MANAGING THE CORPORATE REPUTATION OF A TRANSFORMING
ORGANISATION: A STUDY OF MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY OF KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Universities, like other organisations, are challenged to manage corporate identity and reputation to maintain a competitive edge. Few studies in Africa focus on the impact of internal communication on corporate identity and reputation management during organisational transformation. Thus, this study interrogated how a transforming and complex university in Kenya managed the corporate identity, image and reputation for competitive advantage. The purpose of the study was to establish how Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU) management communicated with its employees to nurture the corporate identity, image and reputation during a ten-year period of transformation. The study draws insights from in-depth interviews with 23 university management members, 178 self-administered questionnaires through random stratification of MMU employees, and content review of two MMU strategic plans ranging from 2011 to 2021. The findings suggest that MMU management used formal and interactive channels to create awareness of organisational transformation. These channels included face-to-face engagements, formal meetings and mediated communication through telephone conversations and intranet that facilitated record keeping. The management engaged in top-down and bottom-up communication to build employee trust, while employees expressed reservations of bottom-up information accuracy, suggesting information exclusion. On the contrary, the employees preferred digital and interpersonal channels for internal communication, which included telephone conversations, social media, personal visits by MMU management, and university events. Publicity activities were to disseminate information to prospective students and sponsors through selected private television, vernacular radio, and MMU radio stations, traditional print media, and the MMU website to communicate the MMU brand and image. Employees acknowledged that MMU brands itself as a leader in telecommunication, technology, mechanical, manufacturing, and media training through state-of-the-art equipment, robust faculty, and problem-solving ventures through research. The current study proposes stronger employee involvement, executive packaging and positioning, coaching successful faculty members as brand ambassadors, retraining employees, and employee participation in policy formulation to enhance new culture. In addition, these opositions will enhance the corporate identity, brand, as well as university performance, product quality, policy and processes to enrich the corporate reputation during transformation. The findings challenge university management to actively engage the corporate communication function, emphasise employee participation, and focus on the continual improvement of corporate identity and reputation management practices for competitive advantage. The current study proposes a participative, multi-layered and multi-dimensional communication model for efficient and excellent internal communication. The current study recommends that corporate communication practitioner be strategically positioned to coordinate employee engagement, utilise appropriate communication channels and counsel university management on corporate identity, image and reputation management during organisational transformation.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE THESIS

CIMA	-	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
CTS	-	Central Training School
CUE	-	Commission of University Education
JKUAT	-	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
KCCT	-	Kenya College of Communication Technology
KPTC	-	Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation
MMU	-	Multimedia University of Kenya
UoN	-	University of Nairobi

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Governments endeavour to establish world-class and competitive universities by upgrading existing institutions, establishing new ones, or merging existing ones (Salmi, 2009). The upgrading of universities results in rapid changes and transformations in the higher education sector. Froneman (2003) states that university transformations are pertinent to cope with global competition, shifting stakeholder expectations, technological development, economic restrictions and social reconstruction. These swift changes demand the interrogation of corporate communication strategies which transforming universities must adapt to attain competitive advantage and manage stakeholder expectations, especially for internal stakeholders. Sulkowski, Wozniak, and Seliga (2019) argue that institutions depend on the mother university for organisational identity. Thus, a transforming university has to interrogate its corporate identity and reputation with the internal stakeholders during the change process if it is to achieve competitive advantage. Thus, this study examines corporate reputation management of a selected transforming organisation in Kenya, namely, Multimedia University of Kenya. This chapter is devoted to stating the problem, clarifying the research objectives and questions, identifying the significance and limitations of the study, formulating assumptions, defining key terms, and outlining the structure of the study. The section begins with an overview of corporate communication and reputation management in transforming organisations.

1.1 Background to the Study

The importance of corporate communication in the success of organisations is widely acknowledged in academic literature. It is believed that corporate communication contributes to organisational success in various ways. To begin with, Choo (2001) argues that corporate communication is instrumental to advising on political, environmental, technological and social changes that impact organisations. In addition, corporate communication is a medium through which an organisation accesses vital secondary resources that it requires to operate. Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) state that the resources include complex values such as legitimacy and reputation

which are critical to organisational accomplishment. Therefore, the study notes that strategic corporate communication management encourages effective environmental scanning and resource management which may foster favourable corporate reputation. However, effective environmental scanning and resource management during organisational transformation may result in reputation management challenges. Froneman (2003) noted a rise in organisations undergoing change, especially higher education institutions in Africa which were undergoing rapid structural change. Thus, literature underscores the significance of reputation management in competitive, complex and transforming business environments (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Gotsi & Wilson, 2001; Abd-el-Salam *et al*., 2013).

In a competitive environment, corporate communication prescribes a framework to establish and maintain a favourable reputation for the organisation (Cornelissen, 2004). Hence, reputation studies emerged in the 1950s as scholars scrutinized their contribution to organisational success from different disciplines (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). Disciplines such as psychology, economics, strategic management, organisational science, accountancy, marketing and corporate communication analysed the relationship between favourable reputation and business success (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996). A key component in all these studies was the critical role of employees in reputation management and commercial accomplishment for their institution. For example, Kennedy (1977) posits that desirable policies, when clearly communicated and implemented, ensure that employees become corporate salespersons. In a research on Kenya public universities, Nzulwa and Atikiya (2013) examine social media as a reputation tool and conclude that desirable policies, excellent employee communication and a strategic approach to corporate reputation management may differentiate an organisation from its competitors. Consequently, it is important to closely examine the role of internal stakeholders in corporate reputation management of a transforming higher learning organisation, especially in a developing economy.

Furthermore, discussions on reputation management and internal stakeholders in a transforming organisation must address corporate identity management. It is important to note that discussions on corporate identity define it differently based on varying perspectives. A self-presentation perspective views corporate identity as a strategically planned and operationally applied self-expression of an organisation. Kitchen and Daly (2002) argue that self-presentation in the organisation be strategically planned and internally communicated through behaviour,

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communication, symbolism and corporate personality by management during organisational change. This perspective of corporate identity argues that identity management incorporates the visual presentation of an organisation through logos, house styles, advertisements, publicity, products and employee behaviour (Cornelissen, 2004). Thus, it is important to study how organisational transformation impacts on such visual presentations which have a bearing on corporate identity.

Abratt (1989) posits that corporate identity is the purposeful, strategic and visual communication to stakeholders, thus, a consistent corporate identity projection will over time impact on corporate reputation. This suggests that a strong corporate identity projection, organisation's self-representation, is through its internal stakeholders. In the same vein, Chong (2009) contends that organisational identity influences employee motivation as they (employees) perceive and interpret experiences within the organisation. The resultant internal self-representation is projected outward, thereby impacting on the corporate image.

Moreover, this study posits that corporate identity is organisational self-presentation, while the corporate image is the representation to its stakeholders through mental messages. Hence, this study states that the corporate image is a set of mental pictures of the organisation and its products that a stakeholder perceives in response to signals or messages at a point in time (Cornelissen, 2011; Bakker, 2012). The corporate image appears cumulatively, as recipients of messages interact with the organisation and their interest and involvement grows. Since cumulative mental pictures about an entity may be distorted during periods of organisational transition, it is important that management strives to create cumulative and consistent mental pictures to the key publics to build this image. Consequently, Parameswaran and Glowacka (1995) argue that academic institutions are equally compelled to maintain a distinct image for competitive advantage in the increasingly competitive environment of tertiary education. The study takes a students' perspective, while this study will take the employee perspective in image management for competitive advantage. Thus, over time, these cumulative corporate associations and interpretations translate into corporate reputation.

Scholars opine that corporate reputation incorporates collective and perceptual representations of past images and actions and future prospects of an organisation and it is induced through

communication or experiences established by key publics (Cornelissen, 2011; Butterick, 2011). To achieve these experiences requires a series of programmes from the management that convey visibility, distinctiveness, authenticity, transparency and consistency to the organisation (Abdullah, 2009). Furthermore, Dreidre, Macphail, and Mseti (2015) recommend that the programmes involve building interrelations at all levels, ranks, and departments and through research and communication within the institution. These scholars state that the programmes should emphasise corporate reputation more than branding which deals with product identification. For example, they state that in academia, university professors prefer a positive reputation rather than to be branded. Roberts (2009) argues that in the competitive education environment, valuable messages originate from independent sources and are based on experience more than from marketing communication. Therefore, a transforming institution like Multimedia University of Kenya ought to interrogate its collective and perceptual representations for growth, stability and sustainability in an ever-evolving business, political and social environment.

1.2 Multimedia University of Kenya as a Transforming Institution

Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU) was selected for study due to the rapid changes in the structure, product, personnel and leadership. The study observes that these transformations seem to coincide with the socio-political and economic transitions in Kenya. MMU's history as a training institution dates back to 1948. In 1948, the Central Training School (CTS) was founded to train postal and telecommunication service workers for colonial settlers (Kithinji, 2009). Later, the postal department reorganisation from colonial civil service to East African Legislative Assembly led to the recreation of the training institution. In addition, the colonial government planned to provide higher education to the three countries to prepare for technical and engineering fields (Unknown, n.d.). The creation was as a result of technological innovations and expanding business leading to the demand for the training of a local workforce (Kithinji, 2009). Following the disbandment of the East African Community and the taking over of telecommunication services to the Ministry of Communication and Power, the training school became a subsidiary of the newly established Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation School in 1977 (Gachagua, 2004). Prior to the disbandment, Kenya in the 1970s had undertaken an expansion program to reduce communication disparity between urban and rural areas by modernising telephone, telegraph and telex facilities (Gachagua, 2004).

The expansion programs of the 1970s and 1980s followed by the liberalisation of telecommunication services in the 1990s by the Kenyan government created a need for vocational and technology-oriented institutions as well as a dramatic growth in university education (Unknown).To address the emerging local, global and technological demand and markets, there was an increase in student population at tertiary level (Gachagua, 2004) and university level (Mutula, 2002; Woldegiorgis & Doevespeck, 2013). In 1992, the training school became Kenya College of Communications Technology (KCCT), a middle-level training college and a subsidiary of Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (KPTC). In 1999, Government of Kenya began to liberalise telecommunication services and KPTC was split into three entities, resulting in the institution becoming a subsidiary of Telkom Kenya Ltd (MMU office, 2015). In 2006, during President Kibaki, the privatisation process of state assets as advised by International Monetary Fund to stop the perpetual pumping of taxpayers money was finalised (Governance, Undated). Telkom Kenya was privatised, and the institution became a subsidiary of the Communications Commission of Kenya ((MMU office, 2013). It was believed that privatisation would accelerate economic growth as telecommunication plays a key role in economic activities as well as the open sector to foreign investors. In 2008, Kenya College of Communications Telecommunication was transformed into Multimedia University College of Kenya and it became a constituent college of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) under Legal Notice No. 155 of 2008 (MMU Magazine, 2013). In 2009, which was during President Kibaki's reign, the Joint Admissions Board delinked admissions into universities from bed capacity, thereby enhancing student admission in public universities, upgraded four institutions to university colleges and physical facilities, and increased bursary provision to increase enrolment and retention (UNESCO, 2012). This led to the award of a university charter in March 2013 which made the institution a fully-fledged public university, thus Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU) (MMU office, 2013). In addition, changes in Kenya's government telecommunication policy led to communication expansion, liberalisation, privatisation and parastatal reforms (Noam, 1999).

These expansions and parastatal reforms had an impact on strategic changes of MMU from 2012, in line with the organisation's transformations. MMU's strategy was to establish strategic alliance, innovation and product development and diversification. The new institution's mission became "… to provide quality training in engineering, media, information science and technology and business to meet the aspirations of a dynamic society, while inculcating a strong research, outreach,

and extension and innovation culture within an efficient team of academic, technical and administrative staff" ((MMU office, 2015). The institution was awarded a Charter by Commission for University Education (CUE) after the commission officials carried out an inspection and were satisfied that MMU had attained the set conditions on physical resources, standards on academic programmes and standards of university library (University, 2014). The commission then recommended the accreditation and the president of Kenya awarded a charter in an accreditation ceremony. A University Charter is a legal instrument of accreditation which authorises MMU to discharge its mandate (ibid). This attainment of charter status transformed the institution into a university and refocused its corporate strategy into being "… a world-class centre of excellence in training, research and innovation in cutting edge technologies" (MMU, October 2015). MMU is one of the 70 universities operating in Kenya (CUE, 2017). The expansion of higher education in Kenya is aligned to Kenya's *Vision 2030's* social strategy on education and training which aims to transform education and build institutional capacity and human resources to develop Kenya (Bank, 2000; Kenya 2030, 2019).

MMU's transformation was not only external, which impacts the reputation, but also internal, which influences the organisation identity, image and reputation. To begin with, the transformation from tertiary to University College to university status led to the introduction of multidisciplinary courses ranging from technical, technological, business to social sciences to address national market demands. The faculties and academic programmes are as follows:

1. Faculty of Engineering and Technology;
2. Faculty of Media and Communication;
3. Faculty of Business and Economics;
4. Faculty of Science and Technology;
5. Faculty of Computing and Information Technology;
6. Faculty of Social Science and Technology (MMU Management, 2012).

Hence, the course diversification, curriculum modification and changes in institutional status in 2013 resulted in increased enrolments. The student population rose from approximately five hundred to five thousand from 2011 to 2018. The diversification, modification and enrolment changes led to organisational and corporate cultural changes and identity diversity. There was, furthermore, diversity in systems and processes, programmes, the student and staff population, and

facilities. Finally, institutional changes resulted in a marked employee increase from an estimated two hundred full-time staff to approximately three hundred pensionable and contract staff (Strategi (Plan, 2017 - 2021). This study observes that employee recruitment from varied institutions and employee retention of the old institution led to organisational identity and reputational challenges. These complexities were compounded by management turnover.

There have been five principals and vice-chancellors during the transformation from KCCT to MMU, namely, Mr. Patrick Omutia (Director of KCCT, 2001 -2003), Eng. Isaac Bondett (Director of KCCT, 2004 -2007), Eng. Prof. Ambani Kulubi (Director KCCT – Ag. Principal of University College, 2008 – 2012), Prof G. Naituli (Acting Principal University College, 2012), Eng. Prof. Walter Oyawa (Principal – Acting VC, 2013 - 2014) and Amb. Prof. Isaac Kaberia (VC of MMU, 2014 to date) who all had diverse experiences, leadership styles, and professional backgrounds. Therefore, it is worth examining how leadership changes, modified organisational identity and culture, institutional and curriculum diversification impacted on MMU. Since management is responsible for overall planning, execution and evaluation of an organisation's communication strategy, it is pertinent to study how the constant change of senior staff challenged communication policy implementation (Steyn & Puth, 2000). The present study seeks to establish in which manner MMU management communicated with its employees in order to nurture its corporate identity and culture, especially during organisational transformation. Repeated changes in strategic plans, high management turnover, staff retrenchment and recruitment, student enrolment and curricular diversification are bound to impinge on the communication of corporate identity and reputation.

1.3 Problem Statement

Empirical studies on corporate identity and reputation undertaken in United States of America, Europe, Asia, and South Africa mainly focus on the retail, financial and manufacturing sectors (Kennedy, 1977; Goia & Thomas, 1996; Christensen & Askegaard, 2001; Desiree, 2006; Nkwimba, 2009). Literature in Sub-Saharan Africa hardly interrogates how public universities manage corporate identity and reputation for competitive advantage (Sulkowski *et al.,* 2019). In Kenya, where the competition was accompanied by rapid transformation in some public universities, such interrogation is required. Hence, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature. This is because for universities, like other organisations to survive and thrive, they require a strong corporate identity and positive corporate reputation. Therefore, survival and progressive forces

arising from curriculum, policy, technological and generational transformations may compel these institutions to evaluate their corporate identity and reputation. For example, the enhanced university enrolments caused by a double student intake in 2011 and the enrolment of self-sponsored students brought about media scrutiny of university management (*Nation,* August 2015; September 2015; November 2015). The scrutiny was on student enrolment, the rapid growth of universities compared to the availability of resources, survival, sustainability and stability challenges. Thus, progressive institutions may address these challenges through environmental scanning and strategic corporate communication by nurturing their corporate reputation. Consequently, various questions, in the face of rapid transformation from earlier college status to MMU, require complex answers. Nurturing corporate reputation during rapid transformation may impact on, how the core values that imprint a sense of identity to the employees are communicated by management. As a result, the study examined how internal stakeholders who have served the transforming institution since its lower stature, maintained their perceptions and identity of MMU. In the same vein, the study interrogated how new employees assimilated into a system whose identity was transient, due to strategic corporate communication management challenges. Furthermore, the constant recruitment and release of academic staff in the competitive national higher education environment may challenge the recognition and accreditation of academic programmes by regulatory and professional bodies. Therefore, this study interrogated how MMU during the ten-year period of transformation, sought to communicate a formidable corporate reputation both for competitive advantage and to maintain a robust and definite internal identity for existing and prospective internal publics.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish how Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU) communicated with its employees its corporate identity, image, and reputation and where it fell short of this strategic institutional objective during a ten-year period of transformation from a college to a university.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

a. Identify the internal communication strategies that MMU used to manage its corporate identity, image, and reputation.

b. Analyse how MMU management, over the last ten years, communicated its corporate culture and corporate identity to its employees, in order to manage the corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation.

c. Evaluate how employees as internal stakeholders at MMU interpreted the fulfill messages, symbols, channels, and artefacts and how this impacted on the corporate image.

d. Analyse how MMU managed its internal communication challenges and opportunities and how this impacted on its corporate reputation.

e. Develop a communication model focusing on future communication of the corporate reputation of this transforming organisation.

