which film Inc was affiliated. The two organisations operated under the same brand name, and respondents expressed a sense of pride in being associated with such a well-known brand. However, they explained that Film Inc was ‘decoupled’ from the studio, and claimed that the studio tended to focus on looking after its own interests:

‘How we work with the US and UK – we are quite separate. Even though our heritage is in the US, I think the studio itself sees itself very much as a

US Entity. We like to think that it's more global, but they tend to look after themselves.'

### *Parent Company*

Finally, respondents described their company's relationship with the parent company. This relationship was considered very important because the parent company had a strong influence over Film Inc's ethos and style of management ('We're owned by (the parent company), so we're run by (the parent company). Simple as that').

### Reputation

Respondents acknowledged that Film Inc had a 'big brand name' that was 'powerful' and 'well known throughout the world.' More specifically, they claimed that it was 'known as a very good employer' and 'had an appearance of being cool,'

## **5.6.3 Evaluation of Film Inc's Corporate Identity**

### **5.6.3.1 Qualitative Overview**

There were three aspects of Film Inc's identity that respondents considered particularly attractive: the product, the benefits, and the financial stability of the organisation.

Above all, respondents were attracted by the product ('it's all about the product that really appeals to me' 'it's a very energizing environment, mainly due to the product that you're involved with'). This was partly because the product was media-related and the media industry was seen as fun and exciting ('fun - I guess it's because of the industry we're in' 'exciting and exhilarating... very fast moving and exciting industry to work in'). However, respondents also felt that it was important to have a genuine

passion for the product itself ('I think it's important for someone who comes to work here to have that passion for the product'), and those who felt this passion experienced a great sense of personal satisfaction from seeing the results of their work ('the benefit or the joy is when you see the product that you've been working on in the shops and it looks good'). In fact, this aspect of Film Inc's identity was considered highly attractive even by employees who had no direct involvement with the product. For example, one respondent gestured towards a film poster hanging on the wall and explained:

'I'm looking at that picture up there. Even if I've done something silly like hanging that picture or couriered an original of that to somebody, it does make you feel like you're part of things, versus a person working in a factory packing boxes. You feel like you're making your mark on the world – it doesn't matter how small it is – it is leaving a mark, even if you're not going to see your name up in lights in the credits.'

Respondents also drew attention to the highly attractive package of benefits that Film Inc offered its employees ('great organisation to work for in terms of the benefits that you are given' 'Compared to other studios, it's not the best moneywise, but you get a lot of other benefits that other studios don't'). Some of these were serious benefits, such as pension and health plans ('gives staff good benefits – good medical plans and pensions schemes' 'like the pensions, medical plans – on a serious level, things like that are really good'). Others were more like perks ('the benefits from an employee standpoint are amazing, in terms of benefits and general perks'). Examples included free DVDs of major Film Inc releases, free product ordering, and the opportunity to attend film premieres ('great perks, free DVDs and you can see Film Inc films before general release' 'free product ordering and that kind of thing' 'you will get the opportunity to go to film premieres and screenings'). However, by far the most attractive of these perks was the a shorter working week in the summer ('We've had summer hours for the last three or four years' 'Even if they've got to work an extra hour Monday to Thursday, Friday afternoons off is fantastic'). One respondent even

suggested that this kind of benefit could be more important than the level of financial compensation: 'Money's not that important. Obviously it is – you've got to pay the bills – but you've got to take into account that sort of thing.'

Finally, respondents were attracted by the financial stability of the organisation. They felt that Film Inc had been around so long that it was unlikely to succumb to the economic downturn, and this meant that their jobs were reasonably secure:

'It feels solid and even if there was a bad year – especially in the climate that we're in at the moment – you kind of feel like the company will get through.... If you get your head down and do your best, you'll come through with it.'

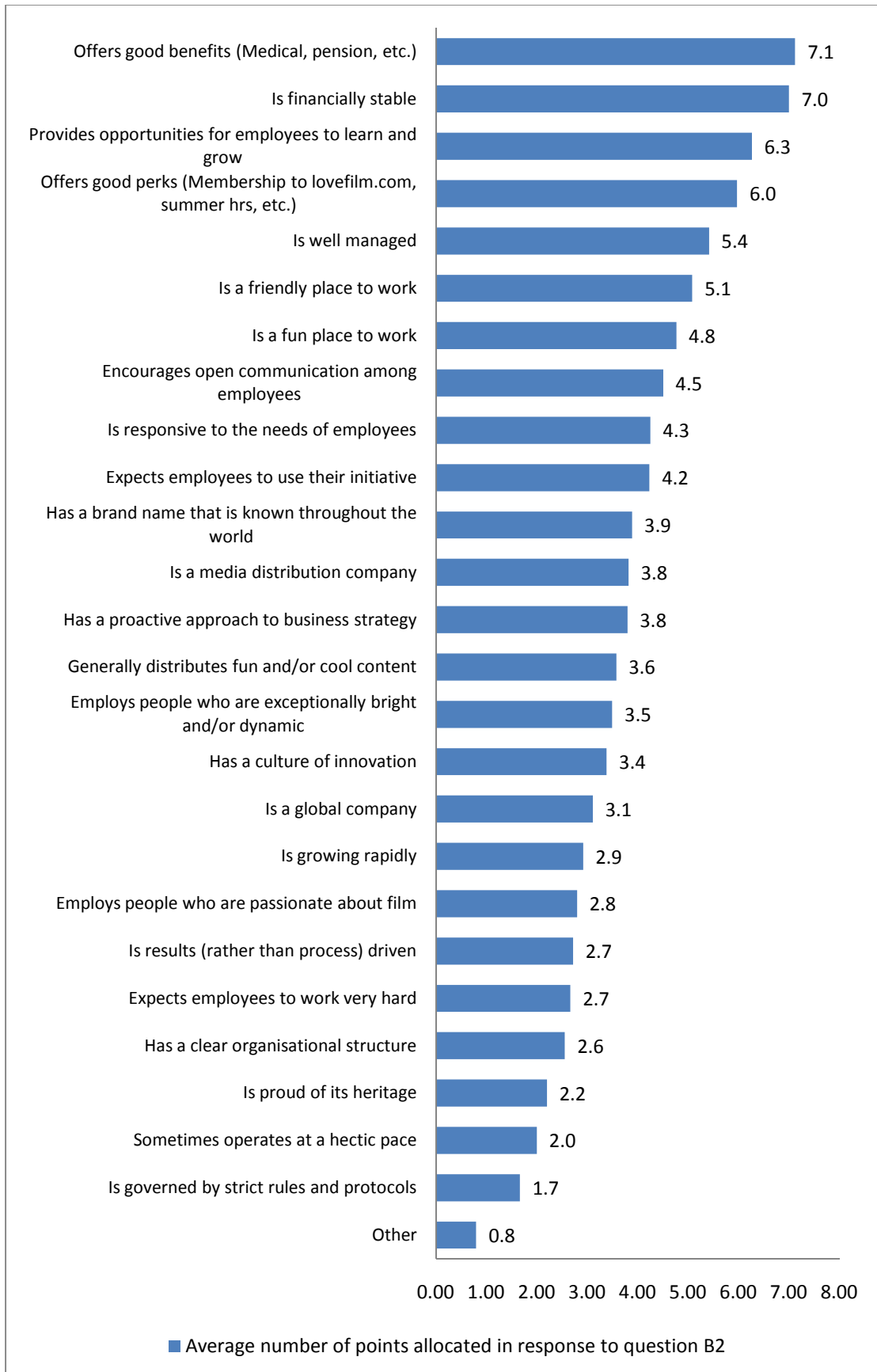
This was seen as a particularly important consideration because the country was in the midst of an economic recession ('Stable – quite an important one for the times we're going through' 'Especially in the current times, if you get a full time job then it's very secure').

On the other hand, one aspect of Film Inc's identity that respondents generally considered unattractive was the office space. As explained by one respondent, 'for somewhere that's inspiring on so many levels, the actual location... It could be in a nicer location...' They described the office as 'grim,' 'drab,' and 'a bit grey,' and one respondent suggested that 'it could be a bit brighter.' Respondents also complained that the lift often broke down ('this is quite an old building and the lift always breaks down') and the building was very poorly air conditioned ('the air conditioner will go on and off in a world of its own – it's either really hot or really cold'). Overall, they felt that Film Inc's office did not compare favourably with those of the other studios ('if you go to any other studio, the offices are really nice. Ours are not'), and they felt that these seemingly small issues were important ('little things like that do make a difference to people').

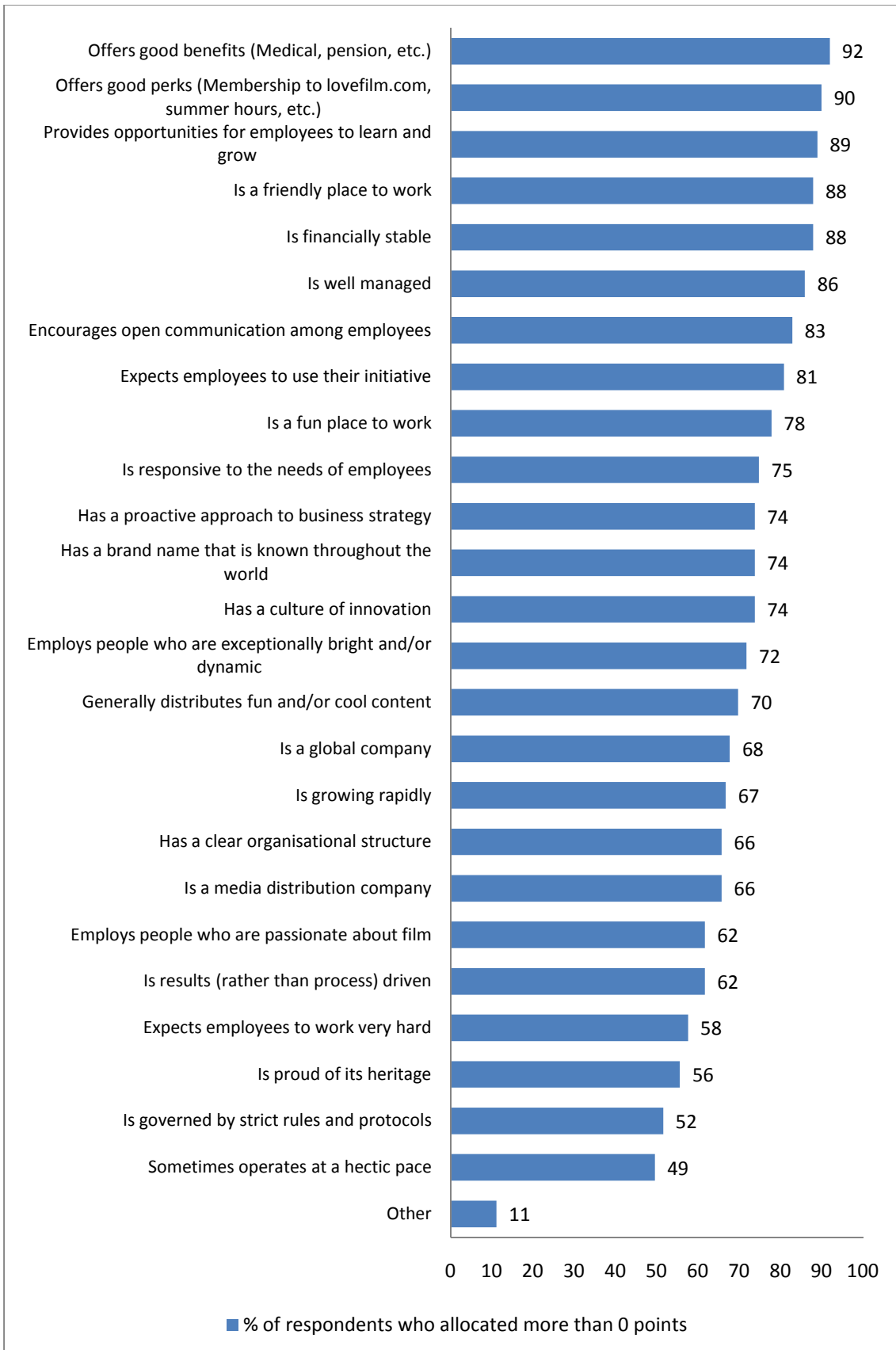


### 5.6.3.2 Quantitative Results

Based on the 99 responses collected in stage 2, the attribute that employees considered most important was 'Offers good benefits (medical, pension, etc.)' (7.1 points), followed by 'Is financially stable' and 'Provides opportunities for employees to learn and grow.' The attribute that they considered least important was 'Is governed by strict rules and protocols' (1.7 points), followed by 'Sometimes operates at a hectic pace' and 'Is proud of its heritage.' The average number of points allocated to the most important attribute was more than four times the number allocated to the least important. However, there was no clear cut off point between the important and unimportant attributes; every one of the twenty five attributes was allocated at least some points, with each one receiving just a little less than the one before. This gradual change is shown in Figure 15.



**Figure 15: Average number of points allocated to each attribute (Film Inc)**



**Figure 16: Percentage respondents who allocated points to each attribute (Film Inc)**

## **5.7 CASE 6: TV INC**

### **5.7.1 Introduction**

#### **5.7.1.1 Description of TV Inc**

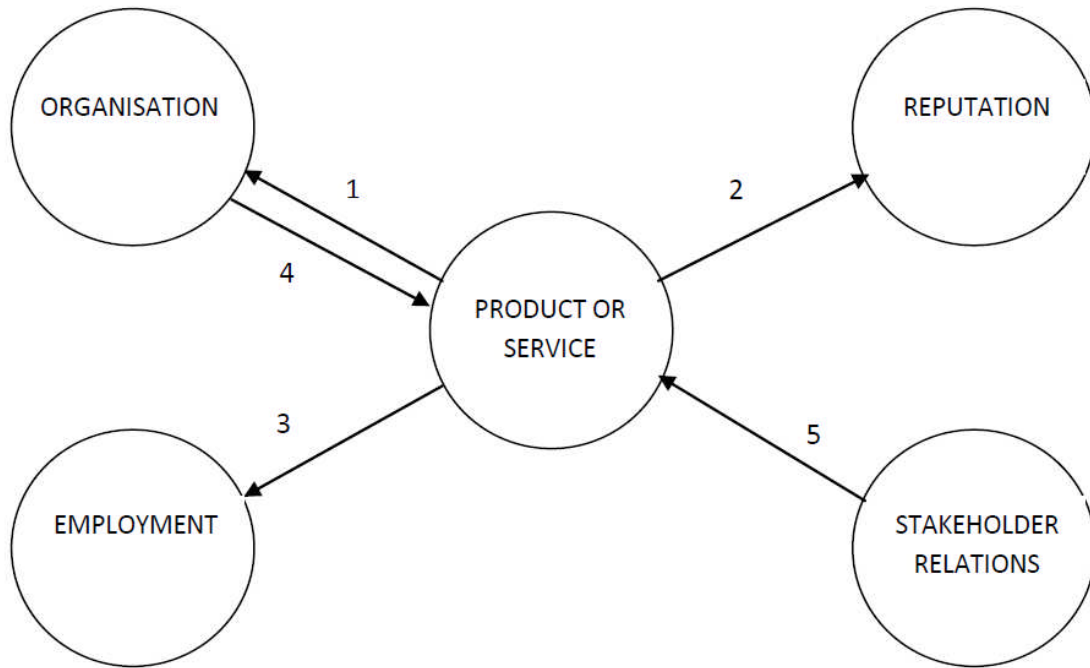
TV Inc is the UK's largest independent television production company. It is based in central London and produces a wide range of television programmes, including documentaries, comedies, dramas, and other genres. Many of their programmes are broadcast around the world. However, the company is best known for one of its highly successful reality television programmes. This particular programme was considered groundbreaking when it was first broadcast, and the format has given rise to prime-time hits in almost 70 countries around the world (Wikipedia). However, many people believe that the programme appeals to the 'lowest common denominator'. The programme is also highly controversial and shortly before this research was conducted, the programme had sparked a highly publicized race row. As a result, the organisation's reputation was (and continues to be) strongly influenced by this one programme; TV Inc is generally considered to be one of the most profitable and the most notorious organisations in the television industry.

#### **5.7.1.2 Statistical Overview of Results**

The number of responses in stage 1 was six. This was far less than the number requested, but the level of consensus across the 6 responses was so high that this was considered sufficient to develop an accurate picture of the organisation's identity. However, the company chose not to participate in stage 2. This was due to the economic downturn, which affected the company badly and required them to layoff a large number of employees; they felt that the layoffs had damaged morale and preferred not to ask employees to fill in a complicated survey. Therefore, the results reported here are based solely on the qualitative data collected in stage 1.

## 5.7.2 Perceptions of TV Inc's Corporate Identity

### 5.7.2.1 Connecting the Five Main Attribute Categories



**Figure 17: Connecting the five main attribute categories (TV Inc)**

The foundation of TV Inc's identity was the programmes that it produced (Product/Service). Respondents clearly explained that these programmes were produced for the sake of making money – not simply for the sake of entertainment. However, they also argued that TV Inc had become successful by producing highly creative and controversial programmes 'that no other company would make.' The willingness and ability to make these programmes was unique to TV Inc, and respondents claimed that the organisation was planning to continue making these sorts of programmes in the future. Therefore, the most influential dimension of TV Inc's identity was not its desire to make money, but the distinctive characteristics of the programmes that enabled it to do so.

### Influence of TV Inc's Programming Output

Respondents explicitly connected TV Inc's programming output to three of the four remaining attribute categories: Organisation, Reputation, and Employment. First, respondents made a direct connection between the success of TV Inc's programmes and the success of the organisation as a whole (link 1). For example, one respondent explained that TV Inc 'creates loads of successful TV shows and looks set to have a great future.' Others did not make even an explicit distinction between them. For example, another respondent simply stated that 'TV Inc is Entertainment, with a track record in global hits.' Second, respondents acknowledged that the character of the programmes produced by TV Inc had influenced the Reputation of the organisation as a whole (link 2). For example, respondents felt that the organisation was often 'criticized for producing lowest common denominator programming'. Finally, respondents felt that the programmes being produced at TV Inc made it a fun place to work ('fun – because of its programming output') (Link 3).

### Attribute Categories that Influenced TV Inc's Programming Output

Respondents mentioned two categories of attribute that could or did influence the organisation's programming output: Organisation and Stakeholder Relations.

#### *Link 4*

Because TV Inc had an unequivocally commercial outlook, respondents felt that it was driven to make programmes that would yield a profit for the organisation ('a business – does not make TV for entertainment sake but for money'). This commercial outlook, combined with the organisation's high tolerance for risk, was inextricably linked to the bold and controversial nature of its programmes; these sorts of programmes had the potential to yield substantial profits ('big ideas, big exposure, big money'), and TV Inc was willing to accept the associated risk. As explained by one respondent, TV Inc was

‘prepared to take risks, learn from its mistakes,’ and this is why it was able to ‘make programmes that no other company would make.’ However, because the organisation had such a strong commercial outlook, it inevitably prioritized profits over quality. This meant that some of the programmes that TV Inc produced were of a particularly poor quality (‘programmes are made solely because they make money and some of them are very low quality’).