1.6 Research Questions

This study answers the following questions:

a. Which internal corporate communication strategies has MMU used to manage its corporate identity, image, and reputation over a period of ten years?

b. How has MMU management, over the last ten years, communicated its corporate culture and corporate identity to its employees, in order to manage the corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation?

c. How did employees as key stakeholders at MMU interpret the organisation's messages, symbols, channels, and artefacts and how did this impact on the corporate image?

d. How did MMU manage its corporate communication challenges and opportunities and how did this impact on corporate reputation?

e. Which communication model could be used to focus on future communication of the corporate reputation of a complex and transforming organisation?

1.7 Limitations, Delimitations, and Ethical Clearance of the Research

The limitations and delimitations of the study enable the researcher to focus on a manageable research structure. Thus, the fact that certain aspects are excluded from the study does not mean that they are unimportant.

This study is based within the theoretical fields of corporate communication and public relations, but also gathered theoretical insights from the fields of strategic management, organisation behaviour, human relations, and linguistics. The study is based on a socio-cultural tradition, within which it concentrated on how an organisation, MMU, communicated with its employees to nurture corporate identity, image, and reputation during ten years of extended transformation period.

This study particularly concentrated on selected verbal, nonverbal and visual cues used by MMU to nurture and maintain the corporate identity, culture, and image during organisational transformation. The study used a broad spectrum of fields in organisational management and cultural studies, but these did not alter the fact that this study is anchored in the corporate communication field. The multidisciplinary approach enriched the study.

This study focused on how organisational culture related to the effective management of identity and image and is not intended to provide any assessment of performance management systems.

The study recognises that seventy universities are authorized to operate in Kenya (CUE, 2017), but the study only focused on Multimedia University of Kenya. The study is limited to the analysis of the corporate image, identity and reputation management of the institution during the transition period from 2011 to 2018. Lastly, this research was conducted solely for academic purposes; it does not in any way attempt to identify potentially unethical practices of the institution.

The author of the study recognises that some information in internal MMU documents is or was classified as confidential. Therefore, the author sought official permission to access such information as was required for academic purposes. It is believed that the findings are useful to MMU management and employees, therefore, management was persuaded to avail the required information. The research project received ethics clearance from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University for all contact with human subjects, with reference number H/16/ART/JMS-004 valid from 15/11/2016 to 15/11/2019.

1.8 Justification and Significance of the Study

In 2012, the Kenyan government published the Universities Bill 2012, seeking to transform and expand university education in Kenya. This provided the legal and regulatory environment for university expansion. The Ministry of Education article states,

> University education is one of the most rapidly expanding sub-sectors of the Education sector in Kenya. Demand for university education has continued to increase with many students who are unable to be absorbed in Kenyan universities seeking admission in institutions of higher learning outside the country.
>
> The Directorate of Higher Education in the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology has taken this challenge in stride. Constituent university colleges and campuses affiliated to universities have been established to expand access to higher education.
>
> Currently, we have 7 public universities, 18 private universities of which 11 have received university charter and the rest are on letters of interim authority. This number is expected to increase.

This status in 2012 set the stage for a state-driven increase in the number of public universities. Therefore, these emerging universities must establish themselves in a competitive environment and focus on niche improvement. Thus, identity and reputation management should strongly communicate the chosen niche for the said institutions. The present study comes at an opportune time for emerging universities to maximize on their identity and reputation management in order to enhance their competitive advantage.

This study is significant to corporate communication practitioners, marketing professionals, and university management staff who are concerned with the formulation and identification of corporate identity and reputation management strategies during organisational transformation, and how they manage to communicate corporate culture and the corporate image of a complex organisation.

The findings aspired to in this study contribute to the body of knowledge in corporate communication, and specifically, in reputation management of universities in Kenya and Africa. Even though the findings of the study are specific to MMU, MMU has similar characteristics as most universities in Kenya and Africa. Thus, the findings of the study bring forth experiences which other universities may find relevant.

The study is significant to universities as the findings challenge MMU management to focus on the continual improvement of corporate identity and reputation management practices; and on projecting organisational culture for a competitive advantage over similar institutions, for corporate growth and sustainability.

Lastly, the study is significant as it will generate awareness among academic institutions on the importance of effective corporate communication strategy in the management of their corporate reputation. The study adds, as a case study, to the already existing knowledge on corporate identity, image and reputation management of academic institutions on this continent and beyond it.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions behind this study include the understanding that:

1. Multimedia University of Kenya was faced with challenges in its attempt to nurture and maintain its corporate identity, image, and reputation during organisational transformation.
2. Emerging universities faced challenges in attempting to carve out a unique corporate identity, image and reputation different from their former parent institution(s) since 2012.
3. Multimedia University of Kenya management faced challenges in the attempts to transform the corporate culture in line with the new institution, based on a set of corporate vision, mission, and values as stated in the strategic plan.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

1.10.1 Communication

Communication is the 'sending and receiving messages' or 'the transmission of messages from one person to another' (Steinberg, 2007). In this study, communication is understood as a transactional process of exchanging information to create a shared meaning of policies, goals, and objectives.

1.10.2 Effective Communication

As used in this study, effective communication has the purpose to identify the core idea that a sender desires to communicate. The sender must carefully decide the precise message and its purpose and consider the context and attitude of the receiver. Based on these factors, the sender chooses the verbal and non-verbal symbols (code), the medium for transmitting the message, and take into account that the receiver should be familiar with the code and be competent to access the medium of transmission. Communication is decided as effective if the employee receives the message, generates the desired result, response or reaction (Modaff & De Wine, 2002).

1.10.3 Strategic Communication

In this study, strategic communication involves a well-planned and well-coordinated means of passing information; well-designed messages between management and employees which involves dialogue among employees of different cadres and ethnic backgrounds. It is communication through dialogue between management and employees to facilitate change, continuous improvement and connects employees to corporate or university objectives (Hayase, 2009).

1.10.4 Corporate Communication

Corporate Communication is an interactive management process to influence, through communication, all those with a stake in the institution (Cornelissen, 2008). In this study, corporate communication is defined as the interaction to build relationships by linking stakeholders to the organisation for a similar explanation. This is achieved through the university communication flow vertically, horizontally, internally and externally, linking employees

internally to each other to manage the corporate reputation for a competitive advantage over similar institutions (Argenti, 2007).

1.10.5 Corporate Identity

Corporate identity is "the organisation's presentation of self to its various stakeholders and the means by which it distinguishes itself from all other organisations" (Hatch and Shultz, 2000). In this study, corporate identity relates to employees' understanding and communication of MMU's central and unique attributes. In addition, it relates to the communication channels that MMU management uses to communicate with its employees on what makes the organisation unique (William, Osei & Omar, 2012).

1.10.6 The Corporate Image

The corporate image is the net result of all communication, ideas, beliefs, and impressions that internal and external stakeholders have about an organisation (Cornelissen, 2004; Chun, 2005). Such corporate image may be actual or ideal, the actual image is what management desires for the institution and the ideal image is the desired image for competitors and the industry, while the actual image is composed of corporate vision, mission, and marketing objectives. In this study, the corporate image relates to the employee and management impressions communicated through visual cues, verbal and nonverbal behaviour about MMU, as an organisation (Skinner *et al.*, 2014).

1.10.7 Corporate Reputation

In this study, corporate reputation denotes a unique and long-lasting image that internal stakeholders form about the organisation. Corporate reputation arises from the cumulative impressions, meanings and overall assessments by stakeholders (van Riel & Fombrun, 2008). Thus, the corporate reputation is yielded by the aggregate stakeholder perceptions, over a long period of time, of an organisation's ability to fulfill their expectations, whether through products, working for the organisation or investing in the organisation (van Riel & Fombrun, 2008). This study understands corporate reputation is the expectations, attitudes, and feelings that constituents have about the organisation. The success of a transforming organisation depends on how the organisation develops its employees to communicate a unique corporate identity. One can measure

the corporate reputation by evaluating how much internal its stakeholders know about the organisation and its attributes (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2008).

1.10.8 Corporate Reputation Strategies

This study considers corporate reputation strategies to be the specialized techniques that build, sustain, promote and rebuild employee perception, support, goodwill, and understanding to support management during organisational transformation and to earn positive rating for competitive advantage (Nkwocha, 2014).

1.10.9 Internal Communication

Internal communication refers to specific ways of managing communication tools and initiatives with respect to internal stakeholders (Ragusa, 2013). In this study, internal communication refers to the messages, methods, and activities used to transfer corporate information in both directions between management and employees. The interaction may take place through strategies, policies, tools, and processes to influence organisational reputation (Argenti, 2007).

1.10.10 Communication Channels

These are methods and media used by an organisation to communicate and interact with its internal and external stakeholders. Channels are critical as they pass messages between the senders and receivers. Such channels include tools, systems, and processes used to communicate between management and employees, who are internal stakeholders (Al-Ghamdi *et al*, 2007; Friedl & Vercic, 2011).

1.10.11 Communication Climate

In this study, the communication climate is understood to involve five factors: superior-subordinate communication, the quality of information, superior openness, opportunities for upward communication, and reliability of information (Dennis, 1974).

1.10.12 Dominant Coalition

A dominant coalition is sometimes also referred to as the decision-making coalition. This is the group with the power to make and enforce decisions about the direction of the organisation and to determine the organisation's objectives, the respective employee tasks and departmental functions (Hogg & Doolan, 1999 in Le Roux, 2010). It is argued that this group should consist of the top management or board members (Le Roux, 2010). In this study, the dominant coalition refers to MMU senior management, made up of the Vice-Chancellor, two deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Finance Officer, the Legal Office, and the two Registrars.

1.10.13 Internal Stakeholders

Internal stakeholders are groups within the organisation who share the organisation's identity and with whom the organisation, especially management, seeks to communicate (Jahansoozi, 2006; Steyn & Puth, 2000). In this study, internal stakeholders are the employees and management of Multimedia University of Kenya who are referred to as the internal stakeholders. The study shall refer to the terms, employee, and staff, interchangeably.

1.10.14 Employee Engagement

This study defines employee engagement as an interaction between employees and management. This interaction goes beyond employee satisfaction to include effective internal communication aspects of trust, credibility, internal alignment, organisational goals, accuracy, openness, transparency, timeliness, using numerous channels and message management (Hayase, 2009). It involves consistent messages from management to inculcate values of commitment to the institution (Brown, 2012).

1.10.15 Public University

This is a term that denotes university in Kenya that is maintained or assisted out of public funds (Chapter 210B). The study refers to MMU as a public university (CUE, 2017).

1.10.16 Stakeholders

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Stakeholders are any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of the organisation's objectives (Cornelissen, 2008). Stakeholders, in this study, include MMU management, teaching and non-teaching staff on permanent employment basis, students and parents, University Council, government bodies, University community and media who affect or are affected by the university.

1.10.17 Transforming Organisation

Transformation involves a series of collective activities to redesign, redefine and re-engineer an organisation's system and structures due to fierce competition, demanding customers and economic pressures (Samantaray, 2006). An organisation may either transform by improving operations, changing its strategy to regain lost competitive advantage or through corporate self-renewal in which it anticipates and prepares to cope with environmental changes (Samantaray, 2006). Therefore, the management of a transforming entity secures information, trends, and relationships to plan effective communication processes for its identity and image management. This study views MMU as a transforming organisation because it has undergone several operational and strategic changes from technology college to university status.

1.11   Summary of Chapter

This chapter is devoted to stating the problem, clarifying the research objectives and questions, stating the significance and limitations of the study, formulating assumptions, defining key terms, and sketching the structure of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AND THE TRANSFORMING ORGANISATION

2.0 Introduction

Transformation is a shift in organisational capability which may be attributed to global, political and academic changes. Globally, human rights advocacy has expanded freedom of expression in public and private institutions. In Kenya, Chapter Eleven of the Kenya Constitution has advanced the need for public participation in policy changes. In academia, The Universities Act 2012 has provided a legal and regulatory environment for higher education expansion. The university expansion created a desire for each university to communicate its corporate identity, image, and reputation in a competitive environment. MMU was one such organisation that underwent change and had to determine its corporate identity, image, and reputation. The purpose of the study is to establish how MMU communicated with its employees its corporate identity, image, and reputation and where it fell short of this strategic institutional objective during a period of rapid transformation. In line with this purpose, the chapter will review literature on various areas in corporate communication and organisational transformation. It will begin by examining corporate communication definitions and descriptions, especially, from a participative and strategic communication perspective. It presents historical perspectives of public relations and corporate communication and presents a critical discussion on the role of corporate communication in an organisation, especially to internal publics. It discusses the excellence theory and the relevance of the theory to a transforming university from a participative approach.

2.1 Corporate Communication and Public Relations Practice

Hynes (2008), a managerial communication scholar, states that communication is the complex understanding of a message based on the receiver's perception and message interpretation. The scholar visualises the receiver's interpretation of communication to be like an onion composed of different levels and layers. The scholar states that the levels include: intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organisational and intercultural. The three layers are: climate and culture, the purpose of communication, and content, channel, and environment (Hynes, 2008). A deeper understanding of receiver's communication interpretation at various levels and layers was pertinent to this study

which sought to interrogate how effective MMU management communicated with its multi-layered employees the corporate identity and image during the ten-year organisational transformation period. Hence, this study examined how management communicated identity and image to internal stakeholders, beginning with employees at various organisational levels, employee interpretation and perception of these messages. Skiner, Von Essen, and Motau (2008) and Hynes (2008) both emphasise on information packaging, message interpretation, and channel choice to evaluate internal communication effectiveness. This study posits that information preparation, packaging, presentation and evaluation of effectiveness are critical aspects of the communication function during organisational transformation. Waldt (2008) states that communication is the integration and coordination of all organisational activities that are critical during transformation. Thus, it is pertinent that corporate communication practitioner evaluates the total integration and coordination of organisational messages during the ten-year organisational transformation.

Since this study centres on corporate communication practice, corporate reputation and organisational transformation, this section begins by presenting various perspectives of corporate communication. Thomas (2008) traces the evolution of corporate communication from corporate relationship management activities comprising of normal business correspondence, record keeping, and legal records management. Ths correspondence and record-keeping activities seemed to influence public perception and promote beneficial corporate relationships with the publics. Thomas provides a historical perspective of corporate communication and relationship building, while Steyn and Puth (2000) provide a strategic management perspective of corporate communication.

Steyn and Puth (2000) perceive that the commercial contribution of corporate communication function is about environmental scanning, stakeholder relationship management, public participation, and futuristic focus. Thus, Steyn and Puth (2000), from a strategic management perspective, state that corporate communication is thinking through the current corporate mission, environmental conditions and setting forth a guide for tomorrow's decisions and results. Also, Stroh (2004), from a strategic viewpoint, advocates for relationship building through flexibility, diversity, and interaction for positive organisational change attainment in behaviour and perception to accomplish the corporate mission. Holtzhausen and Voto (2002), Fouche (2003) and

Stroh and Toth (2007) state that flexibility, diversity, and interaction in behaviour and perception widen the corporate communication role and provides for employee participation through interest groups, departments, hierarchies and gender. However, Steyn, Mateboho and Grobler (2001), from the strategic management perspective of corporate communication, in the African context in general and Kenya in particular, state that the profession seems to be in the infancy stage as the function is yet to synchronize stakeholder behaviour and organisational interest effectively in order to communicate excellently. Therefore, this study sought to interrogate how the corporate communication function, during organisational transformation, communicated its identity, image, and reputation for competitive advantage to employees, a key stakeholder.

The stakeholder management perspective interrogates corporate communication functions and their outputs for the organisation. The evolution of corporate communication and its commercial contribution to stakeholder management led to the critical examination of relationship management and corporate communication functions, namely, reputation management, corporate advertising, media relations, financial communication, employee relations, community relations and philanthropy, government relations and crisis communication (Stroh, 2007). In addition, Stroh (2007) advocates for corporate communication activities that foster effective stakeholder management through strengthening participation and self-regulation which culminates in organisational strengthening. Hence, scholars advise that the corporate communication function should promote relationship building through deliberate, planned and strategic interactions with stakeholders, beginning with internal stakeholders if it is to contribute to organisational output Freeman, 1984; Deetz, 1995; Stroh, 2007). The study aligns with Apolo, Baez, Pauker and Pasquel (2017) who advocate for a participatory approach to strategic stakeholder management, beginning with the internal stakeholders for effective corporate identity and reputation management during transformation. Cornelissen (2014) argues that effective reputation management, from a management perspective, links communication function to internal stakeholders to the organisation.

This study posits that a link between internal stakeholders and management results in an integrative and interactive approach to corporate communication management. This means that corporate communication activities are directed to relevant target groups within the organisation to convey and emphasize the corporate identity (Steyn & Puth, 2000; Apolo *et al.,* 2014). De Wet *et al.*

(2008) and Meintjes (2012) posit that corporate identity is conveyed through unity in procedures, purpose, and achievements within the organisation. Scholes (1997) initiated the argument that an interactive management process influences all those with a stake within the organisation. Kalla (2005) took a multidisciplinary and interactive disciplinary perspective, within the organisation by drawing from domains of business, management, corporate and organisational communication. Kalla (2005) argued that an interactive approach in corporate communication activities begins within the organisation, internal communication, through formal and informal communication at all levels and domains. Mazzei (2004) demonstrated the integrative and interactive nature, using a model on the communication relationships between marketing, organisational, public relations and corporate communication. Hence, Mazzei (2004) argued an integrative and interactive approach in corporate communication impacts on corporate identity management. The scholar stated that corporate communication discipline is theoretically rooted in strategic and management studies. Thus, the scholar posited that corporate communication, as an emergent discipline, must take a holistic view and focus on building relationships with stakeholders, especially internal stakeholders (Mazzei, 2004). These integrative and interactive perspectives seem to originate from the strategic viewpoint on internal stakeholder management and organisational theory.

Steyn and Puth (2000) state that corporate communication has a strong association with organisational theory and behaviour as it deals with stakeholders who influence and are influenced by the organisation. This perspective views communication as dependent on the organisational style and organisational structure which directly or indirectly impact on human behaviour and relations (Ndwalaza, 2012). This perspective advocates for an integrative and interactive approach communication management by sending consistent messages to influence stakeholders for purposes of managing identity and reputation for competitive advantage (Steyn & Puth, 2000). This perspective demonstrates that an aspect of corporate communication, especially internal communication, is a key component for identity and reputation management. However, the current study argues that sending consistent messages to internal multi-layered and multi-faceted groups could create message interpretation challenges, especially during organisational transformation. The study, to some extent, identifies with the scholar's perspective that a correlation exists between organisational style, structure, employee behaviour and receiver message interpretation. Thus, corporate communication practitioners propose an integrative approach which emphasises on communication, human resources and marketing functions collaborating to build trust to

stakeholders (Society for New Communication Research Conference Board, 2016). These corporate communication perspectives seem to align with various communication phases and paradigms.

To establish if MMU communicated effectively with its employees, it is pertinent to examine corporate communication phases and models. Grunig (1992) outlined four models of public relations from which corporate communication builds on. The model incorporates the asymmetrical and symmetrical aspects of communication in the organisation. Thus, public relations definitions incorporate either symmetrical or asymmetrical communication aspects based on the paradigms adopted. The reflective paradigm connects public relations symmetric model whose emphasis is long term stakeholder relationship, mutual understanding and mutual financial returns which is communicated through corporate social responsibility activities to obtain legitimacy (Van Ruler, et al., 2001). On the other hand, the relational paradigm impresses on two-way symmetrical communication for mutually beneficial relationships with its stakeholders to ensure organisational survival (Ledingham, 2003; Jahansoozi, 2006). Public relations practice in the African context, in general, seems to define the practice from both reflective and collective culture perspectives. This communication focuses on the maintenance of long-term stakeholder relationships, mutual understanding leading through concern for public interest and consultative participation (Adegboye, 2013; Chouinard & Cousins, 2013; Le Roux & Cilliers, 2013). A collective approach incorporates, slightly, stakeholder and participatory paradigm at an organisational level.

To arrive at the collective and participatory level in the African context, and Kenyan context in particular, this section outlines the phases to public relations practice in the organisation. The three phases of public relations practice in the organisation, which this study addresses, include the systems, one-way, and transactional communication approaches. To begin with, the systems approach to communication recognised agentry as the fundamental role of public relations. Diggs-Brown (2012) states that the agentry role is one-way communication associated with information manipulation for favourable organisational relations with the publics through a medium. The systems approach aligns to rhetorician, press agentry, journalistic and publicity public relations techniques and traditions used to influence positive public perception, create awareness, and fundraise for institutions (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). For example, American and European

academic institutions, especially universities, used the systems approach to communicate institutional activities such as graduation announcements and ceremonies as a form of publicity (Fauconnier, 1982; Rensburg & Cant, 2002). This demonstrates the genesis of publicity and elaborate use of events management techniques, especially during graduation, to institutional branding and image management of public universities in Kenya. For example, the university graduation ceremonies are live on national television stations and accompanied by elaborate newspaper supplements and feature articles which are costly ventures, especially for emerging universities. This publicity of the events and institution has historical roots in agentry tradition whose emphasis in the external public rather than relationship building through a participatory approach to reputation management.

Austin and Pinkleton (2015) argue that the asymmetrical communication approach to public relations emphasises on persuasion and one-way information flow. They posit that this type of communication is from the organisation to the publics for organisational benefit rather than relationship building and mutual benefit. Furthermore, Littlejohn and Foss (2009) contend that the one–way publicity and information flow approach targets segmented audiences, namely, corporate owners, labour unions, employees, press and government agencies for commercial gain. The scholars argue that audience segmentation results in the rise of the dominant coalition and power relations as information is power (ibid). Secondly, Austin and Pinkleton's (2015) concept of audience segmentation is that it culminated in the rise of consultancy services for institutions to defend organisational objectives through planned and systematic asymmetric communication campaigns to persuade the publics. Thirdly, Bendix (2001) had observed that audience segmentation had resulted in a polarisation between employer and employees; employee and employee antagonism in the organisation; and the birth of trade unions. Fourthly, audience segmentation resulted in top-down communication with the dominant coalition passing information to 'passive' publics. This study argues that this approach upheld the dominant coalition agenda but increased conflict and confrontations with employees. Thus, one concludes that asymmetrical communication function increases internal conflict and confrontation due to communication challenges fostered by various employee cadres. Therefore, an organisation's desire for integration and attainment of competitive edge and nurture identity and image requires a change of tact. Change of tact starts with communication change that incorporates environmental

scanning, beginning with the internal environment, to analyse trends and prescribe strategies for achieving organisational goals during organisational transformation (Wilcox, et al., 2000).

Incorporating environmental scanning is about gathering information, understanding, adapting to patterns, trends, and relationships. Public opinion and propaganda in the 1960s saw the development of public relations towards moulding public opinion, a form of asymmetrical communication. Thus, the public perceived practice as either a propaganda tool to spread biased information for governments; a commercial tool offering lobbying services for manufacturers; or a mobilization tool for nationalist movements (Brown-Diggs, 2012). Skinner, Kiuluku, Tikolo, and Yankah (2014), and Akpabio (2009) state that, in Africa, the practice was perceived in various ways as a tool for political agitation for independence and nationhood; international diplomacy and fundraising for development; for democracy and constitutional changes; and persuasive publicity. For example, L'Etang and Muruli (2004) state that the asymmetrical communication approach practiced in Kenya by British colonial administration was for self-preservation and it incorporated appropriate rhetorical strategies and tactics. This asymmetrical approach to mould public opinion for self-preservation seems to be still practiced in public institutions, including public universities despite the *Kenya Constitution 2010* which advocates for public participation in decision-making. Thus, Austin and Pinkleton (2015) propose that effective message dissemination, as per the McGuire domino model, involves the adoption of a receiver-oriented view rather than the linear model of communication and practice of top-down communication. Transforming universities, too, seem to have inherited persuasive practices and source-oriented perspectives from mother, public, universities. Therefore, this study proposes that effective stakeholder management and communication of evolving stakeholder groups and internal relations involves environmental scanning to adopt appropriate communication approaches that are transactional and participatory. This study interrogates whether these approaches and technological-related channels that are interactive and transactional for effective communication were incorporated during organisational transformation.

A transactional communication approach, also known as public relations two-way symmetry, adheres to mutual influence and relationship management, despite audience segmentation challenges. Brown-Diggs (2012) states that audience segmentation may be due to censorship, culture and language differences, political and corporate practices, multilingual and multi-ethnic

differences; accessibility to systems. Despite these challenges, USA scholars, in the 1970s and 1980s, advocated for a paradigm shift to a mutual understanding with internal and external publics for mutual benefit (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Argenti, 2007a; Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). In Kenya, mutual benefits in organisations seem to be championed through trade unions and communication and human relations policies. Though the study notes that Nkirote's (2018) study on the influence of selected trade unions activities on the performance of public universities in Kenya concluded that collective bargaining had a negative performance effect on public universities, yet the same study stated that union activities enhanced employee welfare which had an impact on university performance. Thus, it can be assumed that a transforming public university in Kenya may use trade unions champion for two-way symmetry as one way to enhance communication and improve performance. The study further recommends relationship-building between employees and the university council (ibid). The study adopted a quantitative approach and sampled only union officials of selected public institutions, thus left out the union members, therefore, the findings may be skewed. However, transforming universities may not have independent trade union associations but chapters to champion their course for participation in decision-making for mutual influence.

Thus, corporate communication practice, in the 2000s, advocated for an integrative approach to communication which emphasises on internal communication, human resources and marketing functions collaborating to build trust to stakeholders (Society for New Communication Research Conference Board, 2016). Building trust and effective stakeholder management are achieved through consistent messages; story-telling that cuts across departmental barriers; and alignment of goals and budgets (Society for New Communication Research Conference Board, 2016). Trust is the collective level of positive expectations that members have about others in the group and trust is gained when the said people are competent, open and honest, concerned about the employees and reliable but is broken when there is dishonesty, micro-managing, inconsistency, finger-pointing, and secrecy (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). Seeley, Plowman, & Miller (2018) in a study on department of defence state that trust is a casualty of poor internal communication and respondents distrusted leaders because the leaders were known to change their minds even after accepting an idea; communication practitioners were asked to stop posting information in places where employees would access and practitioners noted the importance of procedures to be clearly stated. This study posits that an integrative approach to communication examines stakeholder

interactions, procedures and resource allocation within the organisation. An integrative approach aligns with Van Riel's (2007) argument that communication is the lifeblood and medium through which organisation accesses resources such as capital, labour, legitimacy, and reputation. These resources are created by stakeholders who share certain characteristics, goals, and aspirations (Soola, 2000). Nwosu (2004), who refers to this type of communication as synergetic, states that this type of communication is guided by the principle of team management, creative cooperation that builds trust, openness, respect and is progressive. The scholar further outlines the personal traits of a cooperative communicator as being less antagonistic, less defensive, more loving, more interdependent and more inter-relational (ibid). Though Opran (2015) places the internal communication function in human resource function, Waldt (2018) argues that there must be sound integration and coordination of corporate communication during change. This study identifies with the integrative, interactive, and two-way approach to communication management if identity, image, and reputation are to be nurtured in a transforming organisation.

2.2 Corporate Communication Practice in the Organisation

Since this study is about effective communication in a transforming organisation, it is pertinent to begin the section by describing an organisation. Ndwalaza (2011) perceives an organisation as a social arrangement with interdependent units that pursue collective goals, purpose, and has controls. In addition, the author states that the organisation has a boundary that separates it from its environment but operates in a prescribed system (ibid). Modaff and Wine (2002) and Fielding (2006) posit that an organisation is hierarchical and compartmentalised yet units are interdependent and need coordination; employees have different responsibilities and positions where power is held, and resources coordinated to attain organisational objectives. According to Katz and Kahn (1978), the interrelated and interdependent parts form a system, structure, and culture unique to the organisation. This study identifies with the view that a transforming organisation, for example, a university observes aspects of the organisation in that it is hierarchical, compartmentalised and has interdependent parts. In addition, the study notes that Chomsky (2003) describes a university as an institution rather than an organisation. The scholar argues that an institution is a system, a system that functions; and that universities are institutions which organise themselves in specific ways in order to be competitive (ibid). The study notes the two terms became intertwined and are used interchangeably in discussions on universities (van Wyk, 2009). Despite the interchangeable use of terms, this study posits that a university is a hierarchical

structure with interdependent and interlocking activities which may require to be synchronised through communication, especially internal communication, in order to pursue organisational objectives. Thus, corporate communication, in a university may be a function that recognises, diagnosis communication-related problems and coordinates these interdependent parts through internal communication to manage reputation (Cornelissen, 2014). The present study proposes to use public relations and corporate communication interchangeably.

The study interrogates how a transforming university that inherits a hierarchical and multi-layered approach in which decision-making and communication are centralised, with an opposing force from trade unions, may manage identity and reputation. Deetz (2003 in Mumby, 2004) cautions that though communication is the central mode of organisational life, various forms of power and domination within the organisation skew decision-making. They state that the powers prefer asymmetrical and distorted communication within the organisation (ibid). Therefore, Mumby (2004) proposes an alternative communication practice in the organisation that allows for more creative cooperation of stakeholders in decision-making and resource allocation. The present study advocates for the alternative communication practice in the organisation, one which is not only integrative but wholesome and participative in decision-making. It must be noted that decision-making in the organisation depends on the organisational structure and resource allocation. Lunenburg and Ornestein (2008) conclude that organisational structures influence communication as the organisational chart offers a graphic demonstration of formal arrangements of communication in the organisation.

The integrative communication perspective advocates for all the communication produced by an organisation be directed at target groups to convey and emphasise on the corporate identity. In the same vein, Scholes (1997) perceives it as an interactive management process to influence all those with a stake in the organisation. However, Kalla (2005) takes a multidisciplinary perspective by drawing from all broad communication domains of business, management, corporate and organisational communication. Thus, corporate communication is an emergent discipline, with strong ties and association to organisational theory and behaviour, and deals with stakeholders who influence and are influenced by the organisation (Steyn & Puth, 2000). Consequently, the study argues that corporate communication relates to the whole organisation, whether profit or

not-for-profit in a competitive environment to develop and maintain positive identity, image, and reputation.

Steyn (2003) states that the role of corporate communication in organisations ought to emphasise on communication techniques that champion for commercial and community objectives. This may imply that to achieve commercial and community objectives, corporate communication function ought to adopt a wholesome, symmetric, bilateral and strategic view of communication management in an organisation. A wholesome approach involves environmental scanning and boundary-spanning roles to build a viable and coherent whole. According to Lubbe and Puth (2002), the environment is the totality of physical and social factors external to a system's boundary that impact on decision-making. On the one hand, Van Riel and Fombrun (2014) expound on environmental scanning and branding stating that it focuses on external communication through the adoption of monolithic identity, strengthening of corporate brand and image, and uniformity of corporate communication policies for competitive advantage. On the other hand, Bronn and Simsic (2002), associate corporate communication with strategic management by stating that the function involves internal and external communication management that seeks to create favourable perceptions and relations with stakeholders to build a coherent whole in the organisation as well as management of the bottom line.

Apart from environment scanning, Modaff and Dewine (2002) state that boundary spanning is an organisational system of exchanging information within its environment, internal communication. However, Cheney and Christensen (2001) argue that integrating external and internal communication blurs communication boundaries. The blurred boundaries may be addressed through corporate communication strategies and policies, effective corporate identity and culture management. It is noted that public institutions in Kenya are often bureaucratic and may shy away from blurred communication boundaries. Furthermore, communication strategies and policies may advocate for either a centralized or decentralized model based on corporate objectives. Therefore, communication strategies and policies ought to be considered alongside commercial and community objectives of public institutions, especially Kenyan universities which are highly hierarchical (Argenti 2007a). Therefore, a transforming institution has the option of adopting a centralised or decentralised model and a strategy that emphasises on communication consistency and clear controls for competitive advantage.