#### *Link 5*

Although there was no suggestion that TV Inc actively tried to accommodate the wishes of any particular stakeholder group, respondents acknowledged that certain groups did have the power to influence its production decisions. For example, one respondent explained that TV Inc France had recently been sued by ‘reality contestants who claimed that what they did amounted to work and that they should be paid a wage.’ He went on to explain that this was ‘potential disastrous’ for TV Inc because a ruling in the contestants’ favour would mean that the organisation had to pay out vast sums of money to past contestants, and reality televisions would become ‘incredibly expensive’ to make. Similarly, another respondent described a recent spate of complaints regarding the use of premium rate phone lines as a means for viewers to call in and participate in television programmes; she explained that these complaints had ‘had an impact on TV Inc’s ability to include premium rate lines in its programmes.’ More generally, respondents acknowledged that the interests of external stakeholders could not be ignored, and they described TV Inc as ‘a brand that consumers, employees, and broadcasters have to buy into.’

### **5.7.2.2 Describing the Five Main Attribute Categories**

#### **Organisation**

##### Demographics

Respondents described TV Inc as a big organisation, in terms of employment figures ('big – we employ over 1000 people') and number of programmes produced ('big – because it is a large employer in the TV industry and because it makes lots of programmes'). They also claimed that the organisation was well-established ('established; we've been doing what we do a relatively long time for the industry') and pointed out that it had offices around the world ('global, with a presence on every continent').

##### Organisational Ethos

The ethos of the organisation was described as 'entrepreneurial' and 'youthful in terms of ideas, fresh thinking.' More specifically, respondents felt that the organisation had an overtly commercial outlook ('very commercial in its outlook') combined with a tendency toward bold and often controversial ideas ('values controversial, off-the wall ideas'). Therefore, one respondent argued that the most accurate motto for the organisation would be 'big ideas, big exposure, big money.'

##### Organisational Success

Respondents felt that TV Inc defined success in terms of profits ('it does not make TV for entertainment sake but for money'). They recognized that profits were largely dependent on the popularity of its programmes, and they claimed that the company had 'a track record of global hits.' As a result, respondents felt that TV Inc was



‘successful and strong,’ and that it would continue to be so in the future (‘looks set to have a great future’).

### Strategic Outlook

Respondents described TV Inc as ‘ambitious’ and ‘financially astute,’ and they felt that the organisation would continue to be successful in the future (‘the future with the company looks bright’).

### Management of the Organisation

TV Inc was the only organisation in which respondents did not explicitly mention management or leadership. However, they expressed clear views as to how the organisation functioned; they felt that it was ‘disconnected,’ with ‘not enough communication between certain departments,’ and ‘very unbureaucratic.’ For example one respondent explained that ‘due to the creative environment at TV Inc, rules, procedures, and necessary form filling-in is sometimes ignored’

## **Employment**

### Management of Employees

#### *Expectations of Employees*

TV Inc was perceived to be a ‘demanding’ place to work. Employees were expected to work hard (‘it is hard work as there is lots to do’ ‘very hard work, long hours’), perform to a high standard (‘they do not suffer fools and will expect you to work hard and communicate’), and use their own initiative (‘alot is expected of you and you’ll simply have to get on with it’). Respondents claimed that the organisation was ‘prepared to nurture new people and ideas,’ but it made no allowance for weakness or

underperformance. For example, one respondents claimed that if a friend of his was considering a job offer from TV Inc, he would tell them that 'there's no place for weakness and that pastoral care is almost non-existent. That they'll use them and bleed them dry'.

### *Criteria for Career progression*

Respondents claimed that it was possible for employees to progress within the company ('If you work hard and commit yourself to your job you can be successful'). However they disagreed about how this could be accomplished. For example one respondent felt that progression was based on merit ('it's a meritocracy') while another emphasized the importance of networking and self interest ('In order to get ahead, you need to be the kind of person who can talk the hind legs off a donkey and can drink most people under the table. Ruthlessness and ambition are a must too').

### Benefits of Employment

Respondents claimed that TV Inc rewarded its employees well, in terms of pay, training opportunities, and other benefits ('alot of money is invested in employees both with remuneration and with extra things such as parties'. They also felt that working for TV Inc was 'interesting,' 'fun,' and 'exciting,' and that the credibility gained from having worked for TV Inc would enhance their future career prospects ('it's potentially a great spring board to get work elsewhere. Looks good on the CV').

### Work Environment

Respondents claimed that TV Inc offered a 'great working environment' that was 'fun, relaxed, creative' and 'filled with laughter.' Some also described it as 'busy' and 'exciting.' One respondent explained that 'the atmosphere appears to be laid back, but there is an undertone of stress and anxiety.'

## Workforce

Respondents described their colleagues as 'clever and eloquent', highly committed ('most employees work hard and do whatever is needed to complete'), creative ('has lots of creative people working for us'), and 'not afraid to speak out.' They also claimed that people working at TV Inc were generally 'really friendly,' though they acknowledged that sometimes there was 'bitchiness around the organisation.' Finally, respondents felt that TV Inc employed some of 'the best creative talent and senior commercial people in the business.' However, because the organisation was generally 'inflexible for parents,' almost all senior positions were held by 'men or women without children or families.'

## **Product/Service**

TV Inc's programming output was generally perceived to be exceptionally creative ('ground-breaking creativity, delivered') controversial ('our formats do court media controversy') and commercially successful ('successful commercial creations'). Respondents also pointed out that the organisation's programming output was 'eclectic, with hits in every genre.' However, they recognized that TV Inc's emphasis on profitability had led to the production of some poor quality programmes ('I think programmes are made solely because they make money and some of them are very low quality').

## **Reputation**

Respondents described TV Inc's reputation from two perspectives: the perspective of the general public and the perspective of other organisations in the media industry. They felt that the views of the general public tended to be negative ('criticized for producing lowest common denominator programming' 'not liked in the UK, because

success breeds contempt') and poorly informed ('people only think we make one programme'). However, they felt that the organisation was respected and envied by other organisations in the media industry ('envied by its rivals' 'the industry respects the work we do and the people who work here').

### **Stakeholder Relations**

Respondents felt that the TV Inc was keenly aware of how it was seen by various groups ('Is self-aware of how other people view the brand, positively and negatively' 'a brand that consumers, employees, and broadcasters have to buy into'), and of how these groups could influence the organisation's success. For example, when asked to describe an event that would be troubling to the organisation, one respondent described the potential impact of being required to pay a wage to reality contestants. He explained that TV Inc was 'recently sued by some reality contestants who claimed that what they did (appeared in a reality TV show) amounted to work and that they should be paid a wage.' He then went on to say that 'this is potentially disastrous for TV Inc as it would mean they owed millions of Euros to all past contestants and that reality shows would now become incredibly expensive to make.'

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have described the results of six individual case studies. Together, these six cases provide the basis for the comparative case study research design described in Chapter 4. This multiple case study approach was considered appropriate because it was expected to enhance the external validity of the results; while the results of a single case study can provide interesting insights with regard to one organisation, the results of these six strategically chosen cases were expected to provide insights that could be applied to a much wider set of organisations outside the specific context of the study. Therefore, an important aspect of this study was the comparison across cases. The individual case write-ups have been structured to facilitate this comparison, and the results of the comparison are discussed in the following chapter.

## 6. CROSS CASE COMPARISON

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

As expected, the answer to the research question was different in each case; when attractiveness was conceptualized in terms of the value and importance, it became clear that what made each organisation's corporate identity attractive to its employees was at least partly dependent on what those employees perceived to be distinctive about their organisation. However, there were some clear commonalities in the ways that employees described their organisation's identity and in the factors that influenced the perceived attractiveness of that identity. These commonalities are striking, in part, because they were replicated across all six cases. They are also striking because they directly undermine some of the fundamental assumptions on which this study was based. As a result, the results of this study provide new and potentially important insights regarding the way in which employees perceive and evaluate their organisation's corporate identity.

The purpose of this chapter is to address the research question by comparing the results of the six case studies. In order to clearly address all three parts of the research question that were discussed earlier in this thesis, this chapter is divided into three parts.

**Section 1** addresses the first part of the research question:

'What are the dimensions and sub-dimensions of Corporate Identity, when seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory?'

In this section, I compare respondents' perceptions of each organisation's identity. I conclude that corporate identity is comprised of five theoretical dimensions, which may be further divided into twelve sub-dimensions. However, I go on to argue that corporate identity is more than the sum of its parts; while identifying the dimensions

provides valuable insights into the nature of the construct, a more complete framework must account for the complex web of perceived connections among the constituent attributes and dimensions. I then identify three criteria that can be used to describe and map the individual connections, and I discuss the patterns that emerged in each of the six cases.

**Section 2** addresses the second part of the research question:

‘What are the dimensions and sub-dimensions that make an organisation’s Corporate Identity attractive to its employees?’

This section is divided into two parts:

In the first part of section 2, I review the quantitative data that was collected in five of the six cases (TV Inc is not discussed because stage 2 was not conducted in that case). However, based on my analysis of the qualitative data, I argue that the implications of the quantitative data are not as clear as expected; because some attributes were construed as both attractive and unattractive – by different respondents from the same organisation or even by the same employee – I argue that it is impossible to definitively categorize attributes as ‘attractive’ or ‘unattractive,’ even within a particular organisation. This argument contradicts one of the fundamental assumptions underpinning the second stage of the research, and limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the quantitative data.

In the second part of section 2, I argue that the assignment of value is a complex process that can be influenced by three factors: the value that is *perceived* to be inherent in the attribute, the context of evaluation, and the traits of the individual employee.

**Section 3** addresses the third part of the research question:

‘What makes an organisation’s Corporate Identity distinctive or unique?’

In this section, I argue that the distinctiveness of corporate identity does not lie solely in a discrete set of attributes, as suggested by Social Identity Theory, but also in the gestalt perspective that emerges from the combination of attributes and connections.

## **6.2 CONCEPTUALIZING CORPORATE IDENTITY**

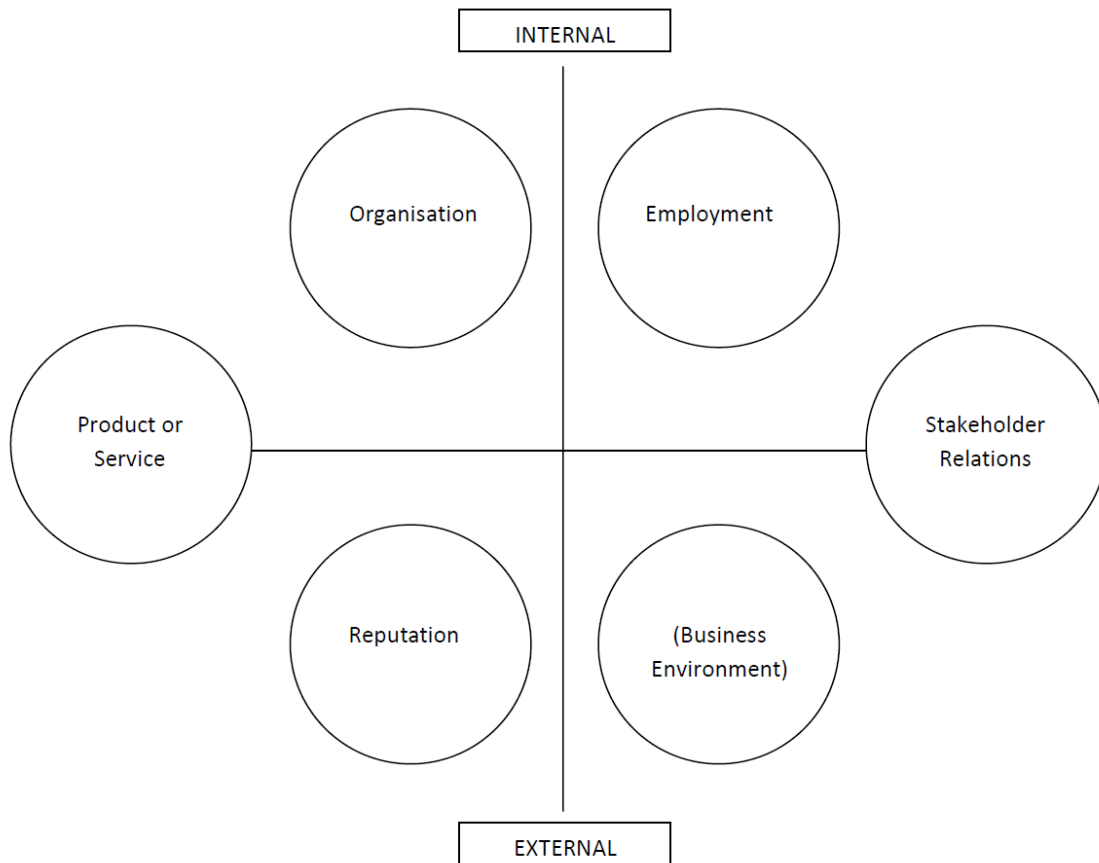
### **6.2.1 Scope of the Construct**

Although the specific attributes that employees used to describe their organisation's identity are different in each case, the *categories* of attribute are almost identical; the five main categories of attribute identified in each case are Organisation, Employment, Product/Service, Reputation, and Stakeholder Relations (See Figure ). 'Organisation' includes attributes of the organisation as a whole, such as age, structure, and quality of management. 'Employment' includes attributes that are specifically related to employment, such as the type of work environment, social dynamics of the workforce, and the organisation's style of managing employees. 'Product/Service' includes attributes of the organisation's product or service, as well as the impact of that product or service on people's lives or on society at large. 'Stakeholder Relations' includes attributes of the organisation's relationships with specific groups or institutions, such as customers, regulators, or the media. 'Reputation' refers to outsiders' perceptions of the organisation. (In three of the six cases – Sports Inc, TV Inc, and Film Inc - respondents also mentioned the business environment. However, the business environment may be seen as the context for identity, rather than part of the construct itself.)

The first two categories, Organisation and Employment, have an internal focus that is consistent with previous conceptualizations of corporate identity; most of the attributes in these two categories are specifically related to the organisation itself. However, the other three dimensions - Reputation, Product/Service, and Stakeholder Relations - all refer to employees' perceptions of phenomena that are least partly



external. Since corporate identity has been defined in this thesis as that which is most central, enduring, and distinctive *about the organisation*' (Albert and Whetten, 1985 – emphasis added), it could be argued that these external phenomena are closely related to, but separate from, the identity of the organisation.



**Figure 16: Categories of attribute that employees use to describe their organisation's identity**

My rationale for treating these five attribute categories as part of the corporate identity construct is that the attributes that constitute identity at the organisational level are determined by the organisation, the theoretical perspective and the purpose of inquiry (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Since the purpose of inquiry in stage 1 was to elicit the attributes that employees associate with their organisation, thereby describing the organisation's identity through the lens of Social Identity Theory, there is no theoretical basis for excluding whole categories of attribute that were mentioned by employees. Moreover, the responses given in stage 1 suggest that employees perceive the five dimensions to be inextricable linked and interdependent. This means that

separating the dimensions would inevitably corrupt the viewpoint of the respondents; in order to conceptualize corporate through the lens of Social Identity Theory, it is necessary to consider the categories of attribute that employees used to describe their organisation's identity *and* the connections among them.

## **6.2.2 Dimensions and Sub-Dimensions of Corporate Identity**

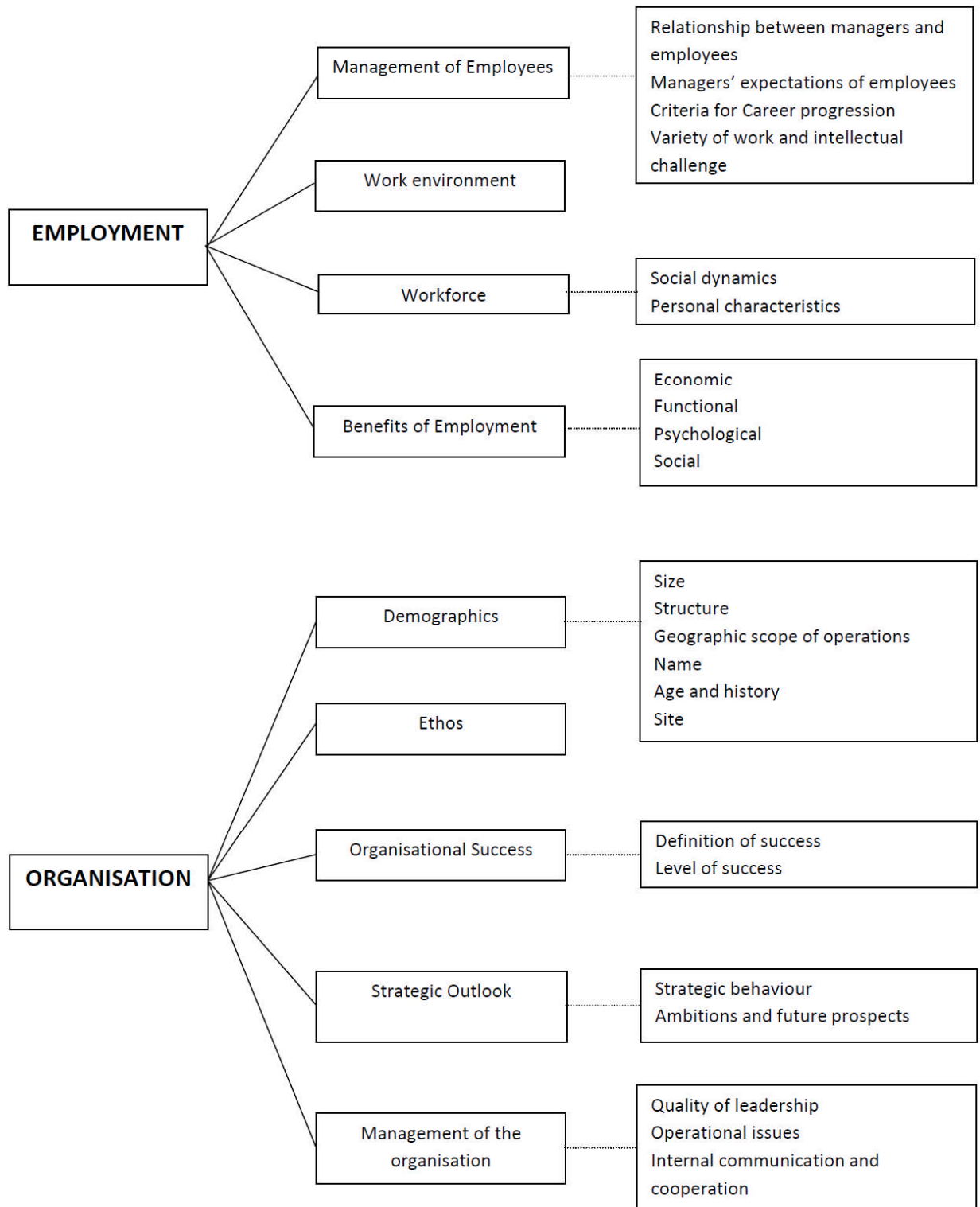
The five categories of attribute described above could be further divided into the twelve sub-categories shown in Figure 18, each of which was also observed in all six cases. This finding is significant because it suggests that the categories and sub-categories of attribute that employees use to describe their organisation are consistent across organisations. In other words, these categories and sub-categories represent the theoretical dimensions and sub-dimensions of Corporate Identity, when seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory.

### **6.2.2.1 Organisation**

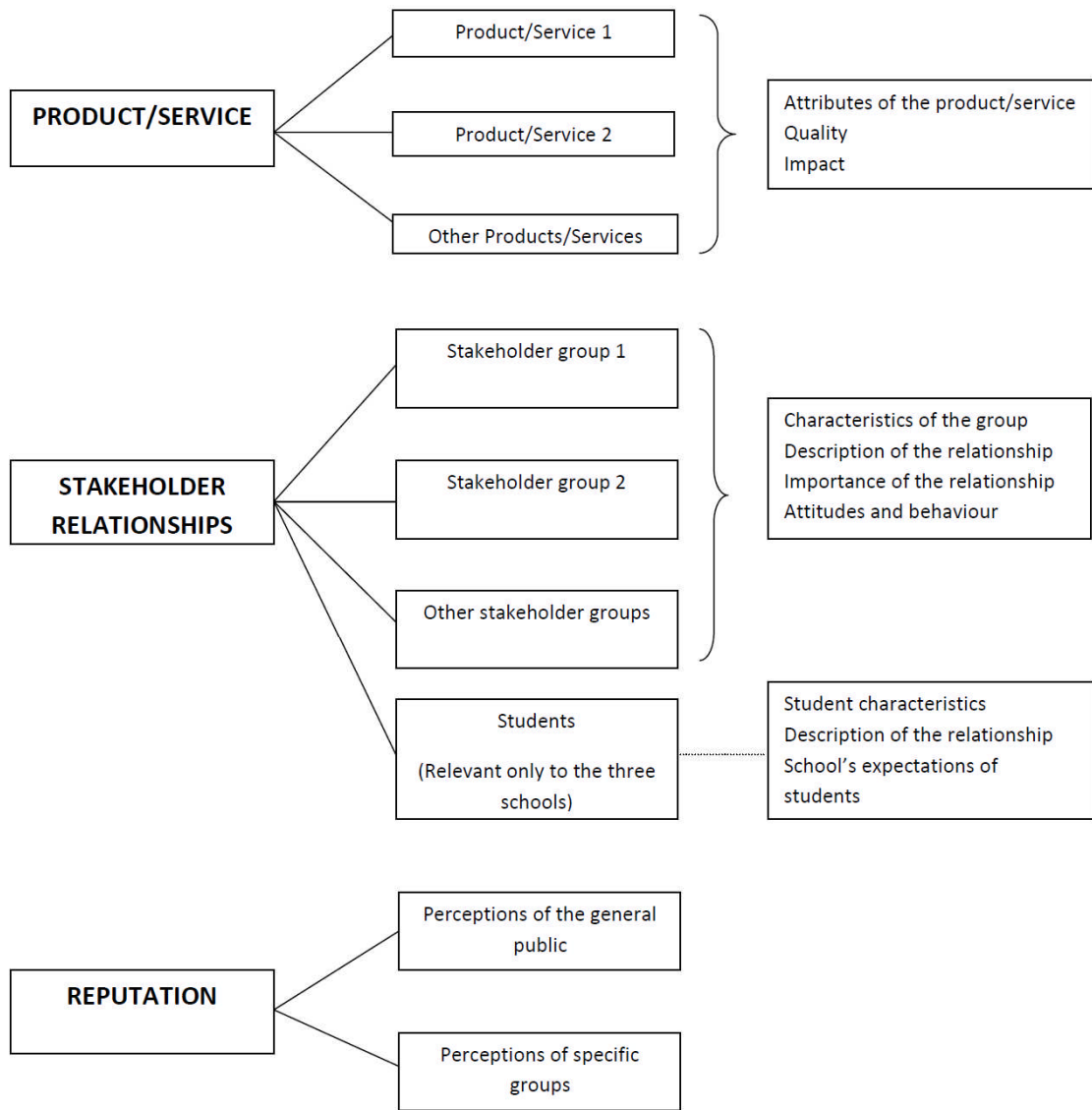
This category includes any attribute that is directly related to the organisation as a whole. It has an internal focus that is consistent with previous conceptualisations of Corporate Identity, and is made of up of four sub-categories: Demographics, Ethos, Strategy, and Management of the Organisation.

#### *Demographics*

This category includes the size, structure, age, name and geographic scope of the organisation, as well as the location and characteristics of the main site. Size, age and site were mentioned in every one of the six cases while the other types of attribute were mentioned less frequently. However, they all correspond closely to the types of attributes that have been associated with Corporate Identity. For example, Mukherjee and He (2008) argue that identity is comprised of core values and demographics, and



**Figure 18: Dimensions and sub-dimensions of Corporate Identity**



**Figure 18: Dimensions and Sub-Dimensions of Corporate Identity (Continued)**

they claim that demographics include size, structure, age, and location, as well as country of origin, business, and competitive position. (The results of this study confirm that business and competitive position are important issues, and they are discussed in relation to 'Product/Service' and 'Success,' respectively. Country of origin was not found to be important in the context of this study.)

### *Organisational Ethos*

Ethos refers to the intangible attributes that shape everyday behaviour. This sub-category is similar to culture, which has typically been closely associated with corporate identity as well as other corporate level marketing constructs. For example, Balmer and Greyser (2002) describe culture as 'a major element of an organisation's actual corporate identity, Kapferer (1997) cites culture as one of the six facets of the identity 'prism,' and Hatch and Schultz (2003) argue that 'a blending of corporate and cultural values with marketing practices is the hallmark of corporate branding.' However, Ethos differs from culture in two important ways.

First, culture is typically associated with organisational values (Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Kapferer, 1997; Schein, 1992) while ethos was typically described in terms of the general feel ('Traditional; has quite an old-fashioned feel' 'conservative') or typical behaviours of the organisation ('we are always pushing the barriers and taking risks' 'it is quite dynamic in some areas but also quite bureaucratic on other areas'). Values were often implicit in the way that respondents described the Ethos of the organisation ('ethical' 'is very commercial in its outlook'). However, the words 'culture' and 'values' were almost never used.

Second, culture is typically seen as a defining or pervasive aspect of an organisation, but ethos was accorded far less importance. In fact, ethos was mentioned by no more than three respondents in any one of the six cases.

### *Strategic Outlook*

In all six cases, respondents mentioned their organisation's ambitions or prospects for the future. For example, Film Inc was described as 'cautiously going places,' and a respondent at TV Inc claimed that his organisation looked 'set to have a great future.' Some respondents also described their organisation's typical behaviour or attitude in a strategic context. For example, the School of Engineering Inc was described as 'entrepreneurial,' while the School of Science and Technology was described as 'always on the lookout for business opportunities' and Sports Inc was described as 'agile; it does things quickly when it wants to.' However, the notion of a managerial 'vision' was almost completely overlooked.

Rather than attributing the organisation's strategic behaviour to decisions made by senior managers, respondents tended to focus on the link between strategy and organisational capabilities. For example, respondents from TV Inc emphasized their organisation's ability to develop and produce television programmes that were creative ('ground-breaking creativity, delivered'), controversial ('our formats do court controversy'), and extraordinarily successful ('a track record in global hits'). They felt that TV Inc was able to make these programmes because it employed 'the best creative talent and senior operational people in the business,' and because it was willing to take risks that others would not take ('we are always pushing barriers and taking risks'). As a result, TV Inc was able to make programmes that 'no one else could make.' It was this unique capability that had allowed the organisation to become extraordinarily successful, and respondents felt that it would continue to build on this capability in the future ('it made its name doing this and wants to stay at the forefront of the industry for this').

In fact, there were only two cases in which respondents mentioned strategic planning, and in both cases respondents felt that it was essentially absent. In the School of Management, one respondent stated that 'we develop our brand slowly, as a

consequence of good work rather than with a well resourced strategic plan,' and another stated, 'It is difficult to see a strategic plan or common goal either at departmental or higher level.' At Film Inc, respondents expressed two different views: one complained that 'Film Inc doesn't seem to have a fully worked out long term content strategy,' while another described the organisation as 'quite strategic – very clear in terms of what we're trying to achieve.'

While this lack of emphasis on the role of senior managers is entirely consistent with the group mentality implied by Social Identity Theory, it represents a significant departure from the manager-centric view espoused in the marketing literature. For example, Mukherjee and He (2008) argue that 'senior managers, according to strategic choice theory (Child, 1997), have the circumscribed liberty to formulate a strategy to fulfil certain strategic objectives.'

Of course it would be naive to conclude that managers are not or should not be the drivers of organisational strategy; the managerial bias found in the marketing literature indubitably reflects the way in which organisations actually function. However, these findings are consistent with Hulberg's (2006) supposition that managers and employees do not always 'perceive the world within the same or an equivalent frame of reference,' and they suggest that understanding how employees view the world is likely to be a critical step in the alignment of their behaviour with the identity of the organisation.

### *Organisational Success*

Previous conceptualisations of corporate identity have incorporated 'strategy,' with a strong emphasis on the role of senior management, but they have not identified 'success' as a separate issue. The most likely explanation is that success is seen as a function of the strategy devised by managers; the strategic objectives set by managers determine the relevant measures of success, and organisation's success in achieving

those objectives is primarily dependent on managerial skill and insight. However, the results of this study suggest that this manager-centric viewpoint is not always shared by employees.

#### Defining Success:

The definition of success espoused by respondents was different in each case. Respondents from TV Inc focused on the popularity and profitability of their programmes; respondents from Sports Inc focused on the organisation's ability to deliver on brand values; respondents from Film Inc focused on sales figures; respondents from the School of Management focused on the quality of their research and its relevance to management practice; respondents from the School of Engineering focused on their ability to solve real world problems facing the Engineering and Aerospace industry; respondents from the School of Science and Technology focused on the quality of their teaching and their ability to remain at the cutting edge of research in their field.

These differences may be readily explained in the context of Social Identity Theory because employees' collective definition of success provides an implicit indication of the criteria that they use when comparing their own organisation with others; since employees are motivated to frame this comparison in such a way that their own organisation will be construed as positively distinct, Social Identity Theory suggests that they will define success in a way that reflects the distinctive strengths of their own organisation. However, this argument implies that all employees, rather than just managers, may play a role in defining success for their organisation, and it is supported by the results from the School of Science and Technology.

As explained in the case write-up, respondents from the School of Science and Technology felt that managers were primarily focused on meeting the demands of the Government. This focus was a symptom of the need the School's financial dependence



on the Government; respondents explained that the Government provided most of the School's revenue, and that losing this contract could jeopardize the School's very existence in its current form. However, respondents resented managers' willingness to pander to the Government's demands. They took pride in the School's educational status and standards, and felt that managers were allowing the Government to undermine those standards by emphasizing 'training' over 'education.'

This conflict is a symptom of the School's hybrid identity. Managers' definition of success is rooted in the financial needs of the organisation, reflecting the School's utilitarian identity. Respondents' definition of success is rooted in the ideology of academia, reflecting the School's normative identity. Therefore, these two definitions of success are both contradictory and mutually dependent; financial resources allow the School to pursue its academic objectives, and academic achievements allow the School to bring in revenue. This does not directly contradict the argument that appropriate measures of success are dependent on the strategic objectives proscribed by managers. However, it does imply that the success of an organisation cannot always be fully measured from just one perspective; in order to fully measure success, it may be important to understand how success is defined by managers *and* employees.

#### *Management of the Organisation*

Management of the Organisation includes any attribute that is related to leadership, operational issues, or general management, as well as those related to internal communications and co-operation within the organisation. However, it does not include attributes that refer specifically to the management of personnel because these are included under 'Management of Employees.'

### 6.2.2.2 Employment

Employment includes any attribute that is specifically related to employment or employees. Because these issues have generally been associated with Human Resources Management and Organisational Behaviour, they have received little attention in the literature on corporate identity. However, most of the attribute sub-categories identified in this study have some precedent in the literature on Employer Branding. Since Corporate Identity is assumed to be conceptually identical to the internal component of an organisation's employer brand, the results may be discussed in this context.

#### *Management of employees*

Management of employees is made up of four sub-categories: the relationship between management and other employees, managers' expectations of employees, variety of work and level of challenge, and criteria for career progression. Together, these four sub-categories correspond to what Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) call 'the organisational human capital philosophy;' they describe how managers in a particular organisation seek to align the behaviour and objectives of their employees with the goals of the organisation.

#### *Benefits of Employment*

The other part of the organisation's 'human capital philosophy' (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) relates to the benefits of employment in that particular organisation, and these fall into four categories: economic, functional, psychological, and leisure. The first three categories – economic, functional, and psychological – are consistent with those described by Ambler and Barrow (1997) in their work on Employer Branding. However, the fourth category – leisure – has not previously been recognized in the Employer Branding literature.

Economic benefits include anything of economic value that is received by employees in exchange for their work, such as pay, pension, and health insurance. More specific examples identified in this study include competitive salaries (Sports Inc), a subscription to lovefilm.com (Film Inc), and access to sports facilities (the School of Science and Technology).

Functional benefits include policies, experiences, or opportunities that have no inherent economic value but offer some practical value for the individual employee. The functional benefits identified in this study generally fell into one of two categories: opportunities to improve the individual's skill level or future career prospects, and policies that allowed employees to more effectively manage their work-life balance.

Psychological benefits include any positive mental state or experience that is associated with employment. However, this type of benefit differs from the other two in that it tends to be associated with some other aspect of employment. For example, the results of this study suggest that 'fun' is generally associated with the work environment, 'rewarding' is associated with the work, and 'a sense of belonging' is associated with the social dynamics of the workforce.

Social benefits include any attributes that are related to social or leisure activities. For example, a respondent from the School of Science and Technology explained that 'there are various sporting clubs/activities for anyone to join, but little social life for (non-government) personnel.' Similarly, a respondent from the School of Management complained that 'unfortunately, beside the Christmas party there aren't many occasions to meet the colleagues... There is nothing related to leisure time in Cranfield!' This category of benefit has not previously been recognized in the literature on employer branding, but references to this type of benefit were observed in every one of the six cases.

### *Workforce*

Workforce includes any attribute that describes or relates to the group of people working within the organisation, and it can be further divided into two more specific sub-categories: 'Personal Characteristics' and 'Social Dynamics'. Personal characteristics refer to the typical characteristics of people working within the organisation, such as age, experience, personality, and country of origin. Social dynamics refer to the way in which employees relate to and interact with one another.

### *Work Environment*

Work environment includes any attribute of the space in which employees work, such as the noise level, pace, level of intellectual stimulation, general atmosphere, or physical characteristics.

#### 6.2.2.3 Product/Service

This category includes any attribute that is directly related to the organisation's product or service, and it can be divided into two sub-categories: attributes and impact. Attributes in the first category describe the actual or desired characteristics of the product or service, as well as the brand and associated brand values. Attributes in the second category describe the wider social impact of the product or service.

#### 6.2.2.4 Stakeholder Relations

While most conceptualizations of Corporate Identity have an internal focus, there are precedents for considering stakeholder relations to be part of the corporate identity construct. For example, Kapferer (1997) describes 'relationships' as one of the six facets of the identity prism while Mukherjee and He (2008) argue that 'identity is critical for marketing because it defines the company and locates a company within

the broader nexus of customers, employees, and other stakeholders.’ Balmer (2006) does not treat stakeholder relations as an element of corporate identity, but he argues that ‘constituencies’ is one of the ‘6 Cs of corporate marketing;’ he describes constituencies as ‘whom we seek to serve,’ and he argues that the question that managers need to address is ‘Which stakeholders are of critical importance to the organisation and why?’

The responses given in stage 1 indicate that this question can provide important insights regarding the identity of an organisation. For example, respondents from The School of Science and Technology recognized that their School was largely defined by its relationship with the Government; as explained in the case write up, this relationship was perceived to have a direct impact on three of the four remaining attribute categories. Similarly, respondents from the School of Management felt that the school’s relationship with industry had a significant impact on the organisation as a whole, and they considered this relationship to be one of the ten most important attributes of its identity.

#### 6.2.2.5 Reputation

‘Reputation’ refers to outsiders’ perceptions of the organisation. However, like the other categories of attribute described here, reputation was studied from the perspective of employees. Therefore ‘reputation,’ as described here, is identical to what Dutton et al (1994) call ‘construed external image.’<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> I chose to use the term ‘Reputation,’ rather than ‘Construed External Image,’ in order to maintain consistency across all five categories. Since identity has been conceptualized as a cognitive construct, all the attributes are, in fact, construed. However, it would be unnecessarily complicated to describe every category as ‘construed’ and it would be confusing to apply this label selectively. In addition, I considered the term ‘reputation’ to be clearer than the term ‘image’ because the latter term has been used in relation to many different audiences. However, ‘reputation’ is always associated with organisational outsiders.

This distinction between actual and perceived reality is generally given little attention in the context of Social Identity Theory because organisational identity, as a cognitive construct, is assumed to be closely aligned with the actual attributes of the group (Turner, 1987). However, this assumption is based on the more fundamental premise that the actual attributes of the group can be 'readily observed' by employees (Turner, 1987). This assumption seems to be valid with respect to most of the attributes in the remaining four categories – Organisation, Employment, Product/Service, and Stakeholder Relations. However, it clearly does not apply to 'Reputation.'

Since Reputation is a cognitive construct that exists only in the minds organisational outsiders, the attributes of an organisation's reputation cannot be 'readily observed' by employees. This means employees' perceptions of their organisation's reputation may not provide a perfect mirror of its actual reputation. In fact research has shown that there can be significant differences between the two types of image (Knox and Freeman, 2005). This means that a company's construed reputation represents a 'potentially dangerous platform upon which to engage with different corporations and cultures' (Balmer, 2008); while the perceptions of employees provide valuable insights into the identity of their organisation, care must be taken when relying on their perceptions to assess the perceptions of those outside the organisation.

### **6.2.3 The Pattern of Connections**

Although respondents were not asked to explain how different attributes or attribute categories related to one another, they repeatedly did so. In fact the emphasis on connections was a persistent feature of the responses given in every one of the six cases. This suggests that employees perceive the pattern of connections to be an integral part of their organisation's identity, and that mapping these connections represents a critical step in conceptualizing the construct.

The notion that corporate identity is comprised of interconnected attributes is not new. For example, Melewar et al (2005) argue that 'corporate identity is constructed from the cohesively interconnected physical, operational and human elements of an organisation,' and corporate identity is described by Moingeon and Ramanantsoa (1997) as 'a system of characteristics which has a pattern which gives the company its specificity, its stability, its coherence.' However, there has previously been little emphasis on describing or mapping these connections, or on identifying the criteria that may be used to do so.

#### 6.2.3.1 Characteristics of each Connection

The results of the study suggest that each connection can be described in terms of three characteristics: importance, direction of influence (where relevant), and content.

##### *Importance*

Importance refers to the perceived importance of the connection between two attributes, rather than the importance of the attributes themselves. However, the results suggest that there is often a direct relationship between the importance that employees assign to one or both connected attributes and the importance that they assign to the connection itself. For example, respondents from Sports were committed to delivering the best possible Event. As a result, they assigned considerable importance to the perceived misalignment between the 'corporate-ness' of their organisation and the type of event they wanted to deliver ('This is NOT how a sporting events business should be run. We will end up with a grey, soulless, corporate sporting event... not what spectators pay to see'). This connection was mentioned repeatedly, in clear, emphatic language, because it described a potential threat to one of the attributes that respondents considered most important. Therefore, identifying

the connections employees consider important may help to explain what they find attractive or unattractive about their organisation's identity – and why.

### *Direction of Causality*

Some attributes can have a direct impact on one another. For example, respondents from Film Inc claimed that the company's long history made it seem very stable ('because it's been around for a long time, you can't imagine that it will go anywhere...it feels very solid'). Similarly, respondents from the School of Science and Technology worried that efforts to accommodate the wishes of the School's main sponsor might have a negative impact on the reputation of the School ('By accommodating the needs and desires of its main sponsor it is in danger of developing a reputation for lowering the educational standards of the university as a whole'). Therefore, some connections can also be described in terms of the direction of causality.