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However, public organisations in Kenya experience communication challenges impacting on competitive advantage due to the macro and micro environmental orientations adopted. Chege (1999) observes that the corporate leadership types and generational economic strategies adopted contribute to communication challenges in local organisations. Kiambi (2010) adds that the, dictatorial, leadership styles of the first two presidents in Kenya emphasised a top-down approach and a one-way form of communication which may not encourage relationship building. Additionally, it seems to have institutionalised corruption and enforced a top-down communication approach. This communication strategy often referred to as a closed system, impacts on the bottom line and on internal communication. In the same vein, Nti (1996) observes that public institutions shy away from an incremental strategy which advocates for a bottom-up approach that involves confidence building, staff involvement and comprehensive reforms that threaten centres of power. This strategy was initiated during President Kibaki's reign, Kenya pursued growth-oriented economic policies and freedom of expression however economic mismanagement resulted in ineffective economic transformation and curtailing of public information dissemination leading to slow institutional growth in comparison to the Asian economies pursuit of merit and excellence (World Bank Report, 2000; Kiambi, 2010). The structure of government has an impact on communication management and the journey towards competitive advantage in public universities such as Multimedia University of Kenya.

Therefore, a World Bank Report (1996) states that the incremental economic approach will enhance good governance structures, capacity building and increase competitiveness rather than encourage elite dominance and linear communication in public institutions. According to Hynes (2008), an incremental perspective incorporates a participative approach that supports stakeholder relationship building, beginning with internal stakeholders and a critical evaluation of corporate activities, responsibilities and communication function. The approach builds on Modaff and Dewine (2002) which focused on stakeholder participation in decision-making and goal setting and concluded that it involves the following; free-flowing communication in all directions; subordinates have the opportunity to question superiors; optimum usage of employee skills and creative energy and high levels of accountability. Nguru (2005), a Kenyan scholar, argues that the approach encourages a collectivist culture, accountability, and empowers the low-level employees

but may destabilise the centres of corporate power, creating discomfort in institutional leaders, especially in academic institutions.

Cornelissen (2014) posits that internal communication, a poststructuralist perspective, emphasises a human relations approach in dealing with corporate issues such as crisis management, corporate social responsibility, and corporate design. This approach, which Deetz (1992) initiated, empowers the employee and promotes employee participation in organisational issues and corporate sharing of information. It seems that a stakeholder approach, beginning with employees, will revolutionise the corporate practitioner's role from communication technician to strategist. Studies on strategic corporate communication practitioners argue for alignment in their role, corporate strategy formulation, and stakeholder relationship management (Mahoney, 2011; Holtzhausen & Zerffass, 2011; Verhoeven *et al.*, 2011). These studies move away from the socio-political perspective which integrates and incorporates visual identity systems, integrated marketing communication, and centralized planning systems to enhance reputation (Deetz, 1992).

Corporate communication function, from a strategic and participative perspective, synchronises internal communication to strategic elements within the organisation. These strategic and participative perspective approaches vary. For example, Mugaga (2011) posits that a wholesome approach to corporate communication links communication to corporate vision, structures, and systems within the organisation. Van Riel and Fombrun (2008) advocate for a corporate communication function that links vision, structure, and systems to stakeholders to facilitate the fulfilment of organisational objectives. Mugaga focuses on internal communication, while van Riel and Fombrun focus on both internal and external stakeholders. This study focused on the strategic link of corporate communication within the organisation for effective communication. Van Riel and Fombrun (2008), from a stakeholder perspective, outline three tasks that link stakeholders to the organisation and organisational objectives:

    a. Management communication to share the corporate vision, trust, strengthen of employee identification and manage change

    b. Marketing communication to support sales and brand for publicity and economic gain

c. Organisational communication for public affairs, investor relations, corporate advertising, and internal communication

To begin with the study suggests that the stakeholder perspective focuses on a delicate balance of management, marketing, and organisational communication within the organisation. In line with this perspective, this study argues that corporate communication strategy incorporates all stakeholders in order to attain its management, marketing, and organisational communication objectives. On the contrary, Cornelissen (2011) and Gupta (2011), management communication scholars, note that the strategy development begins by understanding the internal environment by evaluating the corporate profile, vision, values, philosophy, mission, culture, and communication policies. Though, this study notes that Bouchet (2014) observes the difficulty in distinguishing between internal and external environments. This study posits that awareness creation of corporate strategic elements within the internal environment promotes a participative rather than a coalition dominated approach in an organisation.

Secondly, Argenti (2007) and Cornelissen (2014), from an organisational communication perspective, advocate for a wholesome approach to corporate communication practice which focuses on stakeholder relationship building within the organisation. These scholars state that relationship building is attained as a result of a coherent communication strategy that integrates mission, message, and media in tone, theme, visual and logo for effective stakeholder communication (ibid). These scholar's assertion demonstrates that an organisation must purpose to be intentional in relationship building during communication strategy formulation and implementation. However, this study identifies with Austin and Pinkleton's (2015) perspective on the challenge of implementing a coherent communication strategy in the areas of the message interpretation. This study observes that the challenge in employee message interpretation may be attributed to logical, emotional and tone perspectives. These perspectives may originate from cultural, ethnic and political orientations which playout in the Kenyan higher education context and impact on a transforming university. Thus, the study sought to examine how MMU navigated its internal communication during organisational transformation to manage corporate identity and reputation.

Thirdly, Schultz, Hatch and Adams (2012), from a marketing communication perspective, argue that a wholesome approach to corporate communication involves managing organisations as

corporate brands to influence reputation. The scholars state that branding is about mean-making and sharing experiences with stakeholders to manage reputation (ibid). Fombrun (2012) posits that branding is an effective response to interactions with services and products provided. This marketing perspective aligns with economic theory in which reputation is built through observation of organisational behaviour, interactions with the organisation's affiliations, and creating performance history over time. This study identifies with the notion that reputation management of a transforming public university has to incorporate interactions with affiliates such as other higher education institutions, industry, among others. In the same vein, Wittingham and Yakis (2012) argue that reputation management during transformation in an organisation may be through visual and verbal communication in the form of performances, speeches, dress code, body language, and other symbolic languages. These scholars connect corporate branding, through the organisation's behaviour, to the external environment, to reputation management. Apolo *et al,* (2017) connect the corporate communication function to the management of identity, image and reputation for competitive advantage through the strategic management of communication tools for the construction of links with shareholders to attain organisational goals.

On the contrary, Samantaray (2006) observes that transformation involves improving operations, changing corporate strategy and self-renewal. Therefore, Steyn *et al.* (2003) propose a wholesome approach, through effective internal communication of vision, trust, and brand during transformation to promote corporate identity. Soha (2010), from a futuristic approach, states that corporate communication practice must develop an active internal stakeholder management role as well as be aware of corporate management interferences. Vervey and Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003) had cautioned that transformation may fail due to a lack of corporate communication strategy, or if the communication strategy does not align with the corporate strategy. Darqal and Quwasmeh (2013) and Heath (2010) advocate for a wholesome strategy that adopts a reflective paradigm to integrate the silent voices in the organisation. Thus, the study examines if internal communication strategy incorporated the silent voices as they could impact on corporate identity and reputation management during transforming institution.

2.3 Corporate Communication and Organisational Transformation

This section examines effective corporate communication, from a wholesome viewpoint, in a transforming organisation. Van der Waldt (2004) defines transformation as a dramatic shift in

organisation systems in which an integrative and participative approach to corporate communication if utilised can guide the dominant coalition in developing trust, sharing corporate objectives and vision through employee interaction. In addition, (van Vuuren, 2002)(2002) states that during an organisational shift, the communication function must coordinate employee behaviour, tasks, and goals; communicate measures to their attainment; and manage informal operations. Furthermore, van Vuuren (2002), a reflective perspective scholar, advocates for communication that promotes the interaction of functions within the organisation to form relationships. These scholars advocate for open system principles such as wholeness, hierarchy, self-regulation, open, adaptability, stability and flexibility. The scholars argue that open systems recognise that changes in the organisation are inevitable and, therefore, systems, staff, structures and processes ought to respond and adjust accordingly. Gould (1977) had cautioned that organisations whose speed is slower than the speed of the change outside become extinct. Consequently, the above arguments suggest that to avoid corporate extinction, corporate practice self-regulation, adaptability and flexibility. The present study agrees with the integrative approach of the scholars and proposes an open system for a university which incorporates a participative, consultative and communicative approach during the organisational shift to build employee trust and attain organisation vision.

In the Kenyan context, Munene (2008) posits that university transformation was a marketisation aspect due to external and internal pressures. The scholar states that external factors such as multilateral financial institutions and global trends, and an internal factor such as social demand for higher education were some of the pressures to institutional marketisation. Thus, Munene (2008) advances the argument that university transformation should be part of marketisation. Essentially, Munene presumes that the marketisation of education seems to relate to a trend where academic institutions were encouraged to compete against each other and act more like corporate entities. To some extent, the present study agrees with the element of competition and corporate structure in marketisation; however, employee participation and corporate identity should also be considered during organisational transformation. On the contrary, Mukwana, Kande and Too (2017) outline key features to improve university education in Kenya. These features include education relevance, education accessibility, financing, governance, research, industry linkages and internationalisation. The Kenyan scholars advance the argument that university improvement should be driven by external market, financial and industry factors. However, these external

features overlook emphasis on institutional strenthening, corporate niche, identity and reputation management which are pertinent to university improvement because they provide for a participative approach. The study argues that system and processes should incorporate a participatory approach through culture and teamwork, which are part of effective communication.

Hagel (2018), in a *Marketing Journal* Article, "The continuous transformation imperative", outlines four imperatives to successful organisational transformation. The marketing consultant argues that transformation process incorporates a rethinking strategy in which planning is at two levels; 6 - 12 months (zoom-in) and 10 – 20 years (zoom-out). Secondly, the author states that transformation should involve scalable learning in which institutions come together to become large, innovative and learn together rather than merely concentrating on product, service, processes and business change models. Thirdly, the consultant posits that traditional top-down approach to transformation has a high failure rate due to employee resistance, thus, advocates for scaling-the-edge of an institution. The consultant seems to state that transformation begins by pulling resources, gradually, from the core out to the edge, thus replacing the existing core. Finally, Hagel advocates for an organisation to continually evolve in line with the changing business and global trends. The author outlines these transformation imperatives from a commercial western context in which organisational structures and process are clearly outlined. The present study identifies with the rethinking and scaling-the-edge imperatives. The study observes that the two imperatives, if adopted and adapted, play a role during university transformation. The concept of transformation is about rethinking and replacing the existing core through a communicative and participative approach to provide for a competitive edge. Hence, the present study examines how a bureaucratic young establishment with developing systems in a Kenyan context can incorporate a participatory and wholesome approach involving internal publics to manage identity and reputation.

2.4 A Participative Approach to Corporate Communication Practice

Toth (2007), a proponent of a participative paradigm, advocates for a communication shift from top-down to bottom-up approach with an emphasis on stakeholder involvement and relationships building through constant connection. However, Toth (2007) cautions that bottom-up and constant connection with stakeholders may challenge communication boundaries, structures, and hierarchies within an organisation. Despite the said caution, scholars from a critical theory

perspective, Holtzhausen and Voto (2002) and Deetz (1995) argue for a participative approach to communication. Critical theory scholars call for internal communication strategies that emphasize participation and relationship management. The strategies involve tactics such as employee debate forums, evaluation of mean-making of symbols and policies, continuous employee negotiations and constant feedback (ibid). Therefore, the present study agrees with the argument that corporate communication practitioners should align the communication strategy with the strategic management function during organisational change as part of a strategy towards corporate reputation management. Abdulai and Shafiwu (2014), scholars based in the African communication context, focus on an information-sharing approach among employees at different hierarchical levels to improve commitment levels rather than addressing critical strategic aspects of corporate communication. Furthermore, the scholars state that the communal approach allows for delegation of decision-making to non-management employees rather than line managers, which creates trust (ibid). The scholars place more emphasis on the relational aspect of communication management, participative perspective, but less on strategic management formulation during transformation. The relational aspect develops trust among employees which is important during transformation, but it must incorporate another element in corporate strategy. Thus, the participative approach is desirable and needs to be elevated to the strategic level during organisational transformation.

Moreover, Cotton, Vollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall and Jennings (1988)classify six forms of participative decision-making, among them the representative and informal participative forms of communication management. These scholars state that representative participation prescribes for employee representation at management meetings; while informal participation stipulates for interpersonal relationships in which subordinates and supervisors interact and influence one another (Abdulai & Shafiwu, 2014). The study notes Moghalu's (2014) argument that only about five percent of organisations implement the decisions arrived at from a participative process. However, the study argues that in an emerging economy which seems to subscribe to a capitalistic, liberalised and digitalised context, public institutions could, likewise, embrace an open system that is inclusive in decision-making and representative.

From a participative paradigm, the corporate communication practitioner develops a corporate communication strategy for the organisation that articulates employee communication in line with

corporate vision, mission, values, and objectives so as to strengthen corporate identity and culture (Steyn & Puth, 2000). Chouinard and Cousins (2013) propose a corporate culture that promotes effective internal stakeholder management through communication inclusiveness by listening to silent voices, while Meredith (2006) and Beebeejaun (2006) propose building healthy power relations by managing cultural and ethnic differences. Akuul (2010) proposes that reputation management be enhanced through CEO charisma, teamwork, flexibility, and innovation. In addition, Akuul (2010) advocates for a creative culture through progressive policies such as open space offices for a more tech-conscious, modern generation that focuses on deliverables. Thus, these scholars imply that a participative approach through a corporate culture which integrates employee inclusion of silent voices, ethnic differences, CEO positioning, innovation, and policies have an impact on corporate reputation management. The present study interrogates reputation management from a participative perspective in line with the argument that effective communication, in a tech-conscious generation, during organisational transformation involves the incorporation of an all-inclusive culture.

2.5 Corporate Communication Practice and Internal Communication

Communication channels appropriateness and preferences, of a tech-conscious generation, may have an impact on the effectiveness of internal communication, corporate identity, and image management in an organisation. This study posits that since internal communication norms are changing, strategies must shift in line with the internal stakeholders. Hayase (2009) states that internal communication is more than a mere exchange of information, both informal and formal, between management and employees. D'Aprix (1982) also stated that internal communication had become more than mere communication between management and employees. Previously, the function had an inadequate budget, limited professional staffing and 'near-sighted' vision to honest and direct communication in the organisation (ibid). To enhance the effectiveness of the function, the Watson Wyatt Worldwide Survey (2009) on communication and employee engagement proposed that internal communication be hierarchical, composed of three tiers – foundational, strategic and behavioural. The survey stated that the foundational tier dealt with the formation of the formal communication process, effective use of technology, and linked desired behaviour to employee compensation; though this study did not deal with compensation, it linked internal communication processes, policies and procedures to defined behaviour; in the present study the foundational tier seems to link   corporate identity management. Secondly, the strategic tier

focused on connecting employees to business objectives, and by extension, vision, missions, and values, which in this present study implies that connecting internal communication to organisational success. The present study links the strategic tier to communication to manage the corporate image. The behavioural perspective focuses on the link between change management, senior management's behaviour and employee's role to attain organisational success. The survey study underscored the significance of dominant coalition's (management) behaviour and change communication; and the study's emphasis on management communication to employees during the change to drive organisational success, an element of participative communication approach. This current study posits that management's behavioural change and employees' involvement during transformation brings organisational success, success would impact on corporate reputation management. Thus, the study proposes that all three tiers have a role in internal communication management during organisational transformation. In addition, internal communication management involves the evaluation of the appropriateness of the communication channels. The Watson survey (2009) concluded that employees had channel preferences.

Friedl and Vercic (2011) opine that appropriate internal communication channels facilitate meaning sharing, message negotiation and interpretation between the dominant coalition and employees which, in turn, influence and direct corporate identity and image. However, Daft and Lengel (1986) and Zmud *et al.* (1990) had contended that channels vary in strength and weakness. Klein (1996) stated that internal communication channels included oral, written and electronic, while Al-Ghamdi *et al.* (2007) incorporated technology-related channels to traditional ones. Lastly, Friedl and Vercic (2011) incorporate social media channels to traditional channels. Al-Ghamdi (2007) identifies technology-based communication channels as teleconferencing, video conferencing, internet and mobile phones. These channels, whether traditional, technological or electronic, have varying levels of effectiveness, appropriateness and shared meanings.