### *Content*

Content sums up how or why two attributes are connected to one another, and it often involves detailed, context-specific information. For example, one respondent from Film Inc claimed that the organisation's relationship with the Parent Company enhanced the 'support structure' available to employees. This was a surprising claim because Film Inc employees did not regularly interact with the Parent Company. However, the Parent Company was an international organisation that spanned many different industries. As a result, this respondent explained that 'there's a lot of support around the world' and 'they've got experts in every field, so if you do need to get a view on something, you just pick up the phone.'

Nonetheless, the results of this study suggest that the content of each connection falls into one of four categories: Constructive, Obstructive, Associative, or Relational. These



four categories are discussed below, in the section on ‘Evaluating the Attractiveness of Corporate Identity,’ where they are also illustrated with examples from each case.

#### 6.2.3.2 Characteristics of the Pattern

The results of this study suggest that the pattern of connections is specific to each organisation. (This statement is discussed further in the section on ‘the Distinctiveness of Corporate Identity.’) However, the patterns observed in each of the six organisations exhibited two common characteristics: complexity and coherence. The patterns were complex because individual attributes were often connected to several others, each of which was also connected to several others, and so on. Therefore, the total number of connections was very high. The patterns were coherent because in each case there was one attribute or dimension that provided an anchor for the others.

### **6.3 EVALUATING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF CORPORATE IDENTITY**

#### **6.3.1 Findings based on the Quantitative Data<sup>7</sup>**

##### 6.3.1.1 Identifying Attractive versus Unattractive Attributes

As explained in the Methodology chapter, respondents were asked to allocate zero points to any attribute that they considered unattractive. The intention was to exclude these attributes, so that the allocation of points could be interpreted as a measure of the relative importance that employees assigned to the attributes that they considered attractive. However, every attribute in every case was assigned points by at least one respondent.

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<sup>7</sup> As explained earlier, no quantitative data was collected at TV Inc. Therefore, the following discussion is based on analysis of the quantitative data collected in the other five cases.

The allocation of points to every attribute seems to suggest that employees in every organisation considered every key attribute of their organisation's identity to be attractive. However, these key attributes were identified on the basis of frequency account – not attractiveness – and some of them had been construed as highly unattractive in stage 1. For example, in stage 1, respondents from the School of Science and Technology repeatedly complained about their school's new name because they felt that it was inaccurate ('there's no mention of education in the title – it's a poor choice,' 'I find it regrettable that any reference to science or technology or our university status has been dropped from our name'). However, in stage 2, the attribute 'has a name that does not reflect what it actually does' was assigned an average of 1.4 points. Similarly, in stage 1, respondents from Sports Inc complained about the strict hierarchy within their organisation ('Sports Inc is hierarchical... This is NOT how a sporting events business should be run'). Nonetheless, in stage 2, the attribute 'maintains a clear hierarchy among employees' was assigned an average of 0.76 points.

These conflicting results may be partially attributed to the differing views and preferences of individuals within each organisation; even if the responses given in stage 1 were consistent with the majority view – as assumed in the research design – there may have been a small minority within each organisation who took a different view. Therefore, it is useful to consider how many people allocated points to each attribute. As discussed in the individual case write-ups, the number of stage 2 respondents who allocated points was generally far lower for those attributes that were construed as unattractive in stage 1. This relationship cannot be measured statistically because the value that stage 1 respondents assigned to specific attributes was not always clear, but the circumstantial evidence seems to indicate that a minority within each organisation assigned a positive value to attributes that the majority considered unattractive.

This argument provides a simple explanation for the apparent anomaly in the survey results. However, in the following section I argue that the quantitative data does not tell the whole story. More specifically, I argue that an individual employee may consider the same attribute to be simultaneously both attractive and unattractive. This argument undermines my original assumption that attributes can be classified as either attractive or unattractive, and calls into question any interpretation of the data that relies too heavily on that assumption. Nonetheless, since some attributes were construed as highly attractive in stage 1 and assigned points by most respondents in stage 2, it seems reasonable to assume that these attributes were generally considered attractive – by most employees, in most contexts.

Based on this line of reasoning, the following discussion focuses specifically on the ten key attributes of each organisation's identity that were assigned the highest average number of points in response to question B2 of the stage 2 survey.

#### 6.3.1.2 Importance Assigned to Distinctive versus Non-Distinctive Attributes

As suggested by Social Identity Theory, respondents in four of the five quantitative cases assigned particular importance to attributes that were perceived to make their organisation positively distinct. For example, the attribute that respondents from Sports Inc considered most important was the 'once in a lifetime employment opportunity' to be involving in hosting the Event. Respondents from the School of Management assigned particular importance to their school's emphasis on 'practical relevance over "pure" academic theory and research' because they felt that it was 'arguably the most relevant management school.' The attribute that was construed as most important in the School of Engineering was the School's involvement in 'solving real world problems,' and respondents from the School of Science and Technology emphasized their school's status as a 'centre of excellence in the field of Defence and Security.' (While this was not the only school in the field of Defence and Security, the

notion of 'excellence' implies a positive distinction from others in this field.) In fact the only case in which none of the top ten attributes were distinctive is Film Inc, and this anomaly is discussed in the section entitled 'The Distinctiveness of Corporate Identity.'

On the other hand, some of the other attributes that respondents considered important were clearly not specific to any one organisation. For example, a 'friendly work environment' was considered to be among the ten most important attributes in every one of the five cases, opportunities for personal development in four cases, and pay or benefits in three cases. In addition, the single most important attribute in both Film Inc and the School of Science and Technology related to 'good' functional benefits. One attribute referred to 'benefits' while the other referred to 'terms and conditions of employment,' but both attributes were essentially generic; almost every company offers functional benefits of some kind to some or all of its employees.

**Table 3: Attributes construed as attractive or important**

<b>Non-distinctive attributes construed as important in this Study</b>	<b>Organisation(s) in which each attribute was construed as important</b>	<b>Similar attributes identified by Berthon et al (2005)</b>	<b>Similar attributes identified by Knox and Freeman (2005)</b>
Is a friendly place to work	Schools of Management, Science and Technology, Engineering, Sports Inc	Having a good relationship with your colleagues	Has a friendly, informal culture
Provides good opportunities for employees to develop their skills	Schools of Management, Science and Technology, Engineering, Film Inc	Gaining career-enhancing experience	Invests heavily in training and development of its employees
Offers competitive remuneration (including salary and benefits)	Schools of Science and Technology, Sports Inc, Film Inc	An attractive overall compensation package	Offers a very high starting salary
Offers a stimulating work environment	Schools of Management, Science and Technology, Sports Inc	Working in an exciting environment	
Is well-respected by the wider academic community	Schools of Management, Engineering		Is widely regarded as a highly prestigious employer
Is a fun place to work	Sports Inc, Film Inc	A fun working environment	
Values and respects its employees	School of Management	Recognition/appreciation from management	Really cares about their employees as individuals
Offers a relaxed work environment	School of Science and Technology		Offers a relatively stress-free work environment
Is a personally rewarding place to work	School of Engineering	Feel good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organisation	
Encourages open communication among employees	Film, Inc	Having a good relationship with your colleagues	
Is responsive to the needs of employees	Film, Inc	Having a good relationship with your superiors	Really cares about their employees as individuals
Expects employees to use their initiative	Film, Inc	The organisation both values and makes use of your creativity	Allows a lot of freedom to work on your own initiative

This emphasis on non-distinctive attributes is surprising in the context of Social Identity Theory, but the specific attributes that employees considered attractive are broadly consistent with those identified in previous studies of employer brand attractiveness. Table 1 shows the overlap between the non-distinctive attributes that were construed as important in this study (including all attributes that were among the top ten in one or more cases) with those identified by Berthon et al (2005) and Knox and Freeman (2005). Since these studies were both conducted in the context of recruitment, rather than ongoing employment, the results suggest that potential and current employees value many of the same attributes.

#### 6.3.1.3 Dimensions of Identity that Employees Construe as Important

Respondents in all five cases assigned considerable importance to attributes related to employment. This can be seen from the colour coding in Table 4; blue represents Employment, and has been used to shade more than half of the table entries. However, the importance that employees assigned to the other four dimensions varied significantly from case to case. Respondents from Film Inc focused particular attention on the attributes of the Organisation (purple) while those from Sports Inc were more concerned with the Product/Service (yellow). Respondents from the School of Engineering focused on all five dimensions, while those from the School of Science and Technology focused on every dimension except Stakeholder Relations, and respondents from the School of Management focused on every dimension except the Organisation.

These results suggest that employees may assign considerable importance to any or all of the five dimensions of their organisation's corporate identity. The emphasis on Employment is hardly surprising, since these are the attributes that directly affect employees, and Social Identity Theory helps to account for the importance assigned to Organisation and Reputation. However, it is more difficult to explain the assignment of value to Product/Service and Stakeholder Relations,

One possible explanation for the importance assigned to Product/Service and Stakeholder Relations is that both of these categories can have a significant impact on the success of the organisation. For example, a respondent from Film, Inc explained that the biggest potential threat to the future success of the organisation would be something that prevented the studio from producing a good product:

‘At the end of the day, if you don’t have a product it doesn’t matter how good you are at everything else. You can be the best marketer in the world, but no one can really market thin air, can they? The biggest threat is that something in the industry would halt us making decent product.’

A respondent from the School of Science and Technology made an equally strong case for the link between success and Stakeholder Relations:

‘If the Government training budget was seriously reduced to the extent that they had to renege on the contract, I doubt that additional business would provide sufficient alternative income and therefore our presence and operations on this campus would be at risk.’

Since Social Identity Theory suggests that employees are personally invested in the success of their organisation (Ashforth and Mael, 1989), it follows that they may also assign considerable importance to the attributes or categories of attribute that are perceived to influence organisational success.

While there may be other explanations, these results clearly indicate that employees care about a much wider range of issues than has previously been acknowledged in the literature on Employer Branding. More specifically, they suggest that previous conceptualizations of the Employer Brand, which focus specifically on employment, may be overly restrictive; in order to fully understand what makes an organisation’s identity or employer brand attractive to its employees, it is necessary to consider all five dimensions of the construct.

**Table 4: Attributes that respondents considered important in each case**

	School of Management	School of Science and Technology	School of Engineering	Sports Inc	Film Inc
1	Offers a stimulating work environment	Offers good terms and conditions of employment	Is involved in solving real world problems	Represents a once in a lifetime employment opportunity	Offers good benefits (medical, pension etc.)
2	Emphasizes practical relevance over 'pure' academic research	Offers an academically stimulating work environment	Is a friendly place to work	Has the potential to change people's lives (through the Games)	Is financially stable
3	Is well-respected by the wider academic community	Is committed to promoting the personal development of employees	Strives to provide students with skills that are relevant to industry	Employs many exceptionally capable people	Provides opportunities for employees to learn and grow
4	Values and respects its employees	Offers a friendly work environment	Provides opportunities for employees to develop their skills	Is committed to upholding the values of the Games	Offers good perks (membership to lovefilm.com, summer hours,
5	Is a friendly place to work	Is a centre of excellence in the field of Defence and Security	Has close links with industry	Is responsible for delivering a truly inspirational event (the Games)	Is well managed
6	Provides good opportunities for employees to develop their skills	Strives to be the best	Has a great reputation in the aerospace industry	Offers a friendly work environment	Is a friendly place to work
7	Is ranked highly in the business school league tables	Is part of Cranfield University	Offers challenging work	Is a fun place to work	Is a fun place to work
8	Is in close contact with industry	Offers a relaxed work environment	Is a personally rewarding place to work	Offers competitive remuneration (including salary and benefits)	Encourages open communication among employees
9	Aims to improve the practice of management	Has an open and pleasant campus	Is one of the top Engineering schools in the UK	Has a vibrant atmosphere around the office	Is responsive to the needs of employees
10	Is well-respected by practitioners	Does not have as many facilities as other universities (E.g. shops, restaurants,	Gives academic staff the freedom to explore new ideas	Employs people who are passionate about the Games	Expects employees to use their initiative

Organisation
  Employment
  Product/Service
  Stakeholder Relations
  Reputation



## 6.3.2 Findings Based on the Qualitative Data

### 6.3.2.1 Types of Value

The study revealed three types of value that employees assigned to the specific attributes of their organisation's identity: inherent, context-dependent, and person-dependent. Each of these value types is described below.

#### *Inherent Value*

Respondents perceived some attributes to be inherently attractive or unattractive. For example, when respondents referred to 'good pay,' they did not explain that 'good' meant high rather than low; there was no need for them to explain because anyone reading their responses could reasonably be expected to make this connection. This assumption of inherent value was particularly common in relation to functional and economic benefits, and is consistent with the assumptions that have previously been made in the employer branding literature. For example, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) describe functional benefits as 'elements of employment with the firm that are desirable in objective terms.' However, a central premise of Social Identity Theory is that the value attached to any particular attribute can vary according to the context of evaluation. (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) This means that no attribute is inherently attractive or unattractive; it is only perceived to be so. (Turner, 1987)

The belief that an attribute is inherently attractive or unattractive can be readily explained in the context of Social Identity Theory because value judgements are assumed to be a product of 'socially mediated cognition.' (Turner, 1987) This means that a particular attribute will often be assigned the same value by most or all members of a particular social group. Since social groups can be extremely broad – including anything up to and including the human race (Turner, 1987) – it may never become apparent that the assigned value is a social construction. For all practical

purposes, therefore, some benefits may be treated as if they were inherently attractive. Nonetheless, the distinction between inherent value and value that is only *perceived* to be inherent has important implications for the conclusions that may be drawn from the rest of the data, and for the type of answer that can be given to the research question.

Because 'inherent value' is only perceived to be inherent, an attribute that is considered inherently attractive by one person may be considered unattractive by someone else. This means that findings regarding the value of an attribute are not necessarily generalizable. It is still important to recognize that respondents consider certain attributes to be inherently attractive because these attributes may provide 'important insights into an organisation's identity' (van Riel, 1997). However, when interpreting the data and answering the research question, the generalizable findings are those that relate to cognitive processes (such as the types of value that employee to specific attributes) and to the categories of attribute that are generally accepted as relevant for the purposes of comparison and evaluation (Turner, 1987).

#### *Person-Dependent Value*

The attractiveness of an organisation's identity, or of a specific attribute of that identity, can also be determined by the traits of the individual employee. This phenomenon was most clearly evident at The School of Management, where respondents focused on the ideal fit between the School and the employee. For example, one respondent explained that,

'If you want to work as an academic but maintain close contact with industry, then this is a good place to work. If you want to be surrounded by driven and dedicated people then this is a good place to work. If you enjoy debate and discussion, then this is a good place to work. If you love pure research, and desire to pursue the theoretical, this may not be the place for you.'

However, there were also examples of person-dependent value in each of the other organisations. For example, a respondent from the School of Technology claimed that, 'If you have (Government) connections, you are likely to fit in well with the students and the majority of the staff,' and a respondent from Sports Inc pointed out that the level of commitment required of employees 'could be somewhat consuming, particularly for those who have a family.'

This connection between the traits of the individual and the attributes of the organisation is well-recognized in the academic literature on Employer Branding and Social Identity Theory, as well as by practitioners. With respect to Employer Branding, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) suggest that 'the better the match between the values of the firm that the values of the individual, the more likely the individual is to be attracted to the organisation'. In the context of Social Identity Theory, Dutton et al (1994) argue that perceived congruence between the identity of the organisation and the identity of an individual employee can make an organisation more attractive because membership in that organisation helps the employee to fulfil his or her need for self-concept continuity. In practice, Ewing et al (2002) identify 'source similarity' as one of the three popular positioning strategies that organisations use in the context of recruitment; they explain that the underlying argument is 'These are the kinds of people who succeed in our organisation – if you're of the same ilk, join us and you'll succeed.'

Nonetheless, the results of this study provide two further insights into the link between the traits of the individual and the attractiveness of an organisation's identity. First, they suggest that the link may, in some instances, be simpler and more specific than researchers have previously assumed. For example, studies cited in the literature on Employer Branding tend to use complex statistical analysis to measure the relationship between the attributes of the individual and the attributes of the organisation (e.g. Schneider, 1987; Judge and Cable, 1996). However, the findings of this study suggest that the measure of fit can sometimes be as simple as whether a

person has connections within a particular organisation (School of Science and Technology) or whether he or she has a family (Sports Inc).

Second, these results may help to explain why respondents in the same organisation do not necessary assign the same value or level of importance to the attributes of their organisation's identity. As explained in the literature review, Social Identity Theory suggests that members of an organisation are likely to value their organisation's identity in the same way. However, this does not always happen. For example, the work environment at the School of Science and Technology was generally perceived to be slow-paced and quiet. One respondent described this as 'pleasant' and 'relaxed' (positive) while another complained that it was 'dull' (negative) 'because nothing exciting ever happens.' Of course, it is purely my own speculation that this particular difference is due to the traits of the individual respondents; it might also be a reflection of actual differences in the work environments of their different departments or differences in the context of evaluation (explained below). Nonetheless, since individuals within an organisation are inevitably different from one another, and since the traits of the individual can influence the value assigned to a specific attribute, it is reasonable to expect that differences of this type will occur.

#### *Context-Dependent Value*

As discussed earlier, Social Identity Theory suggests that the value and importance assigned to individual attributes is fundamentally context-dependent; Tajfel and Turner (1979) define context as the set of 'comparable out-groups' (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and they argue that group members will seek to assign a positive value and high importance to the attributes that are perceived to make their organisation positively distinct from these other groups. However, the results of this study suggest that the value assigned to a specific attribute may also be influenced by its perceived connection to other attributes of the same organisation's identity or to attributes of the wider environment. Four types of connection were identified, as discussed in the

previous section, and a consistent link was found between the type of connection and the value assigned to the connected attributes.

#### Constructive Connections:

A constructive connection exists when one attribute is perceived to cause or contribute to another attribute. In this type of relationship, the value assigned to both attributes is the same.

For example, respondents from the School of Science and Technology generally agreed that their School had a 'hands-off' approach to managing employees, but they disagreed about whether this was an attractive or unattractive attribute. Some respondents considered it to be attractive because it caused employees to have a certain degree of autonomy in their work ('one is given considerable freedom to develop research interests'). Others considered it unattractive because it meant that employees received little external encouragement or motivation ('you have to have self-motivation and self-belief because you won't get it from anywhere else'). In this instance, the value assigned to the School's hands-off style of management was dependent on which attribute it was perceived to influence; when it contributed to an attractive attribute, it was seen as attractive, and when it contributed to an unattractive attribute it was seen as unattractive.

In other instances, the attribute of interest was the symptom or effect, rather than the cause. For example, respondents from Sports Inc considered a lack of noise in the office to be unattractive because it was seen as a symptom of inadequate communication among employees ('It is surprising how quite the office is.... It suggests that people are not communicating efficiently and effectively, and regularly. Instead, choosing to hide behind their computer screens'), and inadequate communication was perceived to be an unattractive attribute. However, as this example illustrates, the direction of causality does not influence the assignment of value when the connection

**Table 5: Examples of Constructive Connections from each case**

	<b>Attribute 1</b>	<b>Value (1)</b>	<b>Attribute 2</b>	<b>Value (2)</b>	<b>Words of Respondent</b>
School of Management	Geographic location	Attractive	Ability to travel to London and abroad to do consulting work	Attractive	'It's close to the airport and London, which is great for consulting work!'
School of Management	Does not clearly prioritize among activities	Unattractive	Poor communication and confusion	Unattractive -	'The School is not clear about the relative contribution of graduate programmes, executive education and research – results in diffuse marketing messages and internal confusion about where resources should be focused.'
School of Science and Technology	Tries to accommodate the needs of its main sponsor	Unattractive	Actions that are sometimes detrimental to school and to the Government	Unattractive	'Each time the Government changes some aspect of this relationship... the School hurriedly adapts to accommodate such changes, often in a clumsy or ill conceived way which is detrimental to both parties.'
School of Science and Technology	Tries to accommodate the needs of its main sponsor	Unattractive	Pays little attention to the needs of employees	Unattractive	'More concerned with the relationship it has with the Government, rather than with its own employees'
School of Engineering	Big	Attractive	Sense of security for employees	Attractive	'There is a positive sense of security to be part of such a large organization'
School of Engineering	Hands-off style of management	Attractive	Feeling of trust and empowerment	Attractive	'I like being left to get on with my work and the feeling of trust and empowerment this gives me.'
Sports Inc	Diversity of the Workforce	Unattractive	Confusion and ineffective communication	Unattractive	'There are a number of very talented people who have all joined the organisation with very different motivators and experiences. This

					sometimes causes confusion as there are many different reference points individuals use as well as a different base level'
Sports Inc	Made up of employees with no sporting event experience	Unattractive	Corporate-ness of the organisation	Unattractive	'Sports Inc is largely made up of employees with no sporting event experience. This has contributed to the overall corporate-ness of the organisation'
Film Inc	Big	Unattractive	Feeling of anonymity	Unattractive	'Because it's such a big company, you do feel a bit anonymous as times, a bit like a number'
Film, Inc	Big	Attractive	Opportunities for personal development	Attractive	'It's a place that generates alot of opportunities because of its size'
TV Inc	Positive reputation in the TV industry	Attractive	'Opens doors' for employees	Attractive	'The industry respects the work we do here. The name does open certain doors'
TV Inc	Cynical, commercial outlook	Unattractive	Production of low quality programmes	Unattractive	'Cynical; I think programmes are made solely because they make money and some of the are very low quality'

is constructive; because the value assigned to both attributes is the same, knowing the value assigned to one attribute is sufficient to determine the value assigned to the other. Table 5 shows examples of constructive connections from each case.

#### Obstructive Connections:

An obstructive relationship exists when one attribute is perceived to be incompatible with – or a hindrance to – the other attribute. In this type of relationship, opposite values are assigned to the two attributes.

The most salient examples of obstructive relationships were observed at Sports Inc, where respondents assigned a negative value to any attribute that was perceived to conflict with the values or desired attributes of The Event. Examples included the dress code, office layout, location, organisational hierarchy and lack of social interaction in the office; all of these attributes were considered unattractive because they were thought to contribute to a ‘corporate’ style of working that was incompatible with the ‘inspirational’ values of the Event. However, the same phenomenon was also evident in the other cases. For example, a respondent from Film Inc complained about the outsourcing of critical business functions to foreign companies because he felt that it prevented employees from doing their jobs as efficiently as they might otherwise; ‘another thing that is not really ideal is the outsourcing of departments like IT and accounts. For example our accounts team is now in Hungary. So if you do need to get hold of someone right here, for something that needs quick results, it’s almost impossible.’

In some instances it was difficult to determine whether there was any perceived causality between the two attributes. However, because the value assigned to the two attributes is always opposite when the connective obstructive, ambiguous causality was not a problem; knowing the value assigned to one attribute is still sufficient to determine the value assigned to the other. (Table 6 shows examples from each case)



**Table 6: Examples of Obstructive Connections from each case**

	<b>Attribute (1)</b>	<b>Value (1)</b>	<b>Attribute (2)</b>	<b>Value (2)</b>	<b>Words of Respondent</b>
<b>School of Management</b>	Does research that is oriented towards practitioners	Unattractive	Deep meaning of academic research	Attractive	'The aim of the research sometimes is too much towards practitioners or companies oriented and it misses the deep meaning of academic research'
<b>School of Management</b>	Lack of strong leadership	Unattractive	Organisational performance	Attractive	'satisfactorily underperforming; lack of clear leadership'
<b>School of Science and Technology</b>	Tries to accommodate the needs of its main sponsor	Unattractive	The University's reputation for high educational standards	Attractive	'By accommodating the needs and desires of its main sponsor, it is in danger of developing a reputation for lowering the educational standards of the University as a whole.'
<b>School of Science and Technology</b>	Employees are expected to generate business for the School	Unattractive	Expected role requirements for academics	Attractive	'By no means all the academics are interested in generating business because they joined to be academics, not sales/marketing/self-projecting/thrusting people'
<b>School of Engineering</b>	Rural location	Attractive	Distractions	Unattractive	'Excellent academic environment; far from the madding crowd and hence less distractions'
<b>School of Engineering</b>	Lack of social interaction among employees	Unattractive	Opportunities to meet people from all walks of life	Unattractive	'not all staff are able or willing to interact on a more social level, which is a pity because it is a good opportunity to meet people from all walks of life'
<b>Sports Inc</b>	Hierarchical	Unattractive	Ability to deliver the best possible	Attractive	'Sports Inc is hierarchical... There is a very, very strong sense that a few senior people

	<b>Attribute (1)</b>	<b>Value (1)</b>	<b>Attribute (2)</b>	<b>Value (2)</b>	<b>Words of Respondent</b>
			Event		hold all of the power... This is NOT how a sporting events business should be run. We will end up with a grey, soulless, corporate sporting event... not what spectators pay to see.'
<b>Sports Inc</b>	Lack of social interaction in the workplace	Unattractive	The nature of the Event	Attractive	'The nature of the product is that it is a customer facing event and product. However this is not reflected through everyday behaviours within the organisation. E.g. Saying hello in the corridor to a colleague when you pass them or even acknowledging another person'
<b>Film Inc</b>	Appreciation of employees	Attractive	Poor treatment of employees	Unattractive	'They talk alot about the importance of people and things like this, but it becomes fairly obvious that those values are getting dropped when things get a little bit tough
<b>TV Inc</b>	Un-bureaucratic, creative environment	Unattractive	Adherence to rules and policies	Attractive	'I am concerned that TV Inc is very un-bureaucratic. Due to the creative environment at TV Inc sometimes rules, procedures and necessary form filling in is sometimes ignored. So far this hasn't caused any major problems, but there is a concern that it might in the future.'

### Associative Connections:

An associative relationship exists when one attribute of an organisation's identity is associated with another attribute – of the organisation or of the wider environment - but there is no perceived causality between them. In this type of relationship, the value assigned to both attributes is the same.

Based on the responses given in stage 1, it was often difficult to distinguish between constructive and associative relationships because there was no way of knowing whether causality was implicit or absent. However, there were a small number of instances in which there was clearly no causality, and these were sufficient to establish that such relationships do exist. The clearest example involved the need for hard work; respondents generally expressed a positive view of hard work when the task was challenging or rewarding, but a negative view when the work was mundane or unnecessary.

### Relational Connections:

A relational connection is one which involves a comparison. Examples from this study included comparison between organisations, comparison between time frames, and comparison between one organisation and other organisations in the same industry. The results of the study suggest that relational connections influence perceived importance rather than the value assigned to particular attributes. However, there might be instance in which relational connections could also influence the assigned value.

**Table 7: Type of relationship and value assigned to connected attributes**

Type of Relationship	Value assigned to related attributes
Constructive	Identical (+/+) or (-/-)
Obstructive	Opposite (+/-) (-/+)
Associative	Identical (+/+) or (-/-)
Relational	N/A

### 6.3.2.2 Value Interactions

Based on the data that I collected, it is impossible to list all the attributes that respondents considered attractive or unattractive, or to categorically state which type of value was being assigned to each attribute. Nonetheless, the responses given in stage 1 suggest that different contexts and types of value do interact, and this means that employees may consider a particular attribute to be simultaneously both attractive and unattractive. For example, Film Inc was repeatedly described as a ‘big’ organisation, and one respondent explained that:

‘Size has its benefits and its disadvantages. Sometimes it’s really sheltering to be part of a big organisation and sometimes it’s kind of like a cruise ship and its quite hard to steer.

Similarly, respondents from the School of Science and Technology expressed mixed views about their School’s contract with the Government. On the one hand, they recognized that this contract provided the School with a reliable source income and made employees’ jobs more secure. On the other hand, they worried that the School’s efforts to maintain this relationship was damaging the school’s reputation for academic excellence. The result was a sense of ambivalence about the attractiveness of the contract; as explained by one respondent,

‘There must be a fine line between being the winners of a lucrative contract and inheriting a poison chalice, I suspect we are uncomfortably close to that line.’

### 6.3.2.3 Relative Importance of Different Benefit Types

As predicted in the chapter on Methodology, the type of benefits that employees valued most were found to be directly related to the type of organisation in which they were employed. Sports Inc had a predominantly normative identity and employees assigned particular importance to psychological benefits associated with that identity. They also valued functional and economic benefits, but these were not seen as the main reason for someone to want to work for the organisation. On the other hand, Film Inc had a predominantly utilitarian identity, and employees assigned particular importance to functional and economic benefits; the attribute that employees considered most important was 'Offers good benefits (medical, pension, etc).'

These results support my earlier supposition that employees of normative organisations tend to assign particular importance to psychological benefits. They also suggest that the value assigned to functional and economic benefits may be greater in utilitarian organisations than in normative organisations. However, the average number of points assigned to functional and economic benefits was never more than 19.4 (Film Inc). Therefore, it is not clear whether functional and economic benefits can actually outweigh psychological benefits, even in a utilitarian organisation.

## **6.4 THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF CORPORATE IDENTITY**

### **6.4.1 Individual Attributes**

Four of the six organisations possessed specific attributes that respondents perceived to be unique. Employees of Sports Inc talked about the opportunity to be involved in hosting The Event ('inspirational; working on a project this large is a once in a lifetime opportunity'). Employees of The School of Science and Technology talked about the highly specialized field in which their school was involved ('is distinguishable from other organisations precisely because it is a specialist university') and its relationship

with its principle client ('its location and relationship with The Government are unique'). Employees of The School of Management talked about their school's focus on practical relevance ('If you're interested in managers and the problems they face, come the School of Management').

The two organisations that were not perceived to possess distinctive attributes were Film Inc and the School of Engineering. However, each of these organisations did possess combinations of attributes that employees perceived to be distinct. For example, Employees of Film repeatedly described their organisation as 'a media company,' while acknowledging that it was 'not a typical media company' because the style of management was highly structured and 'corporate'. In fact one respondent argued that 'if you work in finance, it's probably not that different from working in a bank.' This anomaly could be traced to the company's takeover by a conglomerate several years prior to the study, and it was this combination of industry (Media) and management style (corporate) that employees perceived to be distinct.

These results support the premise that employees will tend to construe their own organisation as positively distinct from comparable organisations. Moreover, the attributes that respondents identified as distinctive did provide an objectively accurate description of each organisation. However, the attributes identified by employees do not tell the whole story; in order fully to understand what makes corporate identity distinctive, it is necessary to also consider the pattern of connections among these attributes.

#### **6.4.2 The Pattern of Connections**

As explained earlier, the attributes of each organisation's identity were bound together by a complex web of connections. The connections that are mapped in this thesis capture only the highest level of abstraction; they describe explicit relationships among the five main categories of attribute. Nonetheless, even at this level of

abstraction, it is clear that the pattern of connections was different in each organisation. This finding is consistent with the French School of Thought regarding corporate identity; as described by Moingeon and Ramanantsoa (1997), 'it is not the characteristics themselves that make it possible to identify the organisation; it is the configuration or pattern of the system which give it its uniqueness.'

On the other hand, the pattern of connections observed in each of the six cases exhibited two common characteristics. First, it was highly complex; one attribute was often connected to several others, each of these attributes was potentially connected to several others, and so on. Second, in each case there was one dimension or attribute that was connected to most or all of the remaining dimensions; this was described in each case write-up as the core dimension of the organisation's identity.

## **6.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have addressed all three parts of the research question by reviewing and comparing the results obtained in each of the six cases. The results of this comparison have important implications for theory – in all three areas of literature reviewed above – as well as for practice. However, as in any research study, there are certain limits to the conclusions that may be drawn. Therefore, the implications of these results are discussed in the following chapter, as well as the limitations and possible areas for future research.

## **7. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The results of this study were surprising for several reasons. The dimensions of Corporate Identity were found to exceed the traditional scope of the construct; employees were found to evaluate attractiveness in a manner far more complex than that suggested by Social Identity Theory; the unique characteristics of Corporate Identity were found to be unexpectedly subtle and complex. In fact, some of the results fundamentally undermine the assumptions on which the study was based. As a result, they have important implications for theory and practice, and they highlight a number of areas that merit further investigation.

### **7.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

#### **7.2.1 Corporate Identity**

##### 7.2.1.1 Conceptualizing Corporate Identity

The picture of Corporate Identity that emerges from this study is at once complex and coherent. It is complex because it is comprised of many different dimensions and sub-dimensions, and because these dimensions are tied together by an intricate web of connections that are no less integral to the construct than the dimensions themselves. In fact, it is this same web of connections that binds the many disparate elements into a coherent whole. Therefore, in order to fully describe the complexity and coherence of Corporate Identity, it is necessary to consider the dimensions of the construct as well as the pattern of connections among them.



### *Dimensions and Sub-Dimensions of the Construct*

The framework developed in Chapter 3 shows that a unique and attractive Corporate Identity, as seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory, can motivate employees to behave in ways that reflect that identity and support the Corporate Brand. Little was previously known about the attributes or dimensions that constitute identity in this theoretical context (Brickson, 2005), but the results of the study address that gap; they show that identity is made up of five dimensions - Organisation, Employment, Product or Service, Stakeholder Relations, and Reputation – which can be further divided into the twelve sub-dimensions shown in figure 18. In other words, the framework indicates that these dimensions and sub-dimensions may collectively shape employee behaviour in predictable and important ways. However, the external validity of these findings remains unclear.

On one hand, some of the organisations included in this study were fundamentally different from one another; Film Inc and TV Inc were predominantly utilitarian while Sports Inc was predominantly normative, and the three schools were normative-utilitarian hybrids. This makes it particularly surprising that the dimensions and sub-dimensions of identity were found to be identical across all six cases; since different identity types correspond to different objectives and different forms of governance, (Albert and Whetten, 1985), it would be reasonable to expect that they might also consist of different dimensions. However, no such difference was observed. This lack of variation suggests that the dimensions of identity may be reasonably consistent across organisations.

On the other hand, the cases included in this study do not provide any apparent theoretical basis for generalizing beyond the context of this study (see Chapter 4). This means that further research is needed in order to determine the domain to which these findings may be applied. This research should be essentially inductive, allowing for the potential discovery of new dimensions and sub-dimensions, but the findings of

this study may offer a useful starting point for identifying new cases. More specifically, it would be useful to select organisations in which one or all of the dimensions and sub-dimensions described above appear to be unimportant or even absent. This approach would be useful for two reasons. First, this 'explicit search for the negative case' would provide a 'crucial test' of the dimensions identified in this study (Mitchell, 1983); if a dimension is observed even in a context where it appears to be absent, it is likely that this dimension will also be observed in other contexts. Second, if one or more dimensions are found to be absent in a particular organisation, this is likely to indicate that the organisation being studied is fundamentally different from those included in this study. Therefore, its identity may include a dimension that has not yet been identified.

### *Complexity of the Framework*

The dimensions and sub-dimensions of Corporate Identity that have been identified in this study are significantly more diverse and more numerous than those included in previous conceptualizations of Corporate Identity. They are more diverse because they encompass a range of issues that do not relate directly to the organisation as a whole; these include Product/Service, Reputation, Stakeholder Relations, and Employment. In addition, the inclusion of five dimensions and twelve sub-dimensions makes this framework significantly more complex than those that have previously been developed in the Corporate Identity Literature. Therefore, it may be useful to consider why the framework includes so many dimensions and sub-dimensions.

The number of dimensions and sub-dimensions may partially be attributed to the specificity of the attributes mentioned by employees. Of course the type of attribute elicited from respondents is closely related to the research design; respondents were explicitly asked to give 'more detail' and to 'be as specific as possible,' so this is what they did. However, one of the most surprising findings is that respondents very rarely referred to 'values' or 'culture.' This finding is surprising because culture and values

are typically seen as important dimensions of Corporate Identity. In addition, these broad and somewhat amorphous concepts play an important role in helping to simplify and make sense of the complexity in organisations, providing 'coherence among the heterogeneity' (van Rekom, 1997). As a result, their omission inevitably shifts the emphasis from the 'coherence' to the 'heterogeneity.'

This heterogeneity is reflected in the different levels of the framework; the first level describes the broad dimensions of the construct, and the second level describes each dimension in terms of its constituent sub-dimensions. The framework could be simplified by eliminating the second level, and this would not compromise its validity. However, the degree of consistency observed across organisations – in terms of the sub-dimensions and even the types of attribute within each sub-dimension – suggests that it may be useful to investigate the behavioural consequences of each dimension and sub-dimension. (This is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.)

### *The Pattern of Connections*

This study was designed around the assumption that Corporate Identity can be fully described by a list of attributes. However, the results of the study clearly undermine this assumption; they show that the attributes of an organisation's identity are bound together by an intricate web of connections, and this web is no less integral to the Corporate Identity construct than the attributes it connects. Therefore, in order to enhance our understanding of the construct, it would be useful to further investigate the perceived connections among the constituent dimensions and attributes.

### *Facets of Identity*

Following Albert and Whetten (1985), many authors now define identity as 'distinctive' rather than unique (E.g. van Rekom, 1997). This implies that the construct is fundamentally context dependent (Haslam et al, 2003; van Rekom, 1997). For

instance, van Rekom (1997) argues that an organisation's identity may be unique 'in a certain region, or within a certain group of competitors, but perhaps not nationwide or worldwide' (van Rekom, 1997). Elsbach and Kramer (1996) even argue that identity is partially defined by the 'relevant comparison groups.'

This study has not explicitly explored importance of context in defining Corporate Identity, but this appears to be a particularly useful line of inquiry. Context is likely to be particularly important in relation to the Corporate Brand because the organisation has to present itself to multiple stakeholder groups, such as customers, investors, suppliers, regulators, and local communities. Therefore, the brand may have different facets that appeal to different stakeholder groups (Roper and Davies, 2007).

In order to develop a fuller understanding of Corporate Identity, it would be useful to determine how the construct changes according to context. For example, further research could help to explain what makes an organisation distinctive in relation to the consumer market, the employment market, and the investment market. Insights of this kind could help managers to more fully exploit their organisation's Corporate Identity; since corporate branding involves the clear and purposeful communication of an organisation's Corporate Identity to its external stakeholders (Ingenhoff and Fuhrer, 2010), an understanding of what makes that identity distinctive in a particular context may help managers to more effectively craft and target corporate brand communications.

#### 7.2.1.2 Addressing the Uniqueness Paradox

Previous researchers have found that organisational claims to uniqueness are, in fact, very rarely unique. These researchers have tended to focus on broad characteristics such as personality traits (Chun and Davies, 2001) and cultural values (Martin et al, 1983; van Rekom, 1997). However, the results of this study suggest that the uniqueness of corporate identity lies in the details; it lies in the collection of attributes

that employees use to describe their organisation and in the perceived connections among those attributes. This implies that the 'uniqueness paradox' in corporate identity research (Martin et al, 1983) may be at least partly attributed to previous researchers' failure to look beyond the big picture, to explore the details of organisational life.

The pattern of connections is likely to be particularly important because it captures the 'logic' that operates within that organisation (Moingeon and Ramanantsoa, 1997). This logic is likely to be shaped by the innumerable factors that influence the organisation over time, such the values of its founders, its history, and the industry in which it operates. Since the combination of factors that influence a particular organisation are inevitably unique, it is not surprising that the pattern connections is also unique. However, care must still be taken when drawing conclusions about the distinctive characteristics of Corporate Identity based solely on the results of this study.