Lengel and Daft (1988) recognise that employees have channel preferences for receiving information. Friedl and Vercic (2011) categorise the traditional internal communication channels to include employee magazines, intranet news, corporate television, e-mail, newsletters, face-to-face, and employee meetings. Hofstede and Minkov (2010) argue that employees from collective cultures prefer traditional face-to-face communication, but economic and contextual and economic reasons dictate channel choice, not employee preferences. Therefore, Welch (2012) posits that the

dominant coalition and corporate communication practitioner should consider employee communication channel preferences to effectively communicate. Zmud, Lind and Young (1990) examine five categories on levels of appropriateness to the employee as follows:

a. Face-to-face which involves one-on-one (formal) or one-on-one chats (informal)
b. The group which involves group meetings (formal) or group gatherings (informal)
c. Written which involves handwritten notes, typed or printed memos or letters, printed documents or reports, charts and graphs and computer reports (formal)
d. Traditional communication technologies include phones, voice conferencing and facsimile (formal)
e. Computer-mediated communication technologies include electronic mail and voice messaging (formal). (Zmud, Lind and Young 1990: 444)

Furthermore, effective internal communication involves the monitoring and evaluation of media richness and receiver perception. Kwak (2012) advocates for use of the media richness concept in an organisation to attain communication effectiveness. Daft and Lengel (1986) had argued that rich media clears ambiguous information and changes receiver perception almost immediately than lean, less rich media. The authors state that lean media does not pass the message effectively and may not cause perceptual changes in the receiver. Therefore, the scholars argue that for effective communication, the channel must be chosen correctly based on the audience, the message and the situation (ibid). The present study notes that the communication practitioner role will involve monitoring the message reception and perception during organisational change for effective interpretation. Effective employee interpretation may positively impact on identity and image as each employee clearly understands their role in the organisation. Thus, a positive impact is attainable if a corporate communication practitioner undertakes the role by mapping out an internal communication model that incorporates communication channel preferences.

Delport, Hay-Swemmer, and Wilkinson (2014) argue that higher education institutions are generally managed by academicians who may not be familiar with effective communication at management level and therefore, develop a model on effective internal communication for one South Africa university that went through a merger. Power & Rienstra (1999) developed a model for four local governments which comprises of four levels of communication, namely, internal,

among business and divisions within, with the CEO and with the external public. This conglomerate model articulates the organisational objectives while they are then articulated in the communication plan, thus promoting a horizontal communication approach, but accommodates the symmetrical two-way communication. Their study however does not provide for employee feedback, which is critical in relationship management during transformation.

Asif and Sargeant (2000) propose an internal communication model for the banking industry in the United States which utilises a qualitative approach. The model proposes a non-hierarchical process made up of the target audience, planning process, tools and techniques and communication results, among others. The study recommends that practitioners concentrate on facilitating horizontal communication to enhance organisational identity and relationship building (Ibid). This study observes that the model may not apply to hierarchical organisations and does not directly link corporate strategy to the internal communication process, although it explores the relation between informal communication and management styles (Ibid). The Twente Organisational Communication Model (TOCOM) by Van Gemert & Woudstra (1999) depicts communication as a management tool which is directed and controlled. The model positions organisation communication of vision and goals at the top of the communication process, communication structure and climate at the center with the corporate identity at the core of the organisation (Ibid). Furthermore, the model perceives identity as the organisation's personality and image and reputation as an external aspect. This current study, to some extent, identifies with the strategic communication elements of the model but seeks to incorporate modern practices of technology and inclusivity in a transforming organisation in a university in a different context.

Freeman (2009) states that a strategic employee communication model incorporates the critical role that the communication practitioner plays in an organisation. The scholar notes the importance of face-to-face communication and an interpersonal approach for effect in internal communication in an organisation (ibid). Delport, Hay-Swemmer and Wilkinson (2014), in a study on higher education leaders and internal communication, use an evaluation system to gauge good practice in internal practice. The project was undertaken by Leicester University in collaboration with other United Kingdom universities, to evaluate a South African university. The study used questionnaires, telephone interviews, and e-mail to gather data from communication specialists in multi-campus universities. The findings show that staff advocated for decentralisation and

enhancement of two-way communication. The model deals with universities in several different geographical locations and different language preferences in an open system. The study was an eye-opener to university employee preferences for channels, models, and practices that enhance decentralisation and two-way communication in communication.

2.6 Communication Policies in Public Universities in Kenya

Kiambi (2010), a Kenyan scholar, states that the public sector's pursuit of meritocracy led to the need for the articulation of public policies resulting in the creation of in-house public information offices. In addition, the scholar states that the advent of performance contracting introduced in the public sector the aspect of negotiating performance within government entities and among departments within the entities (ibid). This was an introduction of a consultative, negotiated and participatory process to institutional management. Kotter, a scholar in the western context, posits that the introduction of a participatory approach in the management of public affairs, the top-down approach and hierarchical structure potentially create conflict between the management and employees (Kotter, 1995). However, Huczynski and Buchanan (2010) argue that a changing context must embrace diversity, inclusivity, competition, and technology that generate interdependence in functions and dependence on skilled people through coordination and clear communication policy. The scholar's emphasis is participatory policies that incorporate inclusivity in public entities and public institutional.

Mbeke (2009), a communication scholar, suggests that communication policies in public organisations in Kenya seem to take an asymmetrical, top-down, communication approach with the senior management controlling and sending information. This approach mirrors the colonial government top-down approach to information and relations management between the community and commercial interests (Kiambi, 2010). As part of public institutions, universities, including the transforming ones, inherited the asymmetrical approach to communication. In the same vein, internal communication seems asymmetrical. Hence, the necessity to review communication policy, including internal communication policy, as well as the corporate communication functions to accommodate the silent voices.

This study examines how management, in a public university, may communicate diversity and inclusiveness to accommodate the silent voices during organisational transformation through policy. Walton and Susman (1987) proposed a structural policy approach in which management incorporate policies that favour a flexible workforce and flat organisational structures (in Huczynski & Buchanan, 2010). They argued that this type of structural policies will promote the following: motivation and morale, promote clear work schedules and roles; discourage over-centralization in decision-making and encourage planning; departmental interdependence and coordination through appropriate procedures and rules (ibid). The challenge is how practical are these structural policies to be applied in a hierarchical and complex organisation during organisational transformation? The communication of policies and work roles and schedules implies a top-down approach to communication. Secondly, during transformation, Njogu and Middleton (2009) propose that management embrace an interpretive policy approach which promotes employment equity and group solidarity rather than employee alienation and coercion to increase innovation. The scholars state that employee equity strengthens trust, cohesion and may be a critical factor during organisational transformation. The interpretive polices encourage a two-way asymmetrical approach as the process is participative but controlled by management. Thirdly, scholars, May and Mumby (2004), from a postmodern perspective, propose procedural reviews that explain organisational life as well as promote corporate identity, corporate image, and corporate reputation rather than encourage exclusion and power relations. Thus, the present study evaluates how MMU policies, during organisational transformation, communicate inclusiveness and diversity. In addition, the study examines how a young university, which is multi-layered, in an emerging economy and during transformation, incorporates interpretive and inclusive policies to accommodate the silent voices for effective communication, corporate identity and reputation management for competitive advantage.

Waldt (2004) propose that during transformation, corporate communication practitioners must prepare a comprehensive corporate communication policy that is inclusive. According to Cacioppe and Edwards (2006), inclusiveness promotes a healthy organisation which, in turn, enhances corporate identity, image, reputation management and the realisation of organisational objectives. In addition, Cacioppe and Edwards (2006) and Puth (2002) propose that an integral and integrative approach to communication policy should articulate corporate culture, values, and norms to

employees. For example, the oldest university in Kenya, University of Nairobi (UoN) policy adheres to corporate values such as freedom of expression, creativity, responsible citizenship and inclusiveness (Nairobi, 2014) These values promote diversity through freedom of expression, creativity and inclusivity. Furthermore, the University of Nairobi communication policy states that dialogue and feedback is through the use of communication channels ibid) but it recognises the low employee uptake of communication technologywhich would encourage feedback through debates on social media. Lastly, the policy seems unclear on its prescription on branding for identity management; but places emphasis on public lectures for image management and relationship management for protecting reputation. The policy seems not comprehensive and dynamic enough in internal communication to accommodate digital communication and to foster interdependence of functions and employee engagement.

Hence, a comprehensive corporate communication policy provides the basis for communication strategies that lead to effective relationship management (Valin, 2004). Le Roux (2011) views relationships as key determinants of organisational performance which work alongside trust, involvement, investment, commitment, and open communication. Hon and Grunig (1999) identify two types of relationships: exchange relationship in which each party expects something in return from one another, a reward; and communal relationship where there is genuine concern and benefit to one another regardless of the return; employee relationships are regarded as communal. A mixture of exchange and a communal relationship may be important in corporate relationship management because the exchange boosts employee investment and open communication in the organisation, while communal boosts trust involvement and commitment. Adeoti (2003), an African scholar, advocates for a relational approach to communication policy formulation and sees communication strategies that incorporate the cultural context in a transforming university as critical. Thus, it is concluded that a transforming university evaluates its communication policy formulation and communication strategies to incorporate relationship management through employee trust, involvement commitment, and open communication.

In order to manage the relationship, Slabbert and Barker (2014) propose a model for stakeholder relationship development for organisations in the African context. The study used a quantitative web-based self-administered survey and qualitative semi-structured one-on-one interviews, and sampled 53 senior communication professionals from leading listed South African organisations.

Thirty-six respondents completed the web-based survey and eight participants participated in follow-up interviews. The research advocated for the following strategies a substantial change in mind-set at the board and executive level to allocate time and resources for stakeholder management, to elevate corporate communication department; promote stakeholder equity; rename corporate communication to stakeholder relations; and to move the function away from media and publicity. More importantly, the study advocated for stakeholder inclusion in which the stakeholder and the organisation act as stewards for each other and collaborate in problem-solving, and stakeholders are actively represented at organisational board level. The study recommended the renaming of corporate communication practice and upgrading the functions to a strategic level, as excellent practice. However, Meintjes *et al.* (2012) posit that corporate communication practitioners seem to have limited strategic insight into issues affecting the organisation and its relationship with its stakeholders. The study advocated for stakeholder inclusion, while this study advocates for a key stakeholder, the employee representation and equity at all levels of decision-making for effective relationship management.

Hynes (2008) and Steyn and Puth (2000) state that relationship building begins when management, firstly, critically evaluates corporate activities, responsibilities and the communication function aimed at internal stakeholders. Modaff and Dewine (2002) argue that management facilitates relationship building by providing for genuine participation in decision-making and goal setting; free-flowing of communication in all directions; subordinates provision to question superiors; ensures optimum usage of employee skills and their creative energy; and upholds high levels of accountability. This relationship-building approach aligns with a participative approach and a collective culture perspective that empowers the low-level employees, but which may destabilize centres of corporate power, creating discomfort in institutional leaders, especially in academic institutions (Nguru, 2005). A participative approach proposes employee participation in policy formulation to promote strong corporate identity projection, good service delivery impacting on the positive image, and positive reputation. The research points to the importance of a participative approach to the employee or internal communication, hence the necessity for communication policies that address a participative approach. The study was not context-specific, that is, university transformation in Kenya.

Christensen (2014), from a behavioural perspective, developed an eight-dimension instrument on organisational communication during change, in which three groups are tested. The sample was divided into three groups, composed of employees who experienced the change; those who had gone through the change process; and those who had not experienced any change process, with respondents from selected 12 municipalities and 2 production industries. The research underscores the importance of a communication instrument to measure and differentiate employee perspectives during organisational change. The study advocated for direct employee involvement of the three groups from the public entities in planning and implementation for successful organisational change.. Thus, direct employee involvement, especially in decision-making, may bring cohesion and enhances corporate identity. The municipalities and instruments created for successful transformation may not augur well due to context, a university has an organisational structure, management and employee composition that is more complex. Thus, an observation of a balance between structure, employees and management are a critical mix during university transformation. Nwabagara (2011) proposes, from an African leadership perspective on transformation, that leadership practice may trigger group cohesiveness and decision-making in universities. Mbigi & Mae (2005) state that cohesiveness develops through teamwork and mutual understanding. However, the transforming public universities in Kenya seem to have adopted western leadership and financial management styles which were inherited from their earlier managements or possibly donor organisations (Balogun, 1975; Nti, 1996; Chege, 1999).

The emerging universities inherited a bloated workforce composed of old employees and added new employees, structures and management systems, which challenges their cohesiveness and impact s on corporate identity, image and reputation (Kiambi, 2010; Daily Nation, 16th November 2017). A management system that alienates employees from accessing information during critical decision-making may result in blame games and poor leadership judgment Rowe & Calnan, (2006). To overcome these setbacks, Cravens and Oliver (2006) argue that employees and corporate reputation be considered as unique resources that can generate positive financial performance and, ultimately, create a competitive advantage. The need for cohesiveness in emerging Kenyan universities requires good governance structures and capacity building to increase competitiveness and discourage elite dominance and linear communication (Dodoo, 1996; Ntukamazina, 1996; World Bank Report, 2000). Mbigi (2005) advances the cohesion argument by stating that group solidarity and teamwork would be attained through freedom of

speech and the open-door system. An open-door system, to enhance cohesiveness during organisational transformation, calls for review of corporate communication strategies. A strategy, from a futuristic perspective, is the organisation's determination of long term corporate goals and objectives (Chandler, 1993); the adoption of courses of action and allocation of resources to carry out the goals (Chandler, 1993); corporate positioning for the future (Drucker, 1954); and an approach, design, scheme or system that directs course of action in specific situation (Grunig and Repper, 1992). Luhmann (2005), a descriptive theorist, states that emerging universities, like other organisations, must communicate to differentiate themselves through their communication strategy in order to survive (in Mumby, 2013). Consequently, a communication strategy which provides for employee participation in decision-making alongside efficiency and competitiveness is critical during transformation. The emerging universities ought to review their communication strategy to include employee participation, especially in the digital era. Employee participation in the digital era includes management evaluating the communication channels to incorporate digital platforms which may appeal to certain demographics. Discussions on a transforming and emerging university, employee participation and communication channels, are incomplete without evaluation of the corporate communication roles in the university.

2.7 Corporate Communication Roles Theory

This study examines the corporate communication roles theory which proposes the different roles that practitioners perform to achieve effective communication within the organisation. The study examines roles that a transforming organisation, including a university, may use for excellent communication towards employees, so as to manage organisational identity and reputation (Tubre and Collins, 2000). A role is the expected behaviour one engages in while performing a task.

The roles theory is derived from public relations, a predecessor of corporate communication, as roles still seem to play a critical role in communication. Broom and Smith (1979) initiated the role theory when they conducted an experiment on undergraduate and postgraduate students, in a bid to study client relationship experiences based on the enactment of roles. The research concluded that public relations had four dominant roles, namely, technician role, expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem solver (ibid). Some scholars use these roles to describe daily behaviour patterns of individual corporate communication practitioners which, they suggest,contribute to excellent communication and organisational performance (Steyn & Puth,

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2000) . Other scholars have added public relations roles such as media specialist (Broom & Dozier, 1986), policy advisor, brand officer, internal communicator (Beurer-Zullig & Merkel, 2009). Some scholars argue that excellent communication is attained if and when communicators perform their strategic and technical roles (Neill & Lee, 2016). The present study summarises these roles into three, for a transforming organisation to facilitate information exchange, create awareness, and understanding between management and employees. The study proposes that the expert prescriber role handles environmental scanning and strategy; the facilitator role to handle internal communication planning and implementation; and the technician role to handle the new media and technology.

2.7.1 Environmental Analysis Role

Corporate communication function is said to be effective when the practitioner understands the internal environment so as to construct specific strategies that impact on corporate identity, image, and reputation. Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2012) define environmental scanning as a corporate strategic role which involves coordinating a coherent and holistic communication process. Austin and Pinkleton (2015) and Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2012) argue that a holistic communication process begins with the early dictation, identification, and acquisition of information on events, trends and relationships in the external environment to assist management in planning and communication strategy formulation. Next, Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2012) state that the environmental analysis helps to detect meanings, forecasting to develop projections, and assessments to determine strategies. Finally, according to Brown-Diggs (2012), strategy formulation involves SWOT Analysis which is an internal assessment and external assessment through literature reviews, mystery shopping and inspecting industry-specific data. These internal environmental scanning processes culminate in communication planning and strategy, a role for the expert prescriber.

Planning and strategy may promote employee participation and strengthen corporate identity. For example, Ptaszyski (1989) highlights the importance of internal environmental analysis in an academic context. In addition, Murphy (1988), in a study at Georgia Centre for Continuing Education, concluded that internal environmental analysis contributed to increased communication among line and staff personnel due to employee involvement in decision-making. Thus, based on these studies, the internal environmental analysis role may facilitate favourable relationship

management between employees and the dominant coalition, which strengthens corporate identity, especially during organisational transformation. The study examines the practitioner's strategic role of internal environmental analysis to enhance employee and management relationships during organisational transformation to manage corporate identity and corporate reputation.