As suggested in Chapter 4, the organisations included in this study were fundamentally different from one another; they were located in three separate parts of the country, operated in three different industries, and represented three distinct points the normative-utilitarian spectrum. As a result, their identities were fundamentally different from one another, and characteristics that appeared distinctive in this study may not appear distinctive when the organisations being compared are more similar to one another.

In order to more fully address the uniqueness paradox, it would be useful to compare a set of organisations that are as similar to one another as possible. For example, future research might focus on organisations that operate in the same industry and geographic location. These organisations are likely to be subject to many of the same competitive pressures, as well as the same constraints on resources, and may therefore be very similar to one another; by explaining what makes an organisation

different from others that are objectively very similar, it should be possible to explain what truly makes each organisation's Corporate Identity distinctive or unique.

### 7.2.1.3 Different Types of Identity

In this thesis I have explored Corporate Identity through the eyes of employees. This cognitive perspective is consistent with Social Identity Theory and appears to be particularly useful in relation to employee behaviour; as explained by Mukherjee and He (2008), 'perceived company identity has more cognitive, affective, and behavioural effects than the actual company identity.' Nonetheless, this is just one of many possible perspectives on the subject. The term 'Corporate Identity' has been used to describe a number of different phenomena (Moingeon and Ramanantsoa, 1997), and it is important to consider how the viewpoint adopted in this thesis relates to other identity types described in the Corporate Identity literature.

The most widely accepted identity types are those depicted in Balmer and Greyser's (2006) AC<sup>3</sup>ID test framework. These are Actual Identity, Communicated Identity, Conceived Identity, Covenanted Identity, Ideal Identity, and Desired Identity. The type of identity uncovered in this study may be seen as a specific aspect of Conceived Identity, which is described by Balmer and Stuart (2004) (cited in Powell et al, 2009) as 'the perceptions held of the organisation by internal and external stakeholder groups and networks.' However, when explicating the philosophical underpinnings of Social Identity Theory, Turner (1987) argues that the perceptions of employees 'more or less directly reflect' the objective attributes of the organisation. This implies that Conceived Identity – and more specifically the perceptions of employees - should 'more or less directly reflect' the Actual Identity of the organisation.

The assumption that the perceptions of employees 'more or less directly reflect' the Actual Identity of their organisation is particularly useful in the context of corporate branding because scholars have repeatedly emphasized the importance of aligning

corporate brand communications with the Actual Identity of the organisation (Hulberg, 2006; Hatch and Schultz, 2003; van Rekom, 1997). Therefore, it would be useful to measure the gap between these two types of identity. However, Mukherjee and He (2008) point out that measuring Actual Identity may be problematic because researchers may 'fall into the trap of uncovering (their) own cognitive representation of the company.' If the perceptions of employees do provide a reasonably accurate reflection of the organisation's actual identity, then one way to avoid this trap would be to use the perceptions of employees as a proxy for Actual Identity.

## **7.2.2 Employer Branding**

### 7.2.2.1 Conceptualizing the Employer Brand

Previous conceptualizations of the Employer Brand have tended to focus specifically on attributes related to employment (E.g. Moroko and Uncles, 2008, Knox and Freeman, 2005). The underlying logic is that jobs may be seen as 'products,' and that employer branding allows managers to develop and market these 'job products' in such a way that they may 'attract, develop, and motivate employees' (Berthon et al, 2005). However, the results of this study indicate that employees care about far more than the attributes of their own jobs; in fact, the cross-case comparison reveals that employees may assign considerable importance to any attribute of their organisation's identity - Employment, Organisation, Reputation, Product or Service, or Stakeholder Relations. This implies that the 'product' is not just the job, but the organisation as a whole, and it may therefore be useful to adopt a broader conceptualization of the Employer Brand.

### 7.2.2.2 Explaining what makes an Employer Brand Attractive to Current Employees

#### *The Need for a Multi-Disciplinary Perspective*

Although the attributes that employees construed as most important were different in each organisation, some of the other results cannot be readily explained in the context of Social Identity Theory. For instance, Social Identity Theory does not explain why respondents in all five quantitative cases assigned considerable importance to attributes that were clearly not distinctive. Nor can it explain why respondents in every organisation considered various functional and economic benefits to be both attractive and important, regardless of whether the organisation compared favourably on these particular attributes. It also cannot explain why the value assigned to a particular attributes was often dependent on the traits of the individual employee. However, all of these results have one thing in common: they all involve the interests of the individual employee rather, than the group.

Since Social Identity Theory specifically seeks to explain the social psychological aspects of *group* behaviour (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Turner, 1987), it is hardly surprising that it cannot explain phenomena that relate solely to interests of the *individual*. However, these findings draw attention to the limitations of Social Identity Theory in an employment context; although research has clearly shown that the principles of Social Identity Theory can help to explain employee behaviour, it is important to acknowledge that an employee's relationship with his or her employing organisation is not exactly the same as the relationship that he or she might have with another type of social group. Therefore, Social Identity Theory provides an accurate but partial explanation of what makes an organisation's corporate identity attractive to its employees.

In order to address this question more fully, it would be useful to adopt a multi-disciplinary perspective. The parallels identified earlier, between the attributes sought



by potential employees and the attributes construed as important by current employees, suggest that useful insights may be gained from the literature on Employer Branding. However, this area of literature is still in its infancy (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Moroko and Uncles, 2008). Moreover, Employer Branding is not, in itself, a theory; it is a framework that synthesizes many related areas of literature (Ambler and Barrow, 1996), and it is in these related areas of literature that the most valuable insights are likely to be found. One example is the literature on person-organisation fit, which explores the relationship between the attributes or values of the individual and those of the organisation, and how that relationship influences the perceived attractiveness of the organisation. Other areas of literature that may provide useful insights include Recruitment and the literature on Psychological Contracts.

#### 7.2.2.3 Studying Employer Brand Attractiveness

Previous studies of employer brand attractiveness have tended to rely on quantitative methods (See Knox and Freeman, 2005; Lievens, 2007). However, the results of this study point to the value of qualitative methods, such as interviews or cognitive mapping, when studying employer brand attractiveness from the perspective of current employees. These methods could help researchers to explain why employees in a particular organisation consider particular attributes to be attractive or unattractive, important or unimportant. In doing so, they could help researchers to distinguish between, and better understand, the three types of value that employees can assign to specific attributes of their organisation's employer brand. This line of inquiry may provide further insights into the sources of variation across organisations, but it may also uncover important commonalities.

#### *Inherent Value*

In the previous chapter I argued that 'inherent value' is only *perceived* to be inherent. However, the value that is perceived to be inherent in a particular attribute may be

determined by the values and cultural norms of such a broad social group that it never comes into question. This implies that the inherent value of certain attributes may remain constant across organisations. For example, high salaries were considered inherently attractive in every one of the six cases described above, and it is difficult to imagine a circumstance in which the result would be different; since the most inclusive social group is 'the human race' (Turner, 1987), and since the pursuit of wealth has long been considered a fundamental aspect of human nature (Smith, 1759), high salaries should always be construed as attractive. By isolating attributes that employees consider inherently attractive or unattractive, and comparing the results across different organisations, it should therefore be possible to identify attributes that are generally considered attractive or unattractive within a much social context.

#### *Context-Dependent Value*

Of all the value types, context-dependent value is the most likely to create variation across different organisations. This is because 'context' essentially refers to the other elements of the organisation's identity; since each organisation has its own distinctive identity, and since identity influences the perceived attractiveness of a particular attribute, the perceived attractiveness of that attribute is likely to vary from one organisation to the next. However, this study has shown that context can be described in terms of specific attributes and connections, and that these connections fall into four categories: Constructive, Obstructive, Associative, and Relational. By studying context at this level of detail, it may be possible to identify connections that are repeated across different organisations. For example, in this study respondents repeatedly described hard work as attractive when it was associated with intellectual challenge and unattractive when it was associated with mundane tasks. If these or other connections are found to exist in a broad set of organisations, they may help to explain how managers can enhance the attractiveness of their organisation's employer brand.

### *Person-Dependent Value*

Person-dependent value relates directly to the concept of 'person-organisation fit.' A review of the literature in that area is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the results of this study suggest that employees recognize certain factors that are likely to influence the fit between an employee and their own organisation. While there may be other factors that employees do not recognize, it seems reasonable to expect that the employees would be well-placed to identify important determinants of fit. Therefore, it would be useful to further investigate the relationship between employer brand attractiveness and the factors that employees consider relevant predictors of person-dependent value.

### **7.2.3 Social Identity Approach to Organisational Identification**

The value of applying Social Identity Theory to the study of organisations is that it provides a bridge between the concepts of Organisational Identity and Organisational Identification (Haslam et al, 2003). In doing so, it allows theorists to both explain and predict a variety of employee behaviours that reflect the distinctive identity of their own organisation. As explained by Haslam et al (2003),

'it is this combination of strength of identification and content of the resulting identity which sets organisational identity apart from other related concepts such as organisational culture.'

This implies that understanding the 'content' of organisational identity is a critical step in predicting and explaining employee behaviour, and it is surprising to note that this issue has previously been overlooked (Brickson, 2005). However, the findings of my study help to address this gap.

As explained in Chapter 3, Corporate Identity and Organisational Identity are conceptually identical when seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory. This

implies that Organisational Identity may be conceptualized in terms of the five dimensions and twelve sub-dimensions described above.

## **7.3 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.3.1 Corporate Identity**

Identity scholars have repeatedly argued that Corporate Identity cannot be effectively managed by the Marketing department alone (Melewar et al, 2005; Hatch and Schultz, 2003), and the results of this study support that argument. More specifically, the dimensions and sub-dimensions of the construct represent categories of attributes that would typically be managed by different business functions. For example, attributes related to 'Employment' would typically be managed by HR, while many attributes relating to 'Organisation' are more likely to be associated with Operations or with senior management in general, and 'Reputation' is closely associated with Marketing and PR. Since the results also indicate that these dimensions and sub-dimensions are closely connected to one another, this implies that the most effective approach to managing Corporate Identity is likely to be one that involves various functional areas working in concert.

In addition, the framework developed in this thesis clearly and precisely defines the dimensions of the construct that are likely to shape employee behaviour. This may represent an important step forward because previous efforts to manage corporate identity have been hampered by the confusion and ambiguity surrounding the construct; as explained by Melewar and Jenkins (2002), 'it is very difficult to manage what cannot be precisely defined.' By defining the dimensions of the construct, however, this framework helps to transform Corporate Identity from something that is ambiguous and elusive into a set of relatively concrete categories of attributes to which managers can turn their attention.

Since the nature of the construct is fundamentally dependent on the context and purpose of inquiry (Albert and Whetten, 1985), the dimensions are likely to vary with respect to different managerial issues. Nonetheless, defining the dimensions that shape employee behaviour is particularly useful for two reasons. First, as discussed earlier, aligning the behaviour of employees with the identity of the organisation is one of the critical challenges associated with corporate brand management. Second, the dimensions of identity that shape employee behaviour also act as a constraint on the 'domain of signals which can be sent to stakeholders' (van Rekom, 1997); if corporate communications are not consistent with the behaviour of employees, the credibility of those communications will be undermined. Therefore, a clear understanding of these dimensions can help managers to develop a strong and credible corporate brand.

Finally, managers who want to change their organisation's identity need to pay close attention to the perceived connections among attributes and dimensions of their organisation's identity. This is because any change to one attribute will inevitably influence or be influenced by related attributes, and this could have unintended consequences. For example, as discussed earlier, respondents from the School of Science and Technology strongly resented the change in their School's name; even though this was generally seen as a purely cosmetic change, the removal of any reference to academia was perceived to be in conflict with its cherished academic status. In other words, an apparently superficial change cut right to the heart of the School's identity.

Managers will be better equipped to deal with this kind of problem if they consider the connections relating to whichever attribute they want to change before they attempt to do so; if it is connected to another attribute that is in some way fundamental to the identity of the organisation, or to an attribute that employees consider particularly attractive, they should anticipate a significant level of resistance. This does not imply that such changes cannot be achieved. However, it does suggest that such changes are likely to be more difficult, and potentially more costly. Therefore, managers need to

anticipate the challenges, consider how they may be overcome, and allocate sufficient resources to do so.

### **7.3.2 Employer Branding**

#### 7.3.2.1 Limitations of the Employer of Choice Strategy

The results of this study support Mosley's (2007) claim that the strategy of becoming an Employer of Choice is 'unlikely to deliver on the more distinctive fit for purpose requirements of the brand and business strategy.' This is a generic strategy that rests on the assumption that there is an 'ideal blueprint of employment' (Mosley, 2007), and that organisations can strengthen their employer brands by copying best practice from other organisations. However, this study has shown that the attributes considered most attractive by employees are different in each organisation. This implies that generic strategies, such as becoming an 'Employer of Choice,' are unlikely to have the desired effect on employee behaviour; when developing their organisation's employer brand, managers need to uncover the distinctive identity of their own organisation and find out what makes that identity attractive to their employees.

This inside-out approach to employer branding is likely to involve firm-specific research, and will therefore be more costly and more time-consuming than simply copying best practice from others. However, it is likely to be more effective for a number of reasons. First, it will provide more accurate information about the attributes that employees consider attractive. Second, it will help managers to align the behaviour of their employees with the distinctive identity of their own organisation. Finally, understanding their organisation's distinctive identity will provide a potential source of differentiation in the employment market.

### 7.3.2.2 Researching the Organisation's Employer Brand

Rather than conducting extensive research into every aspect of their organisation's employer brand, managers can focus specifically on the dimensions and sub-dimensions of identity identified in this study; this will allow them to minimize research costs while paying more attention to the issues that really matter to employees.

In order to help managers target their research efforts even more precisely, further research could also be conducted to identify the conditions in which each attribute category is likely to be most important, and to determine whether each category could be further divided into even more specific sub-categories.

## **8.4 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have discussed the implications of my findings with respect to three separate areas of literature – Corporate Identity, Employer Branding, and the Social Identity Approach to Organisational Identification. In the following chapter I explain how the findings contribute to theory in each of these areas.

## **8. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

At the beginning of this thesis I argued that Corporate Identity, Organisational Identity, and the internal component of an organisation's Employer Brand are conceptually identical when seen through the lens of Social Identity Theory. I then explained that the term 'Corporate Identity' would be used throughout this thesis, in keeping with the language used in the marketing literature. However, because this thesis is built on a multi-disciplinary framework, it contributes to two separate areas of literature: Corporate Identity and Employer Branding. It also helps to explain how insights from the literature on Organisational Identity can enhance our understanding of issues relating to Corporate Identity. The terms Organisational Identity and Employer Brand are re-introduced in this chapter, so that the contribution to each area of literature can be described in the appropriate language.

### **8.2 CONTRIBUTION TO THEORY**

#### **8.2.1 Corporate Identity**

By depicting Corporate Identity through the lens of Social Identity Theory, this study offers a significant step forward in the discourse between Corporate and Organisational Identity, which has been hailed as the key to advancing theory in this area (He and Balmer, 2007). This discourse has previously been hampered by differences relating to philosophical perspective, purpose of inquiry and level of analysis (Cornelissen et al, 2007; Hulberg, 2006). However, in my thesis I explain how the principles of Social Identity Theory can help to bridge this gap.

More specifically, this study contributes to the literature on Corporate Identity in three ways:



(1) This study identifies five categories of attributes that employees use to describe their organisation's identity: organisation, employment, product/service, construed external image, and product/service. The study also breaks these categories down into their twelve constituent sub-categories. By applying the lens of Social Identity Theory and drawing on previous research in the area of Organisational Identification, it is possible to show that these categories and sub-categories of attribute collectively shape employee behaviour in predictable ways. This is an important link because employee behaviour has the potential to support or undermine all other forms of management-controlled communications.

(2) This study also identifies three criteria that can be used to describe the individual connections between attributes or dimensions of an organisation's identity - content, importance, and direction of causality. By using these three criteria to map the individual connections, it is possible to uncover the pattern of connections among the attributes of an organisation's identity, and to identify the core dimension of the organisation's identity. This makes it possible to develop a more complete picture of the organisation's identity.

(3) Corporate identity has frequently been described as a source of competitive advantage because it provides a source of sustainable differentiation from competing organisations (E.g. Melewar et al, 2005; Melewar and Jenkins, 2002). However, researchers in this area have been confounded by the 'uniqueness paradox' (Martin et al, 1983); while many organisations claim to be unique, their claims to uniqueness are often identical. This study helps to address the uniqueness paradox by identifying two specific aspects of corporate identity that are unique to each organisation: the combination of attributes that constitute identity - particularly the distinctive attributes of the core dimension - and the pattern of connections that bind them into a coherent whole.

### 8.2.2 Employer Branding

The premise of employer brand theory is that an attractive employer brand can help a firm to attract, retain, and motivate employees ‘who can add value to the company and are able to deliver on the company’s brand promise’ (Uncles and Moroko, 2005). This idea has received a great deal of attention, in both the academic and practitioner press, and there is a large body of research that has sought to explain what makes an employer brand attractive to *potential* employees. However, as far as I am aware, there are no previous academic studies that have specifically sought to explain what makes an employer brand attractive to *current* employees. This represents a critical gap in the literature because it is *current* employees who must ‘personify and deliver the brand promise’ through their interactions with a firm’s external stakeholders (Schultz and de Chernatony, 2002). Therefore, the objective of my research was to explain what makes an organisation’s employer brand attractive to current employees. More specifically, this study contributes to employer brand theory in four ways:

(1) This study reveals that employees may assign considerable importance to attributes in any or all of the categories identified above: Organisation, Employment, Product or Service, Stakeholder Relations, and Reputation. Since previous conceptualizations of the employer brand have tended to focus solely on issues related to employment, these findings suggest that it would be efficacious for employer brand researchers to adopt a broader perspective; by considering the impact of attributes in all of these categories, it should be possible to more accurately assess the attractiveness of an organisation’s employer brand.

(2) This study shows that the criteria used by employees to evaluate the attractiveness of their own organisation’s employer brand are specific to each organisation. As explained earlier, this finding is consistent with the principles of Social Identity Theory. However it directly contradicts the fundamental assumptions that underlie previous

research in this area and suggests that different methods will be needed when studying employer brand attractiveness from the perspective of this current (versus potential) employees.

(3) The study reveals three factors that influence the value that employees assign to specific attributes: inherent value, relationships with other attributes, and characteristics of the individual employee. In doing so, it helps to explain why employees' evaluative criteria vary within and across organisations.

(4) This study shows that the perceived attractiveness of an organisation's employer brand, from the perspective of current employees, is dependent on three factors: the unique collection of attributes that constitute the organisation's employer brand, the value (positive or negative) that employees attach to specific attributes, and the relative importance that they assign to those attributes. These findings should support the development of new methodologies to study employer brand attractiveness from the perspective of current employees because they call attention to the three variables that need to be measured.

### **8.3 CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE**

This study contributes practice in three ways. First, it demonstrates a fundamental flaw in the 'employer of choice' thesis; it shows that the criteria used by employees to evaluate the attractiveness of their own organisation's employer brand are specific to each organisation, and this implies that a tailored approach is likely to be more effective. Second, by identifying the specific categories of attribute that employees use to describe and evaluate their organisation, the study may help firms to dramatically reduce the time and cost of researching their own employer brands. Third, it provides a methodology that can be used by managers in many different ways: it can be used to identify attributes of their own firm's employer brand, to determine which of those attributes are considered most important by employees, to identify the

specific strengths and weakness of the existing employer brand, and to measure changes in that employer brand over time. In short, this study suggests that employer brand managers need to understand what makes their own organisation attractive to current employees – rather than relying on best practice from other organisations - and it provides a methodology that can help them to do this.

#### **8.4 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have explained how the results of this study contribute to theory and practice. More specifically, I have argued that these results provide important insights regarding the nature and management of two separate constructs: Corporate Identity and the Employer Brand. They also help to explain what makes an organisation's Corporate Identity attractive to its employees. In doing so, they shed light on a question that has not previously been studied, and provide a useful platform for further research in this area.

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## Appendix A: Stage 1 Questionnaire

### EMPLOYER BRAND QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire is designed to help us understand how you see XYZ, both as an organisation and as an employer. Your responses will remain completely confidential. Results of the study will be reported to XYZ after all the data is collected, but only in an aggregate form. Therefore please feel free to answer each question as fully and as honestly as possible.

Participation in this study is, of course, entirely voluntary. However we value your opinion and hope that you will take a few moments to share it with us.

Once you have completed both sections (A and B) of the questionnaire, please email your responses and your research ID to [rachael.maxwell@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:rachael.maxwell@cranfield.ac.uk) Alternatively, you can email your responses to XXXX and she will forward them on to me.

### SECTION A: XYZ'S ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY

#### Instructions to Respondent

When answering the following questions, think about your company in terms of those qualities that are most central (defining), distinctive (distinguishable from other companies), and enduring (long-term). Think about your company as a whole, and not in terms of specific individuals or departments. Also, please answer in terms of how the company is rather than how you would ideally like it to be.

#### Question 1

Please complete the sentence, "My organisation is \_\_\_\_\_." ten times however you think is most appropriate. On the second line for each question, please explain your answer in more detail.

1. My organisation is .....  
(more detail).....

2. My organisation is .....  
(more detail).....

3. My organisation is .....  
(more detail).....

4. My organisation is .....  
(more detail).....

5. My organisation is .....  
(more detail).....

6. My organisation is .....  
(more detail).....

7. My organisation is .....  
(more detail).....

8. My organisation is .....  
(more detail).....

9. My organisation is .....

(more detail).....

10. My organisation is .....

(more detail).....

**Question 2**

Please take a moment to write about EITHER an actual event that was troubling to your company as an organisation or a hypothetical event that would be troubling to your company as an organisation if it occurred. Why was or would this event be troubling to your organisation?

**Question 3**

If your company were a person, describe him or her.

**Question 4**

What do you think is the most accurate motto of your organisation?

**SECTION B: XYZ'S IDENTITY AS AN EMPLOYER**

Instructions to Respondent

Imagine that a close friend of yours has just received a job offer from XYZ. He or she is trying to decide whether to accept the offer and you want to make sure that he or she has all the necessary information to make an informed decision. When answering the

following questions it is therefore important to include both the positive and negative issues, and to be as specific as possible.

**(1) Please describe what it is like to work for XYZ.**

**(2) What attributes do you think a person needs to possess in order to succeed at XYZ?**

**(3) Is there anything else that you would like to tell your friend in order to help him or her decide whether to come and work for XYZ?**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY!

## **Appendix B: Changes made to the stage 1 questionnaire at Sports Inc**

In order to gain access at Sports Inc, I agreed to make the following 4 changes:

Change 1: The term 'enduring (long-term)' was omitted from for the 'Instructions to Respondent' for section A.

Rationale: Since the organisation as a whole was temporary, managers felt that 'enduring' was not a relevant criterion for describing its identity.

Change 2: The first sentence of question A1 was re-written as follows:

Original version: 'Please complete the sentence "Sports Inc is \_\_\_\_\_" ten times however you think is most appropriate.

Revised version: Thinking about words to describe Sports Inc, please complete the sentence "Sports Inc is \_\_\_\_\_" ten times.

Rationale: Managers at Sports Inc requested this change because they considered the original wording to be overly academic and thought this might be off-putting to their employees. Since the meaning of the question remained the same, and since I too was anxious not to put-off potential respondents, I judged this to be an acceptable change.

Change 3: Question 4 was omitted.

Rationale: This is the one change that I saw as a potential cause for concern. Managers at Sports Inc were adamant, however, that this question be removed; their concern was that it might cause people to question the official motto. I therefore reviewed Brickson's (2005) explanation of the rationale behind each question and concluded that this change might be justified on the basis of an overlap between the questions. Each question is based on a different aspect of the identity concept. For example the premise of question A2 is that identity determines what kind of event will be troubling for an organisation (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) and the premise of question A4 is that identity captures 'who we are' as an organisation (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Therefore the perspectives are different, but it would be surprising if the answer to each question was mutually exclusive.

Change 4: Three questions about organisational change were added to the end of the questionnaire.

Rationale: Managers at Sports Inc were interested in finding out which aspects of the organisation employees wanted to change, and they asked that this be addressed in the questionnaire. Since this did not require any further changes to the questions about Sports Inc's employer brand, I agreed. The questions were shown on a separate page at the end of the questionnaire, under the heading 'Section C: Change', and the answers were not included in the analysis.

## Appendix C: Stage 2 Survey

### SECTION A

***A1. Please indicate the functional area in which you are currently employed***

***A2. Please indicate your current job role level***

***A3. Gender***

### SECTION B

#### Instructions for Respondent

Both of the questions in this section include a list of attributes. The list of attributes is identical for each question, so the questions may seem repetitive. However this repetition is essential to the objectives of the survey; by asking you to respond to the same list of attributes in two different ways, we will be able to identify the specific strengths and weaknesses of Sports Inc's employer brand. Therefore we understand that answering these questions may be a little tedious, but would truly appreciate your patience in doing so.

***B1. We would like to understand how you, as an individual, see Sports Inc.***

Please indicate, on a scale of 1(strongly agree) to 5(disagree), whether you believe that each of the following attributes provides an accurate description of Sports Inc.

If you do not feel that you have any basis for deciding whether a particular attribute provides an accurate description of Sports Inc, you should leave the associated responses blank and go on the next attribute. Please keep in mind, however, that

there are no right or wrong answers; what we really want to know is how you really see the organisation.

***B2. We would also like to better understand what you find attractive about Sports Inc. More specifically we would like to know like to know which attributes you consider attractive and how important it is, to you, that Sports Inc possesses each of the these attributes.***

Step 1: Eliminate irrelevant attributes.

In order to eliminate irrelevant attributes, please allocate 0 to each of the following:

- (a) attributes that you do not care about
- (b) attributes that you consider unattractive
- (c) attributes that do not, in your opinion, provide an accurate description of Sports Inc

Note: If you do not feel that you have any basis for deciding whether a particular attributes provides an accurate description of Sports Inc, you should allocate 0 to that attribute. As before, however, please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers; what we really want to know is what you find attractive about Sports Inc.

Step 2: Indicate how important you consider each of the remaining attributes

Consider how important it is, to you, that Sports Inc possesses each of the remaining attributes. Then divide 100 points among them, allocating points to each attribute in proportion with its importance. For example if you consider one attribute to be twice as important as another, you should allocate twice as many points to that attribute.

The total number of points must add up to exactly 100, but you may divide them up in any way you wish.



Step 3: Make sure that points allocated add up to exactly 100

Just below the list of attributes there is a box showing a running total of points allocated. To avoid a 'validation error', please make sure that the total number is exactly 100 before you press 'continue'.

**SECTION C**

Instructions for Respondent

Please respond to each of the following statements on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree)

***C1. When someone criticizes (name of organisation), it feels like a personal insult***

***C2. I am very interested in what others think about (name of organisation)***

***C3. When I talk about this organisation, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'***

***C4. This organisation's successes are my successes***

***C5. When someone praises this organisation, it feels like a personal compliment***

***C6. If a story in the media criticized the organisation, I would feel embarrassed.***

## Appendix D: Quotations describing the dimensions and sub-dimensions of each organisation's identity

### ORGANISATION

	School of Management	School of Science and Technology	School of Engineering	Sports, Inc	Film, Inc	TV, Inc
<p><b>Demographics</b></p> <p>(Size, structure history, name, location and site characteristics)</p>	<p>'Relatively small'</p> <p>'UK-centric – is not a truly global business school'</p> <p>'Long established'</p> <p>'Aerospace and military are part of our heritage.'</p> <p>'we are actually pretty isolated from a geographical point of view'</p> <p>'It's close to the airport and London, which is great for consulting work!'</p>	<p>'A growing organisation – income and number of activities are increasing'</p> <p>'I find it regrettable that any reference to science or technology or our university status has been dropped from our name.'</p> <p>'Is well established, having started as (previous name) years ago.'</p> <p>'well placed geographically – road and rail access, LHR and BRS airports...'</p>	<p>'Big'</p> <p>'Technically sound; perfect in infrastructure and requirements'</p> <p>'extensive and splintered; includes a wide range of activities and interests, some of which don't seem to link with any of the others'</p> <p>'Built on its history – 60 years of aerospace and engineering activities'</p> <p>'far from the madding crowd'</p> <p>'Calm and quiet place; peaceful and no unnecessary chaos'</p>	<p>'Will continue to grow in staff numbers'</p> <p>'Has lots of different functions and activities'</p> <p>'Sports Inc is posh – the office accommodation gives that impression'</p> <p>'Young – it has not been around for long'</p> <p>'We have gone from being a start-up to employing over 200 people in under 2 years.'</p> <p>'Posh; the office accommodation gives that impression''</p>	<p>'Global – in almost every single country of the world.'</p> <p>'International – it caters for the international market'</p> <p>'Steeped in heritage... We've been real pioneers in the film industry.'</p>	<p>'Big – we employ over 1000 people'</p> <p>'Big – with a whole department for every little thing'</p> <p>'Big – because it is a large employer in the TV industry and because it makes lots of programmes'</p> <p>'is a huge organisation and seems to be getting bigger every year'</p> <p>'global, with a presence on every continent'</p> <p>'Established; we've been doing what we do a relatively long time for the industry.'</p>

		‘campus is a few miles from the nearest major town’				
<b>Organisational Ethos</b>	<p>‘The school has a managerially professional ethos (as opposed to an academically professional one)’</p> <p>‘Traditional; has quite an old-fashioned feel!’</p> <p>‘Set in its ways’</p> <p>‘Ethical’</p> <p>‘Open to new ideas and suggestions’</p>	<p>‘Conservative’</p> <p>‘A fine sense of cynicism keeps people going’</p> <p>‘outlook is positive and upbeat’</p> <p>‘Quite old fashioned and regimented’</p>	<p>‘it is a school that encourages creativity and innovation’</p> <p>‘sometimes resistant to change’</p>	<p>‘Is creative and bold’</p> <p>‘It’s very organic and continually changes.’</p> <p>‘Innovative’</p> <p>‘Politically charged’</p> <p>‘it is quite dynamic in some areas but also quite bureaucratic on other areas.’</p> <p>‘quite a heavy-drinking “hard-working, hard-playing” culture’</p>	<p>‘mixed – it’s kind of like media, with corporate in the mix, but it seems to work’</p> <p>‘Process-driven. We do have a lot of processes and protocols, to the point where we probably aren’t as creative as you imagine working in the film industry.’</p> <p>‘it’s more corporate than any other company I’m aware of’</p> <p>‘Young and energetic’</p>	<p>‘Is entrepreneurial’</p> <p>‘we are always pushing the barriers and taking risks’</p> <p>‘The attitude of the company seems young in terms of youthful in terms of ideas, fresh thinking’</p> <p>‘Very commercial in its outlook’</p> <p>‘values controversial, off-the-wall ideas’</p> <p>‘Most accurate motto – ‘Big ideas, big exposure, big money’</p>
<b>Organisational Success</b>	<p>‘Satisfactorily underperforming’</p> <p>‘an impressive centre of knowledge’</p> <p>‘is a leader in its field – look at the</p>	<p>‘The pre-eminent university for things (to do with the Government)’</p> <p>‘A centre of excellence’ (in its field)</p>	<p>‘Reaching new heights in academia and industry’</p> <p>‘is successful; we have excellent student recruitment figures and commercial and</p>	<p>‘People genuinely seem to believe that we can deliver the task ahead of us and overcome any challenges in doing so.’</p>	<p>‘Financially driven’</p> <p>‘It’s doing very well at the moment’</p> <p>‘We’re in the top five studios’</p>	<p>‘we are always leading the way in terms of new deals digital media’</p> <p>‘track record of global hits’</p>

	rankings and reputation it has'	'a world class institution'	academic successes.'  'One of the top schools in the UK'  'Best in its field; best in Europe, amongst the top in the world'			
<b>Strategic Outlook</b>	'Unambitious, conservative, safe'  'We develop our brand slowly as a consequence of good work rather than with a well resourced strategic plan'  'It is difficult to see a strategic plan or common goal either at departmental or higher level'	'Is always on the alert for business opportunities'  'good enough/no ambition. No effort made to excel.'  'Ambitious but wary'  'not readily adaptable to changing circumstances'	'Progressive; we are moving ahead with technologies in teaching'  'the centre for forward thinking'  'we are moving ahead with technologies in teaching'  'Following; we don't seem to be setting the agenda on a number of fronts.....Floating; we don't seem to know where we want to go'	'Agile; it does things quickly when it wants to.'	'Stable – quite an important one for the time we're going through.'  'Cautiously going places'  'I wouldn't necessarily say that it's completely forward thinking or innovative, but I think that it's trying to be'  As a person: 'he like things steady but will occasionally take risks.'  'International in its outlook'	'looks set to have a great future'  'the future with the company looks bright'  'Ambitious; it has offices worldwide and is always looking to expand'  'I think they are financially astute so financially secure'
<b>Management of the Organisation</b>  (Leadership,	'lacking leadership'  'Reasonably	'Top heavy. Too many chiefs and not enough	'Streamlined; all processes in place with less scope for chaos'	'Well lead'  'It is not clear how decisions are made	'A well-organized company with a definitive structure'	'is very un-bureaucratic. Due to the creative environment at TV Inc,

<p>operations, communications)</p>	<p>efficient’  ‘Is financially driven’  ‘There is quite a bit of bureaucracy at times’</p>	<p>Indians’  ‘Weak at leadership – not much evidence of positive leadership from the top’  ‘The bureaucracy of the university privileges income over academic excellence’  ‘A generally well run and customer-focused organisation’  ‘Spending money needlessly’  ‘Is not as effective as it should be about communicating with its staff’  ‘not all the support services provide the right level of support to academic staff’</p>	<p>‘meetings and work allocation is well organized.’  ‘Departments and groups don’t seem to collaborate much,’  ‘we don’t know what other groups are doing let alone coordinate our activities’</p>	<p>and what levels of accountability individuals at each level have’  ‘Is unorganized but getting better’  ‘Bureaucratic and process driven’  ‘Is not great at day-to-day HR or IT’  ‘the internal systems are not as developed as they could be.’  ‘is not great at day-to-day- HR or IT’  ‘Bureaucratic and process driven’  ‘a collection of specialist silos’ (‘all the world’s experts in their area, little interest in other areas’), and wished that there was ‘less friction between departments.’</p>	<p>‘Well-structured’  ‘Everyone knows what they’re doing, it’s a very well thought through process. Each department gets the best out of what they do and there’s alot of communication’  ‘What could be a little bit better would be the internal communication’</p>	<p>rules, procedures, and necessary form filling-in is sometimes ignored’  ‘Disconnected; not enough communication between certain departments’</p>
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**EMPLOYMENT**

	<b>Business School</b>	<b>Technical School</b>	<b>Engineering School</b>	<b>Sports Inc</b>	<b>Film, Inc</b>	<b>TV, Inc</b>
<p><b>Management of employees</b></p> <p>(Relationship between managers and employees)</p>	<p>‘Hierarchical’</p> <p>‘Does not develop its talent’</p> <p>‘Poor quality of line management; not many care’</p> <p>‘Everyone has their part to play and is valued for it’</p> <p>‘The school gives much power to the hierarchy, notably heads of community. Some schools give far more autonomy and democracy to academics.’</p> <p>‘Autonomous compared with practice but controlled compared with many universities.’</p> <p>‘Is over-working some employees and under-working others’</p> <p>‘Unreliable – not a place that can be relied on to look after you’</p> <p>‘deliver results and you will (mostly) be valued’</p>	<p>‘More concerned with the relationship it has with The Government than with its own employees.’</p> <p>‘Should have a better idea of what is going on below management level.’</p>	<p>‘An opportunity to explore new ideas with some freedom’</p> <p>‘Managers are usually approachable and sympathetic’</p> <p>‘There is more emphasis on working with other companies and meeting deliverable targets as opposed to publishing academic results in research journals’</p> <p>‘There is emphasis on time management and efficiency in achieving results’</p> <p>‘If beyond this you have the drive to push the activity in a new direction then, very often, encouragement and support will be give</p>	<p>‘Is committed to looking after the welfare of its staff’</p> <p>‘At Sports, Inc you are encouraged to express your views and opinions are regularly sought. In addition, information is share from the top down in a very open manner.’</p> <p>‘There is a very, very strong sense that a few senior people hold all the power... staff feel little empowerment to step outside of their immediate functional areas. ’</p> <p>‘There isn’t a rigid hierarchy within the organisation.’</p> <p>‘You are</p>	<p>‘Appreciates their staff. They see you as more of a person, rather than a number’</p> <p>‘You have to work very hard and occasionally long hours, but the rewards are there.’</p> <p>‘While you will get praise if you’re doing a good job, you will get told if you’re doing a bad job. It is quite an honest placed to work in that respect.’</p> <p>‘It pushes individuals to work to their full – like their</p>	<p>‘they do not suffer fools and will expect you to work hard and communicate’</p> <p>‘you would be valued and have the opportunity to grow with the business’</p> <p>‘sometimes not everybody is treated and valued equally’</p> <p>‘Collaborative – we make decisions by consensus’</p> <p>‘prepared to nurture new people and ideas’</p> <p>‘there’s no place for weakness and that pastoral care is almost non-existent.’</p>