Modaff and Dewine (2002) and Gupta (2011) opine that internal communication is a critical component of strategic internal stakeholder management. The scholars state that the internal stakeholder management role involves an assessment of information as well as information exchange in the internal environment (Ibid). Information assessment and exchange to manage internal communication, for purposes of identity and image management, takes varied approaches. For example, Gupta (2011) states that a buffering approach involves influencing the external environment, but prevents it from interfering with the internal functioning of an organisation through lobbying, advocacy, and advertising. On the other hand, the scholar adds that bridging encompasses the organisation adapting internal strategies that meet the demands of the important shareholders, rather than staff and customers (ibid). The study posits that bridging does not promote corporate identity but may promote the image, while buffering may promote both identity and image to some extent. Consequently, Cheney and Christensen (2001) and Bouchet (2014) caution the corporate communicator against integrating external and internal communication roles as this blurs communication boundaries.

Consequently, the corporate communication practitioner role must involve clear creation of external and internal communication strategies and policies for strategic stakeholder relationship management for mutual benefit. Van Ruler (1997) views strategy creation as a management role which develops from effective internal communication strategy formulation to address internal environmental issues,media relations, and agency profile roles to address strategic external issues. Mahoney (2011), a critical theory scholar, states that the role of the communicator is to prepare an internal communication strategy that aligns with corporate strategy to build effective internal stakeholder relationships. Van Ruler (1997) extended Dozier's (1992) two typology roles to include the sales manager who synchronizes the behaviour of the publics with that of an organisation; and an intermediary role which creates mutual understanding between public and organisation. However, Meintjes *et al.* (2012) state that practitioners face challenges in building and maintaining long-term relations due to a lack of teamwork and strategic alignment in corporate

communication departments. The present study focuses on internal communication and employee participation and the role the practitioner has to play during transformation to build cohesion.

Van Riel (2007) argues that to create mutual understanding and cohesion, practitioners must distinguish between levels of information disclosure and levels of truth during organisational communication as follows:

a. One-way information with complete truth about operations and objectives;
b. Two-way with incomplete truths about activities and justifies deception;
c. One-way communication in which an organisation communicates instructions given to employees about procedures;
d. Two-way symmetry in which both parties are open and truthful;
e. Two-way asymmetry in which organisation reveals the truth but does not engage in dialogue.

Cornelissen (2014) and Hynes (2008) suggest that the corporate practitioner, during organisational transformation, adopts a two-way symmetric and participative approach whose emphasis is human relations. Hynes (2008) argues that this approach seeks to empower the employee and to promote employee participation in organisational transformational matters through information sharing. The scholars state that a participative approach, beginning with employees, has revolutionized the communication function and practitioner's role from communication technician to problem solver to strategist (ibid). Strategic communication, from a participative approach, involves environmental scanning and analysis formulation and implementation of communication plans and sharing ideas and information with employees. Thus, the study emphasises on the importance of employee participation in organisational transformation through information and ideas sharing and the strategic role of corporate communicator which involves planning and implementation. This study posits that effective communication planning and implementation will positively influence employees and impact on the corporate image and reputation, especially during transformation. The present study evaluates the challenges and opportunities in strategic communication management and communication planning and its impact on MMU employees and on reputation during MMU transformation.

2.7.2 Corporate Communication Planning and Implementation Role

Corporate stakeholder management, from a strategic management perspective, involves developing and implementing programmes and plans on stakeholders and the publics to manage organisational relations. For example, Cornelissen (2011), from a stakeholder perspective, proposed a three-dimension model of communication between the organisation and stakeholders. The scholar posits that stakeholders are informed of organisational decisions and policies through press releases, newsletters, reports and corporate websites. The author states that a persuasive strategy utilizes campaigns, meetings, and discussions to change and convey knowledge, attitude, and behaviour to create the favourable corporate image; while dialogue involves active stakeholder consultation and incorporation of decision-making (ibid). On the other hand, Botha (2007), African perspective scholars, advocate for a collective approach to relationship management through visible activities and confrontations avoidance but encourage a collaborative approach to stakeholder management. Thus, the study aligns with Bronn (2015) who advocates for a collaborative rather than confrontational approach to communication management to enhance genuine and trustworthy stakeholder relations which impacts the image and reputation. Steyn, Mateboho and Grobler (2001) recognise that the challenge for corporate communication practitioners is how to manage the strategist role and to synchronize the behaviour of the publics with that of the organisation. In the same vein, Bakhuya (2015) advocates for communication coordination at all levels of management and for the implementation of a time frame within the organisation, especially during organisational change. Also, Steyn, Mateboho and Grobler (2001) state that the challenge is for corporate communication senior practitioners to assume broad decision-making roles within the organisation to be strategic rather than tactical.

2.7.3   Corporate Communicator's Role and New Technology

Neill and Lee (2016), in a study conducted on two sets of public relations practitioners in the industry on 116 respondents in 2014, and 114 respondents in 2015, concluded that internal social media manager played five roles, while the technician had three roles. The five managerial roles included social media technician, listening and analytics, online media relations, policymaker and policing, while the roles of technicians were social media technician, policymaker and policing. It was noted that technicians did more than message writing and dissemination, they were involved in environmental scanning both internally and externally and assisted in social media policy making as they were younger and perceived as social media experts. It is noted that the limitations of the study were that the response rate was low. The study provided gender differences in social

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media performance, in that the women were more likely to participate in active communication and yet perform managerial roles. Neill and Lee (2016) state that the roles theory has evolved over the years under the umbrella of excellence theory.

2.8 The Excellence Theory of Public Relations

2.8.1   Background of the Theory

The excellence theory is an integrated collection of theories that were developed after fifteen years of research study on excellent communication (Grunig, 2008; Chang, 2014). The Excellence Theory in Public Relations: Past, Present and Future research sponsored by International Business Communicators Research Foundation, interviewed public relations practitioners, CEOs and employees of 327 organisations (ibid). According to Chang (2014), the study culminated in defining excellence in public relations as a set of attributes and practices that build quality and long-term relationships with strategic constituencies. Previous studies had described the relationship between public relations roles and behaviour of an organisation through mass communication theories of media effects and attitude theories from psychology (Grunig and Grunig, 2008). Grunig and Grunig (2008) argue that this collection of theories culminated in explaining how organisational structure, environment, history, size, and technology impact on corporate communication and public relations practice. Thus, they describe how communication can positively or negatively influence organisations, especially transforming organisations. Hence, the theory prescribes how an organisation can effectively or excellently communicate, especially a transforming organisation. Thus, the present study seeks to examine how effectively a transforming organisation communicated with its publics, beginning with its employees.

The excellence theory stipulates a double-edged approach as it advocates for the effective and strategic management of internal communication and relationship building in an organisation. Laskin (2012) states that the theory serves the dominant coalition, is participative and symmetrical in nature. The scholar adds that the theory prescribes several propositions for communication practitioners in organisations to maximize on communication interactions with internal and external stakeholders to build relationships. Therefore, Heath and Coombs (2006) advocate for 'excellent' practice by observing factors that breed organisational efficiency and maximize on mutually beneficial relationships between the organisation and its strategic stakeholders. Public

relations scholars Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002), from a strategic management and stakeholder perspective, proposed principles that facilitate effective communication and decision-making for the realization of organisational objectives. The present study outlines the tenets of excellence theory and critically examines its impact on corporate reputation management in a transforming public university.

2.8.2   Tenets of Excellence Theory

1.   Inclusivity in organisation communication

Heath (2006) outlines that excellent communication in an organisation advocates for inclusivity, a two-way symmetrical model, which utilizes research and dialogue to promote stakeholder engagement. Adeoti, Olusoji & Mofope (2013) describe stakeholder engagement as being involved in communication planning that promotes a participative decision-making approach to attain organisational objectives during transformation. Yabs (2010), an African management strategy scholar, states that a participative and consultative approach involves mobilizing resources, formulating, implementing and evaluating decisions to attain organisational objectives and, specifically, to fulfill stakeholder expectations. Furthermore, Adeoti *et al.* (2013), from a stakeholder perspective, advocate for inclusive decision-making which culminates in organisational policy formulation and sustainable corporate decisions. A participative approach and effective communication during policy-making and decision communication are critical factors for an organisation that seeks to retain excellent status during transformation.

According to Dutta (2014), inclusivity, from a corporate communication perspective, involves practitioners acting as the bridge between the dominant coalition and stakeholders to lessen employee alienation created by exclusion, either all stakeholder exclusion or getting ideas and opinions of selected stakeholders. Heath (2006) had argued that inclusivity in decision-making involving employees breeds higher levels of satisfaction and mutually beneficial relationships, and balances the corporate interestbetween organisational and internal stakeholder goals. Thus, effective corporate communication relates to organisational objectives and stakeholder interests.

However, Fashoyin (2005) and Adeoti *et al*. (2013) agree that inclusivity seems to pose a challenge in hierarchical and bureaucratic systems in public institutions in the African context. Inclusivity in

communication and decision-making approach, though it adheres to a collective and African perspective and culture, may threaten centres of power. Thus, Lane (2014) posits that inclusivity in public institutions, it seems, is rarely practiced as communication is often utilized as a manipulation tool. Though hierarchical and bureaucratic systems have been evolutionary universal systems essential for modernization of undeveloped societies, the systems curtail inclusivity (Adeoti *et al.,* 2013). Despite these challenges, Bendix (2001), a South African scholar in industrial relations, argues that since employees in the public sector pay themselves because they are taxpayers, therefore, they ought to promote participative decision-making in public organisations. In addition, the scholar states that in the public sector, the management assumes the role of the employer yet they, too, are employees. Therefore, the scholar advocates for a redefinition of this role so that all employees unilaterally plan, decide and control (Ibid). Consequently, according to Cornelissen (2014), this relational perspective promotes employee cooperation and participative processes rather than conflict. In the same vein, Le Roux (2010) argues that participative decision-making involves information sharing with strategic stakeholders across the hierarchy boundaries. Fugazzotto (2009) states that strategic stakeholders are persons critical and crucial for the organisation's attainment of mission, legitimacy and litigation avoidance.

The concept of inclusivity may be a challenge to the public universities in Kenya due to their bureaucratic orientation and the level of permeability in their organisational communication boundaries. For example, the present study observes prestigious and well-established universities seem to run closed systems because they restrict enrolments and desire to stick to traditions, while upcoming universities seem to run open systems that have varied admission requirements as their systems and traditions evolve. Whichever system an institution may adopt will impact policy, university activities and interactions between faculties and administrative officers.

2.   *Corporate Positioning of Practice*
The positioning of the corporate communication office within the organisation may determine the level of its ability to communicate effectively. The theory recognises the importance of proximity to the dominant coalition may enable the communication function to the executive office. Proximity to the dominant coalition empowers the function to play a critical advisory role on matters involving stakeholders and ethical decision-making. Although scholars posit that a direct

reporting to dominant coalition enhances excellence in corporate communication (Bowen, 2004); later research found that the function may be compromised (Mumby, 2013). Grunig (J.E, 1992b)) defined a dominant coalition as a "group of senior managers who control the organisation". Grunig (L.A, 1992c) states that the group possesses both decision-making power and controls the chief resources, while Kotter (1978) had described them as a group of cooperating employees who control basic policy-making. Kotter emphasises the element of 'cooperating employees' in decision-making and policyaking, which is participative. Therefore, proximity and power positioning, if well utilized by the corporate communication function, can enhance rather than curtail participative stakeholder management and decision-making.

White and Dozier (1992) examine the decision-making hierarchy of an organisation which involves several stakeholders. The scholars state that before the dominant coalition makes the decision; proposers make recommendations to the dominant coalition; experts provide scenario-specific information; the consultant shapes how a given issue is represented, and the facilitators enable collaboration among the higher tiers so that decisions are made. Therefore, communication is excellent if the practitioner is up the hierarchy at least at the level of a proposer. However, when then communication function has less organisational power and authority, it is less influential in strategic decision-making (Spicer, 1997). Therefore, Berger and Reber (2006) propose that communication practitioners have to exercise power and influence within the organisation in order to be change agents.

A survey on the *Jobs and careers recruitment, Kenya 2016* website demonstrates that about 30 percent of communication practitioners in public institutions seem to have strategic decision-making powers, as 80 percent report directly to the CEO. For example, Assistant Deputy Director, communication at Kenyatta University Hospital reports to Director, Clinical Services and is part of the strategic decision-making management group of the hospital (Search, 2016). Kenya Revenue Authority and Kenya Utalii College have corporate offices reporting to the CEO and both deal with corporate image management (ibid). On the other hand, some large public entities, for example, the National Health Insurance Fund and Public Service Commission, the communication manager does not report to CEO directly and deals with a marketing component and publicity (Jobs and Careers Recruitment Kenya, 2016). Furthermore, at Multimedia University, the

corporate office reports to the CEO directly but has limited decision-making powers and undertakes the marketing function.

3. Autonomy Versus Integrative Role of corporate Practitioner

The corporate communication practitioner's challenge is to balance between autonomy and integration when planning for communication. The practitioner is expected to relate to other corporate functions within the organisation, yet also remain independent in relation to the said corporate functions. Effective communication practice requires that the practitioner integrates the communication function to all levels and functions of the organisation for coordination of corporate identity, culture, and image. Bowen (2004) argues that the function should not be pigeonholed, encroached or subsumed by marketing or other corporate functions by having a degree of autonomy. Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) posit that it is important to separate the communication management function in the organisation to prevent encroachment from the marketing or legal departments and spearhead the role of generating changes in knowledge, attitude and behaviour.

According to Gupta (2011), autonomy enhances strategic boundary spanning because it is concerned with bringing information about environmental changes into the organisation. Bowen (2004) cautions that when this aspect is usurped by other organisational functions, it is common for smaller or less strategic publics to be ignored in organisational decision-making. The tension is how to manage autonomy, yet be integrative during organisational transformation in order to curve corporate identity away from the previous one, be competitive and carve a niche. To curve a clear and positive corporate identity during corporate transformation may require astute corporate communication professionalism.

4. Professionalism and Professional Skills of Corporate Communication

Bowen (2004) stated that communication professionalism is about the enhancement of strategic and managerial skills to increase the two-way symmetrical approach rather than, merely, technical skills of writing and events management. The scholar argues that professionals have managerial skills, undertake research, facilitate conflict resolution, issues, and budget management, resolve ethical dilemmas and manage staff; rather than being technicians or specialists in writing or

document and documentary production (Bowen, 2004).The professionalization and training of public relations professionals began in America in 1947 at Boston University, while in 1957, the first code of ethics and the licensing of practitioners were initiated (Rensburg & Cant, 2009). Similarly, in Africa, the first public relations consultancy began in Johannesburg in 1948, while the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa was established in 1957 (Rensburg & M, 2009)and in Kenya in 1971 (PRSK website).

According to Kimutai (2011), about 71% of practitioners in Kenya belong to the Public Relations Society of Kenya which may be interpreted to mean that these members observe ethical codes of PRSK. In Kenya, the growth of large institutions in the 1990s resulted in heightened public awareness to manage stakeholder expectation and engagement even though most practitioners practice press agentry in which public relations is evaluated based on the amount of media coverage (ibid). Thus, Tikolo (2011) observes that media advertising and its value evaluation are the key public relations activities among professionals in Kenya. The Kenyan practitioner notes that the public institutions have the highest number of in-house communication practitioners of which approximately 60% possess postgraduate qualifications from local, American and United Kingdom institutions (ibid). Rensburg and Cant (2009) outline that public relations activities include lobbying and advocacy with government bodies for implementation of affirmative action, during policy formulation on social responsibility, and the realisation of corporate reputation as a valuable asset. The scholars add that reputation is to be protected, conserved, defended, nurtured and enhanced at all times (Rensburg & Cant, 2009). Kimutai (2011) observes that statistics on advocacy reveal that although there is a high level of professionalism and training, the profession is yet to experience a return of investment. This may be a challenge to professionals in bureaucratic and highly hierarchical public institutions. The scholar concludes that, despite image management being a key aspect of in-house public relations practitioners in universities, there are yet to be observable aggressive and proactive image and stakeholder management strategies (Kimutai, 2011).

Therefore, though universities in Kenya both practice corporate communication and train either public relations or corporate communication professions, observation shows that the training does not emphasise systematic and strategic stakeholder management stakeholders for image and reputation enhancement. Ketterer (2015) observes that the challenge is greater for young

universities which are recruiting new staff while retaining the old guard, thus have identity management challenges, and a clear articulation of corporate mission and strategies can span generations. Therefore, Nzeribe (1986) had noted the importance of symmetrical communication which encourages employee communication and teamwork.

5.   Symmetrical Approach to Communication Management

Bowen (2004), in regard to the symmetric principle, emphasises two-way symmetrical communication for effective problem-solving and relationship building during stakeholder management. Heath (2010) argues that this approach, whose origin is the symmetry theory and economic-systems theory, is a diachronic communication behaviour which is attained through negotiation. The scholar adds that synchronic communication behaviour is a persuasive, unethical and inferior approach to communication in the organisation (Ibid). The scholar had built on Grunig's (1992) outline of communication strategies that an organisation may use, namely: propaganda, one-way communication, in which partial truthful information is shared; public information, one-way information that provides truthful information; two-way-asymmetry which has truthful information but discourages dialogue; and two-way symmetry encouraging dialogue, truthfulness and exchange of information.