			<p>for you to go ahead.'</p> <p>'Staff are overworked'</p> <p>'We are all overworked'</p> <p>'Very busy and overworked!'</p> <p>One respondent even claimed that single most important attribute a person needs to possess in order to succeed with the School is 'an ability to win funding, from any source'</p> <p>'it is a school that encourages creativity and motivation'</p>	<p>empowered to make things happen and to make a difference.'</p> <p>'In Sports Inc you're listened to whether you're an 18 year old school leaver, a PA or a director with years of experience.'</p> <p>Relationships, roles and accountabilities need to be tested and affirmed in almost every activity.'</p> <p>'prevailing sense of putting yourself under unnecessary pressure to deliver minor milestones'</p> <p>'long hours, lack of resources'</p> <p>'We are asked to think differently in everything we do.'</p>	<p>development and things like that, and pushes them to be top of their game sort of thing.'</p> <p>'You won't find people taking down to you s if they're above you. That sort of things just doesn't happen'</p> <p>'You do have the "We're directors – we shouldn't have to do x, y and z," so they do sometimes push stuff onto you that you may not want to do.'</p>	
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<p><b>Management of Employees</b></p> <p>(Managers' expectations of employees)</p>	<p>'I am encouraged to take on new challenges'</p> <p>'I need to bring in research funding in order to make my role sustainable'</p> <p>'You are expected to perform at a high level at all times and across all types of situations – teaching, research, meetings, working with students'</p>	<p>'Most academic staff are expected to generate business'</p> <p>'You are expected to have a certain amount of practical knowledge/expertise'</p> <p>'not such strong pressure to publish'</p> <p>'you have to be self-motivated'</p> <p>'You are given the freedom to pursue your own agenda'</p>	<p>'Hands off; as long as you are achieving your targets it does not seem to matter how you got there.'</p> <p>Most accurate motto: 'sink or swim'</p> <p>'You can work at your own pace and set realistic goals'</p> <p>'There is very little delegation of tasks at Cranfield which is fine generally as the idea is probably that you should be looking for how you can do things and then getting on with it. However, the danger is that if you are the sort of person who doesn't possess these attributes, then you could find yourself with very little to do on a day-to-day basis.'</p>	<p>'We are asked to think differently in everything we do.'</p> <p>'Working here demands a personal commitment – it's not for 9–5'ers'</p> <p>'Significant workloads with limited staff require long hours'</p> <p>'Is committed to looking after the welfare of its staff'</p> <p>'You are empowered to make things happen and to make a difference.'</p> <p>'Brilliant, exciting, challenging hard work'</p>	<p>'sometimes they expect too much of you – in terms of volume of work and in terms of what you can achieve'</p> <p>'They don't tolerate slackness'</p>	<p>'Great fun, very hard work, long hours... alot is expected of you and you will have to just get on with it'</p> <p>'it is hard work as there is lots to do'</p> <p>'requires a high degree of commitment and alot of time'</p>
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<p><b>Management of Employees</b></p> <p>(Variety of work and level of challenge)</p>	<p>'The work is hard and relentless'</p> <p>'Always new challenges to take on should you wish'</p> <p>'Rewarding, challenging, hard work'</p> <p>'You'll be teaching at least twice as much as you might elsewhere'</p>	<p>'You teach students who are under-qualified but prepared to listen. This is stimulating and testing.'</p>	<p>'Challenging; trying to do things for the first time'</p>	<p>'The work is varied and very exciting.'</p> <p>'Brilliant, exciting, challenging hard work'</p>		<p>'Interesting work'</p>
<p><b>Management of Employees</b></p> <p>(Criteria for Career Progression)</p>	<p>'The rules are not too complicated in terms of how to progress'</p>	<p>'Promotion is very sticky – go in at the grade you want to have and do not listen to promises that promotion will pick you up if you do the right things.'</p> <p>'career progression is very heavily determined by your research record'</p>	<p>'clear progression path for promotion'</p>	<p>'Feels like to get ahead you need to network with important people'</p>	<p>'There is definitely career progression'</p> <p>'You've got to be seen to be going above and beyond if you want to get recognized more'</p>	<p>'It's a meritocracy'</p> <p>In order to get ahead, you need to be the kind of person who 'can talk the hind legs off a donkey and can drink most people under the table. Ruthlessness and ambition are a must too.'</p>
<p><b>Benefits of Employment (Economic)</b></p>	<p>'The pay's good'</p> <p>'Depending on your job title or position, you may find the salary not that competitive'</p>	<p>'The university will promise you the opportunity to do consultancy to generate extra income and then make it really difficult for you</p>	<p>You will be paid well with excellent benefits and you will be treated well.</p>	<p>'Good remuneration'</p>	<p>'Don't come to Film Inc if you're expecting to become a millionaire'</p>	<p>'A lot of money is invested in employees both with remuneration and with extra things</p>

		to do it.'			'Expect to work hard for a very average amount of money'	such as parties' 'there is so much investment in staff (such as training and regular salary reviews)'
<b>Benefits of Employment (Functional)</b>	'Good opportunities for self development'  'You will have the respect of peers and managers the Cranfield name does help you make things happen in the UK'  'Great for... practitioner contacts, developing teaching skills'	'Good terms and conditions of employment'  'Great colleagues and conditions of employment'  'As a lecturer or researcher the prospects for career development, improving research status and gaining experience at an international level are very good.'	'There are training opportunities'  'working hours seem well adhered to, so a work life balance is something one can easily achieve here'  'opportunities exist for staff to improve and expand their skills by attending workshops/courses and other events... IT may not be obvious at first, but over a longer period of time it will help you to achieve bigger and better career objectives.'  'They are flexible in the hours I work'	'You need to understand that you are being recruited for your skills and you will not be 'trained' in a more traditional sense to deliver your role.'  'The experience gained at Sports Inc will set everyone in good stead career wise once The Event is over/it is time to move on.'	'Great organisation to work for in terms of the benefits that you are given,'  'Promotes from within, career development, career growth.'  'Really good access to various training courses.'	'it's potentially a great spring board to get work elsewhere. Looks good on the CV.'

<b>Benefits of Employment (Psychological)</b>	'I am proud to say that I work for one of the "best" schools in field'	'A strong sense of belonging'	'The job is challenging and rewarding'  'There is a positive sense of security to be part of such a large organization as well as to be one of the first to hear about new developments being made in the engineering industry.'  'An opportunity to explore new ideas with some freedom.'	'It gives me a warm glow to think about the difference that the legacy and opportunity of The Event will make to people's lives in East London especially.'	'It's fun, it's rewarding, it's challenging'  'I feel comfortable in this organisation, like I'm part of something'	'fun'  'exciting'
<b>Benefits of Employment (Leisure)</b>	'Beside the Christmas party there aren't occasions to meet the colleagues... There is nothing related to leisure time in Cranfield'	'The School of Science and Technology does not offer all the trappings of normal university life (not shops, restaurants, limited sporting or other clubs)'  'There are various sporting clubs/activities for anyone to join but little social life for (non-Client)		'All my friends and family are always excited by the fact that I am working for Sports Inc.'  'You also get to meet current and former athletes and attend amazing events from time to time.'  'There are unusual and distinctive	'You will get the chance to go to film premieres and film screenings'  'You get summer hours, which are great'	

		personnel'		opportunities to see and participate in many events, and meet many interesting people'		
<b>Work environment</b>	<p>'Stimulating – there is always lots going on'</p> <p>'Exciting, challenging, opportunistic, real-world, intense - a pressure cooker, immersing, never a dull moment'</p> <p>'friendly and inclusive'</p> <p>'Our focus on postgraduate/postexperience creates a different ambience to other university based business schools'</p> <p>'A friendly place to work'</p> <p>'Relatively relaxed'</p> <p>'Exhilarating. Buzzy, busy, over-full of opportunities.'</p> <p>'very corporate'</p> <p>'open, flexible, and structured to be reasonably conducive to meeting informally to share ideas – open areas, multiple</p>	<p>'If you think you are going to live in an academically stimulating atmosphere, go elsewhere.'</p> <p>'nothing exciting seems to happen – not a stimulating environment'</p> <p>'Kafkaesque – corridors of close doors behind which silent people are working.'</p> <p>'Stimulating environment'</p> <p>'A relaxed work environment'</p> <p>'Dull. Nothing exciting seems to happen – not a stimulating</p>	<p>'It's quite a pressured environment'</p> <p>'Very unorganised and corporate - feels like working in a bank'</p> <p>'Is corporate.... the dress code, office layout and location, and organisational hierarchy all contribute to this.'</p>	<p>'The working environment is buzzy and fast-paced.'</p> <p>'There is always something going on and something changing.'</p> <p>'The office is relaxed'</p> <p>'It is surprising how quiet the office environment is.'</p>	<p>'it is massive. So if you're looking for somewhere quiet and intimate it won't be like that at all'</p> <p>'The office is grim. The building's horrible. I think that for somewhere that's inspiring on so many levels, the actual location – it could be a nicer location'</p> <p>'It's quite a high-powered, ambitious atmosphere to work in'</p>	<p>'fun'</p> <p>'light-hearted atmosphere'</p> <p>Most accurate motto – 'Work hard, play hard'</p> <p>'very creative environment'</p> <p>'fun, relaxed, creative environment'</p> <p>'the office is filled with laughter'</p> <p>'there is a creative vibe around the building'</p> <p>'The atmosphere appears to be laid back, but there is an undertone of stress and anxiety'</p>

	coffee stations'	environment'				'it's a fun, young place to work'
<b>Workforce</b> (Personal characteristics)	<p>'We have a lot of people with such strong personalities that they would not be contained by the very strongest of corporate identities'</p> <p>'If you want to be surrounded by driven and dedicated people, then this is a good place to work'</p> <p>'colleagues are friendly and supportive but also committed'</p> <p>'The staff I have worked with are not only very accomplished academics, but genuinely nice people as well'</p> <p>'Our staff remains largely British'</p>	<p>'Is full of clever and entertaining people'</p> <p>'If you have Service connections, you are likely to fit in well with the students and the majority of the staff.'</p> <p>'Employs some first division academics'</p> <p>'Great colleagues'</p> <p>'The people are what make The School unique'</p> <p>'Is the only place where academia and (employees of The Government) work together'</p>	<p>'The staff and students are really friendly and helpful'</p> <p>'Diverse. It has many people from many backgrounds specializing in many subjects.'</p> <p>'Colleagues are hard working'</p> <p>'friendly people'</p> <p>'Great faculty; excellent teaching staff who know their job'</p> <p>'International; we have students and staff from all over the world'</p> <p>'Male-dominated; high proportion of academic staff and students are male'</p>	<p>'A young workforce'</p> <p>'bright passionate people' 'Sports Inc employees will keep working until the job is done and won't give up.'</p> <p>'Not as many parents in the organisation as you might expect in a company of our size (especially women)'</p> <p>'Diverse... a fantastic mix of experience and people from all different backgrounds'</p> <p>'Sports Inc employees will keep working until the job is done'</p>	<p>'The people I've come across are straight forward and honest.'</p> <p>'in terms of people from all over the world, it's very diverse'</p> <p>'Full of good people'</p> <p>'People are really friendly and nice - good bunch of people to work with'</p> <p>'There are a lot of creative minds here'</p>	<p>'the best creative talent and senior commercial people in the business'</p> <p>'clever and eloquent people who are outgoing and not afraid to speak out'</p> <p>'has lots of creative people working for us'</p> <p>'the people are generally really friendly'</p> <p>'lots of gossip'</p> <p>'at times (in certain departments) there can be bitchiness around the organisation'</p> <p>'almost all the senior roles are held by men or</p>

						women without children or families'
<b>Workforce</b> (Social dynamics)	<p>'I feel like I could to other members of faculty for support, and that if they had the time they would help me out'</p> <p>'Mostly collegiate – most faculty try to help each other out'</p> <p>'It's like working for a family firm'</p> <p>'A bit cold – not much is done to build a sense of belonging'</p> <p>'People talk to each other and follow each others' personal lives.'</p> <p>'About presence – people judge each other by how they come across face-to-face'</p> <p>'Show kindness and interest and people will be kind to and interested in you: as long as you have the presence to be worth knowing'</p>	<p>'isolated groups and individuals working alone'</p> <p>'A close knit community'</p> <p>'Most people get on well together'</p> <p>'There is a culture of mutual respect within the School which helps to create a satisfactory working environment.'</p>	<p>'I feel respected by my colleagues'</p> <p>'close knit community'</p> <p>'This school is like a building full of self-employed scientists!'</p> <p>'I find my manager and other colleagues are supportive and friendly.'</p>	<p>'Office and leadership politics play a bigger role than they should in getting things done.'</p> <p>'a community of passionate people'</p> <p>'People genuinely seem to get on with each other and take an interest in each other's lives, both in work and outside of work.'</p> <p>'is a collection of specialists in silos; all the world's experts in their area, little interest in other areas'</p>	<p>'You instantly feel comfortable when you walk in – part of the family'</p> <p>'we're very much a team, so we all have goals and objectives and we work towards those as a team.'</p> <p>'It's a very social company because it's quite young – the age range – the age range is quite young.'</p>	

**STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS**

	<b>Business School</b>	<b>Technical School</b>	<b>Engineering School</b>	<b>Sports Inc</b>	<b>Film Inc</b>	<b>TV Inc</b>
<b>Key stakeholder groups<sup>8</sup></b>	The University  Clients/industry as a whole  Students	The University  The Government  Other clients  Students	Other educational institutions (including schools within the same university)  Industry (specifically the engineering and aerospace industry)  Students	Governing body (Mancom)  The media  General public  Various other private and public sector groups	Parent company  US studio  Customers  Other companies within the Film Inc family	
<b>Description of relationship</b>	‘Is embedded in a supportive institution’  ‘The school can be better integrated into the university as a whole’  ‘The school is very close to industry’  ‘It’s married to industry in many ways’  ‘The school seems to	‘Is the poor relation of proper (Name of The University)’  ‘A faculty of The University’  ‘A provider of education to The Government’  ‘I don’t think our transition into the new contract with the Government has	‘Industrially focused; we have close links to industry’  ‘We do good, well-rounded projects for external clients’  It has a ‘cyclic and symbiotic relationship with industry’  ‘Staff and students	‘There is a significant interaction with a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders’  ‘High profile. There is constant media attention to everything we do.’  ‘Sometimes Sports Inc is buffeted by events and other organisations’	‘We’re owned by (the parent company), so we’re run by the parent company. Simple as that.’  ‘Even though our heritage is in the US, I think the studio itself sees itself very much as a US Entity. We like to think	‘Interesting work, with high profile organizations which regularly changes’  ‘Rarely awarded by its peers’

<sup>8</sup> This specific section does not show a list of quotations, but a list of stakeholder groups that were mentioned by respondents

	<p>have many corporate partnerships with top firms'</p> <p>'it has a high ranking that employers value'</p> <p>'A good deal of the income for the School is from industry'</p> <p>'Powerful network; alumni network of 12,000 in 115 countries'</p> <p>'The clients and students are all first rate'</p> <p>'practitioner oriented'</p> <p>'mostly client focused – attempts to provide a quality experience'</p> <p>'customer focused – the customer always comes first'</p> <p>'Do tend to go the extra mile to help clients and students'</p>	<p>been an easy ride.'</p> <p>'Few ties with the University'</p> <p>'Interaction with students is good'</p> <p>'customer focused'</p> <p>'A Client funded college/School'</p> <p>'Depends heavily on one customer (The Government) for its funds and this makes it nervous'</p> <p>'The School is.... a bit infra dig in the eyes of the University.'</p> <p>'not proud of its association with The University'</p>	<p>work well together'</p> <p>'Staff and students from many countries'</p> <p>'is keen on securing links with other educational institutions all over the world'</p> <p>'Is well connected with other schools (other than the School of Management)'</p>	<p>activities rather than setting the agenda'</p>	<p>that it's more global, but they tend to look after themselves.'</p> <p>'Needs to pull together more and work closer with other businesses and needs to build a better relationship – even between Home Entertainment and Theatrical'</p> <p>'organisation that makes money, is well respected... Because it's owned by (the parent company), they brought that down into Film Inc.'</p>	
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**REPUTATION**

	<b>Business School</b>	<b>Technical School</b>	<b>Engineering School</b>	<b>Sports Inc</b>	<b>Film Inc</b>	<b>TV Inc</b>
<b>General Public</b>	<p>‘Relatively unknown’</p> <p>‘It has a great reputation’</p> <p>‘Well respected in the UK’</p> <p>‘Is prestigious’</p> <p>‘A hidden gem... not widely known among the general public, but an impressive centre of knowledge’</p> <p>‘Internationally renowned... highly regarded’</p>	<p>‘Is relatively unknown’</p> <p>‘Not well known’</p>	<p>‘Low profile; I think other schools have higher profiles’</p> <p>‘Good, solid reputation’</p> <p>‘Is applied; we teach application as well as theory’</p>	<p>‘Most people know about The Event and have an opinion about it.’</p> <p>‘Is thought of as a cool place to work’</p>	<p>‘People know what Film Inc does and they know that it is a well-established business with a great heritage.’</p> <p>‘It does feel like it’s all over the world, and that everyone would know Film Inc all around the world.’</p> <p>‘It’s a brand that goes back a long way’</p>	<p>‘People only think we make one programme’</p> <p>‘Not liked in the UK, because success breeds contempt in the UK’</p> <p>‘Criticized for producing lowest common denominator programming’</p> <p>‘Is self-aware of how other people view the brand, positively and negatively’</p>
<b>Specific groups</b>	<p>‘Is respected – by practitioners (in certain geographies); by academics for its closeness to practice’</p>	<p>‘Unheard of among our client base’</p>	<p>‘Is renowned in the aerospace sector’</p> <p>‘Prestigious; is well known in Engineering and Aerospace’</p>	<p>‘High status within the Games industry’</p>		<p>‘a brand that consumers , employees, and broadcasters have to buy into’</p> <p>‘Enviied by its rivals’</p>

**PRODUCT/SERVICE**

	<b>Business School</b>	<b>Technical School</b>	<b>Engineering School</b>	<b>Sports Inc</b>	<b>Film Inc</b>	<b>TV Inc</b>
<b>Characteristics and Impact</b>	<p>'Explicitly in the mission statement and implicitly in the mission statement, the School emphasizes immediately applicable research and teaching.'</p> <p>'A lot of the work we do is immediately relevant to organisations'</p> <p>'Good at teaching'</p> <p>'We are actually pretty good in terms of our research quality.'</p> <p>'Is strong in turning management research into value for organisations'</p> <p>'Does research which makes a difference in the practice of management'</p>	<p>'a provider of postgraduate courses and short courses'</p> <p>'is about teaching more than just management and technology'</p> <p>'a specialist technology education centre'</p> <p>'a research centre in defence studies'</p> <p>'a centre for defence science consultancy'</p> <p>'undertaking high quality teaching and research'</p> <p>'Relevant to these unsettled times'</p>	<p>'Is commercial; we have a commercial focus to our work'</p> <p>'Technical; we engage in solving real world problems.'</p> <p>'Innovate; we are developing and delivering new technologies.'</p> <p>'We strive to develop students with skills for industry'</p> <p>'Is applied; we teach application as well as theory'</p> <p>'specialist /high-tech courses in the field of aviation').</p>	<p>'The cause is inspirational and the values aligned with it.'</p> <p>'One of the most exciting events every to happen in the UK'</p> <p>'A project of national importance'</p> <p>'A truly inspirational end product'</p> <p>'There is no project like it in terms of scale and complexity'</p> <p>'We have the ability to touch nearly every nation in the world with what we do'</p>		<p>'our formats do court media controversy'</p> <p>Most accurate motto: 'Groundbreaking creativity, delivered'</p> <p>Most accurate motto 'Successful commercial creations'</p> <p>'eclectic, with hits in every genre'</p> <p>'can make programmes that no other company would make'</p> <p>'I think programmes are made solely because they make money and some of them are very low quality'</p> <p>'powerful – because television is so significant in people's lives and TV Inc's output is so large'</p>

Appendix E: Conference and Journal Papers

<b>Title</b>	<b>Type of Paper</b>	<b>Submitted to</b>	<b>Status/Prizes</b>
Exploring the Symbolic Benefits of Employer Branding: An organisational Identification Perspective	Conference	AM 2007 (Doctoral Colloquium)	Accepted and presented
Developing a Social Identity Based Model of Employer Brand Image within the Firm	Conference	European Doctoral Research Conference	Accepted and presented
Motivating employees to 'Live the Brand': A comparative case study of employer brand attractiveness within the firm	Conference	AM 2009	Accepted and presented  - Winner of the Best in Track award  - Runner up for Most Relevant to Practitioners
Motivating employees to 'Live the Brand': A comparative case study of employer brand attractiveness within the firm  (Based on the paper that was presented at AM2009)	Journal	Journal of Marketing Management	Published
An 'inside-out' approach to employer branding: A comparative case study of the attractiveness of the firm	Conference	Thought Leaders International Conference in Brand Management 2010	Accepted