The present study seeks to interrogate how MMU management communicated with employees on the corporate identity and image during the institution's transformation. A two-way symmetrical approach to communication, that is participative, seems to be one method to internal stakeholder relations management. Thus, the communication practitioner's challenge is to create an enabling setting for the building of a strong corporate identity for internal stakeholders and the favourable corporate image for all stakeholders. A symmetrical approach encourages practitioners to conduct research to understand publics, engage in negotiation and collaborative problem solving (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993). The information exchange with stakeholders builds long-term beneficial relations, enhances transparency and ethical communication (Cilliers, 2016). If handled effectively, symmetrical communication, due to its participative nature, may result in changes in stakeholders' knowledge, attitude, and behaviour, KAB model, towards an institution (ibid). The study advocates for symmetrical communication, through dialogue, which is critical during institutional transformation in order to manage corporate identity and culture.

Critics of the symmetrical approach claim that the approach cannot be effective due to unequal resource differences between powerful organisations, dominant coalition and their publics (L'Etang and Piecka, 2006 in Heath, 2010).The challenge may be real in the Kenyan context where the university structure is hierarchical and bureaucratic in a diverse ethnic, non-western and digital context. This context, according to rhetoric critics, challenges symmetry and the sharing of meaning, but this study posits that dialogue and relationship building among employees is a beginning point in creating a corporate identity. Creating shared meaning, symmetrically, is about employee debate; discussion, negotiation, and collaboration to move the organisation forward (Heath, 2010).

Secondly, Pang *et al.* (2010) posit that practitioners adopt an advocacy–accommodating continuum rather than the two-way symmetrical model which is restrictive and based on an outdated approach of strategic management. The continuum, this study proposes, expands rather than replaces the model, as the continuum is based on two-way communication and dialogue between the organisation and stakeholders. A mix of advocacy-accommodation continuum during university transformation encourages rhetoric which supports posturing and willingness and concrete action to meet the promise (Jin, Park & Len-Rio, 2010).

6.   Dialogic Approach to Internal Communication
Dialogue may be a basis for stakeholder engagement and management during corporate transformation as part of corporate reputation management. Dialogic approach emanates from dialogue, Greek for "word" or "meaning", and refers to the quality of the relationship between two people (Bussy, 2010). Buber (2002) stated that dialogue was 'not curious sport' but rather turning to the other as a partner; dialogue is listening, having positive regard and willingness to change (Bussy, 2010); furthermorelistening by suspending judgment; positive regard in which organisational members see one another as colleagues; and willingness to change by transcending members' egos (Ibid).

Dialogic approach emphasises the importance of interpersonal communication which may facilitate building teamwork and increasing employee morale to increase job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover in order to manage corporate identity, image and culture (Bowen, 2004; Adeoti *et al*., 2013). An interpersonal approach to internal communication may resolve

corporate issues early by taking steps to avoid issue escalation within corporate functions. Resolving corporate issues is through exchanging ideas and negotiating (Kent & Taylor 1998 in Pang, 2016).

Although negotiation through dialogue in internal communication is encouraged, bureaucratic tendencies, like those in public universities in Kenya, tend to advocate for written rules, spell out behaviour guidelines, and adherence to a strict chain of command. Also, dialogue measurement will involve content analysis of mission statements and corporate publication; and interviews on stakeholder orientation towards specific groups such as suppliers, customer, community and employees are important (Bussy, 2010). Paolo Freire (1970) proposed that dialogic processes in academic institutions in the developing world are attainable if meaningful sharing is encouraged, equitability and empowerment are promoted.

In a transforming university, the sharing of meaning with internal stakeholders begins with meticulous communication planning and strategy (McQuail & Windahl, 1993). Meticulous planning and strategizing involve filling all the intended/receiver meaning gaps when conversing in the organisation (ibid).

Scholars propose that to promote effective and excellent communication in a transforming and new institution, internal communication should be interactive both formally and informally and at all levels of the institution (Ryan, 1999; Kalla, 2005; Welch & Jackson, 2007). Secondly, a multidisciplinary and functional integration approach to organisational communication (Reinsch, 1996; Smeltzer, 1996; Argenti, 1996; Mumby & Stohl, 1996). Thirdly, the approach involves strategic interaction between management and stakeholders who include ordinary employees, dominant coalition, supervisors or line managers, work teams and project teams (Welch & Jackson, 2007). Strategic interaction of internal stakeholders in transforming universities may be through segmentation by occupation or demographics; or grouped in ancillary, academic support, administrative, academic and research stakeholders (Welch & Jackson, 2007).

Technology through online, 'virtual landscape' may be an interactive platform where internal stakeholders hold quality organisational public conversations and generate positive outcomes (Sundar, Xu & Dou, 2012). The 'virtual landscape' is one where stakeholders co-create

organisational images and brand messages through dialogic communication, yet this facility is underutilized as an organisation does not interact much, online, with stakeholders (Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012In addition, social media users, through dialogue, generate communication than the organisation itself. Transforming organisation can promote mutuality by introducing website dialogue by introducing interface with users (Park & Reber, 2008). Finally, an organisation can develop social media interpersonal relations through the use of language content and style, typography and message timing; encourage employees to respond by 'liking' or posting comments on organisational stories to build identity and image (Pang, 2015). However, Cheney and Christensen (2001) caution communication facilitators to be wary of the blurred boundary between internal and external communication management during transformation.

During transformation, MMU corporate office may address diverse groups, maintain communication channels and climate as part of communication planning, formulation, implementation, dissemination, and institutionalization during phases of change (Bambaas & Patrickson, 2008). The MMU corporate communication practitioners may be a facilitator of change by managing inputs, systems, and structures. Inputs include students, employees, information, technology, cultural expectations, and human predispositions; systems include tracking activities, faculty, and departmental interactions; structure includes managing authority, power, and information flow relationships (Luhmann, 1995). Facilitating change means adopting a dialogic approach to internal communication as proposed by excellence theory. The dialogic approach is easily attained in a collective and communal African institutional setting if employees are equipped with problem-solving, information gathering and networking skills.

7.   *Problem Solving Tact in Communication*

The excellence theory outlines the importance of problem-solving for effective communication. The approach involves the coordination of diverse professionals, roles and functions to have inclusive corporate decisions and incorporate varying viewpoints (Bowen, 2004). Modaff and Dewine (2002) propose a consultative and participative western approach to problem-solving using the four interrelated communication strategies: recognise the issue, contain the negative impact, allow for affected members to articulate issues, and construct new practices on the issue.

8.   *Ethical Communication*

Integrity and ethics are important considerations which were added four years after the publication of the *Excellence Study* (Bowen, 2004). The inclusion demonstrates that integrity and ethics are important enough to be key principles of excellence in an organisation. Bowen (2004) stated that the research found that when ethics is included in decision-making, there are higher levels of organisational effectiveness. The author reiterates that when ethical practices are planned, trained, and instilled to employees throughout the organisation results in a positive corporate image and reputation (Bowen, 2004). Ethics is concerned with a habit, custom or character as demonstrated by the organisation through employee behaviour, corporate policies and corporate social responsibility. In corporate communication, corporate social responsibility is a solid business function to manage stakeholder relations and enhance reputation. Siltaoja (2006) adds that corporate reputation is enhanced through reporting events truthfully and with honesty, pluralism and inculcating trust in employees. The employees then project these values to the external stakeholders through service and corporate social responsibility to build on organisational character and credibility (Jackson, 2004). Therefore, Zulhamri and Aziz (2013) posit that corporate communicators should strategize on the corporate social responsibility agenda as research demonstrates that CSR is positively related to culture and corporate reputation.

2.8.3 Excellence Theory Discussion and Application

According to Browning (2010), the excellence theory was a paradigm shift in public relations theory and practice as it linked corporate communication practice to strategic management. In addition, the theory provided guidelines for communication coordination and behaviour between the organisation, stakeholders, and its messages (Combs, 2006). Further, Argenti (2007) states that the coordination of communication in the organisation is about matching the stakeholders, constituencies, to the messages. The scholar adds that the messages must evolve with the ever-changing business, technological and regulatory requirements (Argenti, 2007). The study proposes that the coordination begins with the communication of mission and vision to internal stakeholders, continuously, to initiate corporate identity and culture to differentiate an emerging organisation. Argenti (2007) proposes that coordination involves the preparation of context-relevant messages after studying the regulatory and legal requirements and corporate strategic plan, and carrying out a communication audit. The coordination is a paradigm shift in roles communication, from technician to strategist, especially in an African context where practitioners are perceived as

'flower girls' or 'page boys' for the dominant coalition. Yet Pang *et al.* (2010) warn that practitioner involvement in the dominant coalition affects an organisation's willingness to dialogue, therefore impedes on excellent communication practice within the organisation.

Secondly, Broom (2009) states that the excellence theory is a grand theory that incorporates middle range theories, namely, situational, systems, strategic management, co-orientation, contingency, relationships, rhetoric, and feminism. Wilcox and Cameron (2010) observe that the theory is flexible in that it promotes a communication practitioner's involvement in strategic management, empowers consultation with the dominant coalition, separates practice as well as aligns it with other corporate functions, and advocates for diversity and inclusion, all of which add to the bottom line. Therefore, this perception of inclusivity in communication empowers the communication practitioner to develop strategies for each stakeholder in the organisation. However, developing a relevant and practical strategy to meet each stakeholder's expectations becomes a challenge. The challenge is even greater in a patriarchal society, like Kenya, and the hierarchical institution context. The communication practitioner has to consider these contexts carefully and creatively develop communication strategies. Therefore, communication practice is about the creation of strategies as well as preparing messages that are relational and relevant to the various internal stakeholder cadres, inclusivity.

Thirdly, the excellence theory promotes relationship building in a multicultural environment within the organisation through inclusivity, dialogue, and involvement. These internal communication strategies are considerate of the relational context. In the African context, Melkote and Steeves (2001) state that the citizens were, in colonial times, classified as tribes headed by a chief. This classification and hierarchical nature of groups established linguistic relationships of superiority and inferiority consistent with colonialists' values and were re-enforced, later, by large private corporations, the government, and political parties. This perspective challenged relationship-building due to the discriminative, top-down, linear and linguistic use of communication (Ibid). In response to hierarchical nature, Honadle (1999) proposes two approaches; the 'autonomy hypothesis' which promotes teamwork, anti-elitist and non-hierarchical relationships; and the 'context hypothesis' which is context-specific in that it outlines which resources, strategies, policies, and plans are to be used to address institutional challenges. The present study identifies with aspects of the two approaches to encourage strategies suitable for

participative decision-making to enhance internal stakeholder relationship building and reputation building.

2.8.4   Relevance of Theory to Transforming Organisation

The excellence theory meets Shaw and Costanzo's (1970) three qualities of a good theory. It has the quality of logical consistency as the tenets do not contradict each other; the theory is consistent with the accepted scientific community. In addition, according to Infante, Rancer & Womack (1990), the excellence theory has been tested in several contexts. The present study undertakes to study the theory in an African, academic and transforming institution and context.

To begin with, the study classifies the tenets into three main categories of corporate communication practice: empowerment, participation, and strategy. The theory advocates for the empowerment of the corporate communication function, placing it in the dominant coalition so as to participate in corporate strategy development. Secondly, the function is separated and differentiated from other corporate functions but collaborates with the said functions to create a communication 'whole'; empowering allows the function to strategize in order to contribute to the bottom line. Thirdly, the theory empowers the practitioner to be directly involved with stakeholders and prepare communication strategy and policy that is sensitive to stakeholder diversity beginning with internal publics. In a new and transforming university, corporate communication empowerment, participation, and strategy to stakeholders, especially, internal stakeholders will impact corporate identity and culture.

2.8.5   Critique of Excellence Theory

Despite the excellence theory's critical role in strategic corporate communication management, some scholars question the theory's dominance in communication practice. Critics adopt a particular theoretical perspective to define and discover answers to questions posed. For example, Infante *et al*. (1990) had argued that the excellence theory adheres to human action and systems perspective to explain and predict communication behaviour in an organisation The human action perspective argues that subjective experience describes the true nature of reality; that is, what happened is not important but what individuals perceived happened (Infante *et al*., 1990). This perspective emphasises the receiver's perception and interpretation of stimuli and assumes the

traditional model where information travels from source/sender to receiver to create mutual understanding.

On the other hand, systems perspective focuses on the exchange of information and the development and maintenance of relationships among members of a system (Ibid). This perspective assumes a network focus for information dissemination which enables the practitioner to predict how and to what extent the information will move within a network or among members. Network focus for communication dissemination is a strategy to be considered in a university which is made of departments, faculties or schools.

Paolo Freire (1970), an influential scholar in liberation theology, education and communication practice, urges communication practitioners to adopt interpersonal and small group approaches that enable participants to identify and explore issues that have meaning for them, especially face-to-face dialogue.

Apart from a theoretical perspective, scholars argue from a philosophical perspective. Philosophical scholars argue that the theory is largely westernized in its ontological, axiological and epistemological philosophical assumptions (Macnamara, 2012). Ontology assumes that reality is not out there but in the mind of the actor (nature of existence); axiology deals with the value system of inquirer; epistemology deals with the relationship between the researcher and object of study (knowledge) (Creswell, 2007).

Murphy (1991) argues that Grunig's symmetrical model of communication is normative and rare or non-existent in practice and proposes a 'mixed-motive' model. In response, Grunig (2000) argued that Murphy's 'mixed-motive' model accurately described by the two-way symmetrical model as originally conceptualized. The excellence theory incorporated Murphy's 'mixed-motive' model into the emerging body of the theory as 'a combination of the two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical models' (Grunig *et al*., 2002). Murphy critiques systemic and ontological perspectives of excellence theory which advocate for a two-way symmetrical approach to corporate communication. The two-way symmetrical approach assumes a consultative and participative system which advocates for levels of reward, cooperation, mutual trust, high

satisfaction, participative goal setting which all adhere to human relations and management theories (Modaff & Dewine, 2002).

Modaff and Dewine (2002) state that traditional organisations, including universities, seem to rely on bureaucratic procedures, centralized decision-making and hierarchal control that favour dominant coalition, while employee interest is secondary. Also, though universities may adhere to hierarchical structures and value 'equality', an examination of university artefacts and spatial utilization may reveal something different (ibid). One may evaluate the artefacts from the a-three-dimensional view of power to check on organisation situations at the surface where there is no conflict when decisions are made. However, at the deep structure level, conflict has a hidden dimension that influences employees' decisions (Conrad, 1983).

The excellence theory is a normative and operational theory that guides practitioners to communicate excellently in a university to manage perceptions and conflict to create mutual understanding. Mutual understanding demonstrates effective communication with stakeholders. Effective communication must begin with a focus on internal communication management. Effective internal communication has a positive impact on identity and culture and reputation management.

2.9 Summary of Chapter

The chapter has outlined the phases of public relations, defined communication and discussed various perspectives of corporate communication and their impact on a transforming organization, a university in Kenya. It has outlined the historical perspective of public organizations in a devolving and transforming Kenya. The chapter discusses corporate communication role during the organizational transformation from an internal communication, a poststructuralist, perspective which emphasises on human relations approach in dealing with corporate communication issues and corporate design (Cornelissen, 2014; Deetz, 1992; Hynes, 2008). This approach empowers the employee and promotes employee participation in organisational issues and corporate sharing of information (Hynes, 12). It concludes by expounding on the communication roles and excellence theories and their relevance to the context. The next chapter will interrogate corporate reputation management and transforming university in Kenya.

CORPORATE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT IN TRANSFORMING ORGANISATION

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is an extension of the literature review and it will analyse corporate reputation perspective, definitions, concepts, and management approaches. The chapter, critically, discusses the elements of corporate reputation which include corporate identity, corporate culture, and the corporate image. The study will discuss these elements, from a stakeholder and participative perspective, in reference to a transforming organisation in a Kenyan context. This is in line with the purpose of the study which seeks to establish whether MMU communicated effectively, or excellently, with its employees to nurture its corporate identity, image, and reputation during a period of rapid transformation. Thus, it is important that this chapter begins with a discussion on corporate reputation, corporate reputation concepts and, later, discuss corporate reputation policy and management in universities.

3.1 Corporate Reputation Perspectives

Corporate reputation, as a concept, has varied definitions based on various schools of thought and disciplines. The various communication schools associate corporate reputation with the corporate image. For example, Gotsi and Wilson (2001), state that the analogous school defines corporate reputation as synonymous with the corporate image. The differential school views the two terms, image and reputation, as diverse, yet, the interrelated school closely relates reputation to the image. This study posits that the concept, reputation, is closely related to the image. In the differential perspective, Dowling (1986) defines the image as the net result of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings and impressions about an object and corporate reputation as the cumulative impressions, meanings and overall assessments by stakeholders (in Van Riel and Fombrun, 2008). In other words, reputation involves the collective perceptions held by stakeholders over a long time. Thus, Fombrun (1996) states that reputation is about an organisation's ability to fulfil stakeholder's expectations whether through products, working for the organisation or investing in the organisation. Image is about an 'individual's' beliefs and feelings while reputation is constituted

by stakeholders' impressions, meanings, and assessments which result in a collective evaluation and interpretation of an organisation. Thus, despite the different schools of thought, the study concludes that reputation is about stakeholder evaluation over a period which results in the creation of meaning towards the organisation.

Corporate reputation is perceived differently by different disciplines yet all these disciplines agree that it is an asset which is dependent on organisational performance over time. For example, accountancy perceives reputation as an intangible asset with financial worth and goodwill (Fombrun & Van Riel, 1997). The economists perceive reputation as organisational traits and signals that are held by external stakeholders and corporate strategists who recognise it as an asset with mobility barriers (Fombrun & Van Riel, 1997). The marketing perspective concentrates on reputation formation and the receiver's point of view; while sociologists define reputation from the perspective of institutional performance, expectations, and norms (ibid). Organisational behaviourists perceive reputation through an internal stakeholder's sense-making process; and corporate communicators perceive reputation as cumulative impressions, meanings and overall assessments by (all) stakeholders (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2008). Thus, these disciplines perceive corporate reputation, from an evaluative and summative perspective in terms of stakeholder perception, asset management, and organisational performance. Therefore, even though every discipline perceives the term corporate reputation differently, each of them notes that corporate reputation plays a critical role in the formation, management and overall assessment by stakeholders of the organisation. Consequently, a transforming organisation has to shape and manage its reputation by evaluating stakeholder perceptions, working with internal stakeholders to enhance organisational performance, and recognising it as an asset.

3.1.1. Mental Formation of Corporate Reputation from a Stakeholders' Perspective

A stakeholder perspective on corporate reputation formation indicates that corporate reputation plays a role in cognitive associations with organisational products and services. Bromley (2000) states that cognitive associations are on-going mental processes about the organisation and its products. The scholar adds that these mental processes may result in sensory stimuli senses which are physical reactions associated with the said organisation (ibid). Bromley (2000), further, outlines the mental information processing levels affecting stakeholder impressions of the

organisation, namely: primary level relating to personal experience with the organisation, secondary level relating to what friends and colleagues say about an organisation, and tertiary level relating to what mass media, paid advertising and unpaid publicity state about an organisation. The scholar, first, suggests that stakeholders form the reputation of an entity through interaction with internal publics, significant others, and publicity activities. Secondly, the scholar concludes that the greatest influence on reputation formation is at the primary level where stakeholders form an impression of the organisation through direct personal experience (Broomley, 2000). Mwenda and Muuku (2004) argue that direct personal experience with the organisation creates cumulative meaning about an organisation in the stakeholder, over time, leading to reputation formation. This personal experience is created through employee interaction with colleagues and customers to form networks and a corporate family, an important component in a transforming organisation in a Kenyan context (ibid).

Mbigi and Maree (2005), from a network perspective to reputation formation, state that stakeholder interaction, at the primary level, involves employees linking, interacting and communicating which will have an impact on organisational impression management. The network perspective focuses on the importance of communication among employees and people, rather than focusing on products, publicity activities, and profits when it comes to forming a reputation. This perspective proposes that reputation formation is people-centered rather than product and profit centred. Scholars posit that an accumulation of positive experiences, positive perception and interpretation culminates in positive reputation formation. Therefore, a transforming organisation is compelled to, critically and consciously, evaluate its internal stakeholder experiences, perceptions and interpretation if its stakeholders are to form a positive reputation of the organisation. An internal stakeholder evaluation of corporate experiences, perceptions, and interpretation to form corporate reputation begins with incorporating corporate identity, a critical element in corporate reputation management.

3.2 Corporate Identity and Organisational Transformation

3.3.1. Perspectives of corporate identity

History demonstrates that corporate identity was associated with self-preservation, internal stakeholder perception, and corporate recognition. Nasir and Chik (1994) argue that the idea of identity for self-preservation was traced to the act of Knights and the sophisticated protective face

gear used for the knights to obscure their identity. The gear was a physical and symbolic item associated with protection and self-preservation for the elite and military. The physical and symbolic use of the gear for protection, self-preservation and, then, recognition has expanded its use from military, aristocratic political to commercial entities (Carl, 1989). Olins (1978) states that commercial entities used symbolic marks on letters of credit and other financial documents for organisational recognition. Nasir (1994) states that identity was used to introduce an organised marking system for commercial and recognition purposes among the middle class. This historical perspective on identity demonstrates that corporate identity is, now, associated with self-preservation and corporate recognition. Thus, the study extends these identities from the historical perspectives to its importance on management managing visual signs such as logos and other corporate designs during organisational transformation for purposes of enhancing visibility.

Christensen and Cornelissen (2011) state that the design aspect of corporate identity was introduced in the 1960s by two designers Lippincott and Margulies, to manage organisation communication, organisation recognition and retention by internal stakeholders. The scholars argue that corporate identity helps internal stakeholders to associate with the organisation. The scholars elaborate that the association, by stakeholders, is through symbols, rituals, procedures, and artefacts to enhance recognition and retention for corporate purposes (ibid). Olins (1978) had, previously, stated that corporate recognition was through artefacts and rituals. Thus, the organisation's identity becomes associated with visual designs, procedures, and rituals. The study associates corporate identity with communication through symbols, rituals, procedures, and artefacts. These entities become critical communication apparatus, for employee recognition and identification, during organisational changes, especially in complex organisations like universities.

Organisational identity and corporate identity are broad and diverse perspectives which are, sometimes, confusing. No wonder Hatch and Schultz (1997) refer to this diversity of definitional perspectives as a "Tower of Babel". Thus, Hatch and Shultz (1997:357), from a collective and reflective perspective, define identity as "a collective shared understanding of the organisation's distinctive values and characteristics". The identity focuses on shared values to enhance organisational recognition and synergy. Markwick and Fill (1997) state that the shared values are articulated through employee verbal expressions to create positive stakeholder perceptions. Organisational identity definitions personify an entity using attributes and terms such as sharing

and caring about the stakeholders, which employees should recognise and associate with within the organisation. Albert and Whetten (1985) define organisational identity as "the shared understanding of the central, distinctive and enduring character of an organisation". Balmer (2008) argues that organisational attributes help in forming a relationship between the employee and the employing organisation. The challenge of a transforming organisation is to identify, develop and maintain the distinct organisational character and attributes if it is to form a bond between the organisation and employees. Thus, it can be concluded that organisational attributes, whether verbal or nonverbal, help employees to recognise, associate with the organisation, which will then be verbally expressed. These expressions that are used to mould the corporate identity become a challenge during organisational transformation, hence the need for management to evaluate internal communication.

The study of corporate identity is articulated from behavioural, psychological and communicative perspectives which all emphasise on the creation of shared meaning. Firstly, the behavioural perspective focuses on how the organisation seeks to explain itself by stating what the organisation is, what it does, and how it does it (Olins, 1978). In this perspective, communication, organisational behaviour, and marketing scholars link employee mannerisms to organisational business and mission. Towards this end, the corporate identity strategies will reflect actions that create shared meaning for employees to meet the organisation's objectives. This implies that corporate identity strategies may be structured to benefit the organisation. Nasir and Chik (1994) state that policy articulation will specify employee behaviour towards stakeholders such as customers, suppliers and host communities as part of, behavioural articulation of, corporate identity. Consequently, those of this school of thought like Van Riel (1997) define corporate identity as "the self-presentation of an organisation, rooted in the behaviour of individual organisational members, expressing the organisation's sameness over time or continuity, distinctiveness and centrality". For example, the yellow colour within the words 'Nelson Mandela University' conveys a certain identity to stakeholders beginning with the internal stakeholders as articulated in the university identity online manual (Nelson Mandela University website).

Secondly, Brown, Dacin, Pratt & Whetten (2006), from the psychological perspective, posit that corporate identity is the sum total of employees' mental associations, pictures, and perceptions of oneness with their organisation. However, Brown (2012) argues that the psychological perspective

recognises that the message is the information processed in the human mind, resulting in a learned response. Brown's view assumes that the mental associations and perceptions of oneness create a strong employee relationship and facilitate employee awareness of the organisation's pictures and messages. Thus, it is safe to assume that employee interaction over time develops a sense of purpose and unity leading to a culture of 'how things are done around here'. Employee interaction with the message, it presumes, will enable employees to interpret the message accordingly and breed employee oneness. Therefore, employee exposure to consistent corporate communication of messages and organisational artefacts will be processed in the human mind to create shared meanings. These imply that the consistent messages on corporate values will be internally processed and interpreted to result in employees projecting values of oneness leading to employee engagement. Bardi and Schwartz (2003) outline employee values that encourage engagement as self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security (in Kreither & Kinicki, 2010). Thus, scholars from the psychological perspective argue that consistent value-laden messages lead to expected behaviour, which enhances corporate identity. Brown (2012) concludes that effective messages are audience-driven, target-specific and informed by research. Thus, this study will evaluate the employee interpretation of corporate messages during organisational transformation in a complex organisation. However, critics such as Brown (2015) caution that the dominant coalition's strategy is to 'indoctrinate' employees through mental associations to enhance conformity and efficient service delivery and self-interest. The study examines how employees of multi-layered and transforming organisation in an African context can interpret corporate messages, artefacts and project similar behaviour to promote the corporate identity.

Thirdly, Hatch and Shultz (2000) argue that corporate identity, from a communication and stakeholders' perspective, is "the organisation's presentation of self to its various stakeholders and the means by which it distinguishes itself from all other organisations". Hence, this perspective argues that corporate identity is about the communication of the organisation's unique attributes to stakeholders. Bick, Jacobson, & Abratt (2003) posit that corporate identity communicates core values, philosophy and strategy of the organisation through the delivery of its product and services. The perspective emphasis is the communication of uniqueness to stakeholders for recognition and retention through corporate design, culture, behaviour, structure, industry identity and strategy to create the corporate personality and image. Coleman (2011) and Apolo (2017) highlight the

receiver's perception and corporate differentiation through visual communication. The receiver's interpretation of the corporate identity may vary due to unique stakeholder attributes and corporate stakeholder management approach. This argument on the receiver's perspective implies that a university, which encompasses various professions and professionals with unique attributes, may have different corporate identity interpretations.

Thus, the challenge for corporate communication practitioners is to enhance employee interpretation of corporate identity that is intentional, individual, yet collective. Interpretation deals with devising a method that creates an individual and intentional understanding of corporate symbols that, eventually, leads to collective interpretation and shared meaning. In a collective cultural setting, identity interpretation implies that focus on employer-employee relationship-building to create shared meaning will result in the positive projection of employee behaviour towards the organisation. Critics of corporate identity state that it is an assumption that identity interpretation will create shared meaning among employees about the organisation. Consequently, the interpretative perspective proposes that communication practitioners may encourage an employee to employee interaction assuming that this interaction will cause employees to associate with the corporate attributes and values. To manage the challenge, Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) propose a communication strategy on organisational self-expression that incorporates a mix of communication, behaviour, and symbolism. In the same vein, Mwandikwa (2003) proposes that corporate identity is achieved:

   a. Through effective internal and external communication strategies
   b. By aligning organisational processes, people, mission and values
   c. Consistent messages to all stakeholders
   d. Innovative use of new technologies to meet the growing needs of your customer base
   e. Employee, shareholder and customer loyalty (15).

Critical studies scholars Peter and Wasserman (1982) argue that corporate identity is a dominant coalition tool for emotional manipulation and control of stakeholders. The critics further argue that identity elements such as vision, symbolic action and recognitions are control systems rather than symbols of unity (ibid). The present study recognises that though these emblems are used to manipulate stakeholders, they can be symbols of unity for the enhancement of shared meanings among internal stakeholders to attain organisational mission and objectives. The study interrogates

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whether the consistent communication of corporate symbols during organisational transformation is a communication strategy for multi-layered entities, different professional groups, and dominant coalition to create shared meaning. Hence, the purpose of the study is to establish how Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU) communicated its corporate identity with its employees and where it fell short of this strategic institutional objective during a period of transformation.

In a bid to introduce a participative approach to corporate communication practice, corporate communicators may face the challenge of senior management manipulation. In the Kenyan public university context, where organisational hierarchy and bureaucracy are prevalent, the challenge of manipulation and exploitation by management and bureaucrats may arise. Moreover, Kreithner and Kinicki (2010) posit that a bureaucratic approach upholds an asymmetrical communication approach that promotes power, achievement and hedonism. These aspects of bureaucracy seem in conflict with the postmodern perspective of self-direction, personal stimulation, universalism, and conformity values. In addition, the scholars state that conflict may arise if bureaucratic aspects of management collide with employee and personal values which may challenge corporate communication management of corporate identity.

Mwinzi, Mberia & Ndati (2016) state that public universities in Kenya have challenges in corporate identity management. Before discussing these challenges, the present study begins by tracing the history of university education in Kenya. After independence, the first education commission report, Ominde Commission, proposed an education system (7-4-2-3) that promoted African values and national unity to enhance cohesion (translated as relationship building) and self-awareness (Ominde, 1964). Simiyu (2001) posits that content change in History and Geography negated national cohesion and promoted individual identity. However, Wanjohi (2011) states that the education system was criticized for being inflexible to respond to employable skills, new technology and attitude towards work, resulting in the $8 - 4 - 4$ system. The scholar stated that the new system introduced technical and vocational education and recommended a program that equips graduates with practical skills, but was equally criticised for being expensive and burdensome to students and parents. The program advocated for six years on numeric and literary skill development and two years of basic practical education to enhance self-employment and informal sector growth (ibid) to address employment and economic challenges in the marketplace. The second system introduced a delicate balance between national cohesion, attitudinal and skills

enhancement, and individual identity as the system advocated for the first three years (early childhood) be taught in the mother tongue and the other years in the English language (ibid). Thus, Sifuna (1998) had stated that the two education orientations, namely, 8-4-4 and 7-4-2-3, resulted in two education systems and introduced two sets of university administrators in management. That is, university management which is a mixture of the two groups made up of senior management, faculty, and staff with different orientations, due to educational background, towards corporate identity management. Thus, this historical perspective on the education system is an indication of the challenges of managing the corporate identity of public universities. Hence, the importance of interrogating the communication strategies that a selected public university, may use to manage its corporate identity.

The management of corporate identity in the public university is, further, challenged by the adoption of a business-like or corporate model and competitive advantage orientations. Tahtinen, (2014) and Azoury, Daou & Khoury (2014) argue that universities, globally, are expected to adopt a business-like model in which management incorporates strategic planning, stakeholder-centred thinking, and a unique identity and brand. In addition, Thuo and Katuse (2013) posit that public organisations, including universities, in Kenya, are expected to adhere to a new public management theory, introduced in the 1980s, which embraces market-oriented management for greater cost-effectiveness, management by objectives, decentralisation, and be customer-oriented and competitive. In line with these orientations, at MMU, as part of a transforming organisation, management and employees are challenged to create and communicate policies and strategies that adhere to a business-like model and competitive advantage. The study notes that a business-like model enhances decentralisation and customer-focus orientation, but with less concern for members in the organisation, which may create a challenge in corporate identity management. Simoes *et al.* (2005) state that corporate identity management is about creating and disseminating common beliefs and shared values. Thus, the present study examines the internal communication strategies used in the dissemination of the strategic plans to communicate corporate identity and corporate culture during organisational transformation. A discussion of the challenges of corporate identity management must incorporate the examination of values and beliefs held by members of the organisation, which are articulated through corporate culture.

3.3.2. Corporate Culture During Organisational Transformation

Cole (1997) argues that corporate culture is a concept that promotes human interaction to attain the organisation's objectives by creating awareness about sharing corporate values and meanings to unite employees. Cole (1997) argues that corporate culture may be presented at the surface level through corporate organisational vision and language communicated through bulletins, notices, newsletters, and annual reports. In other words, the visual presentations and organisation's communication materials have a role in inculcating and creating awareness of the intended corporate culture. Thus, at the surface level, employees may interpret corporate values through exposure to organisational communication material. This study notes the particular importance of organisational communication materials to impart culture during an organisational transformation. However, the study observes that exposure to organisational material in public institutions may encounter challenges due to levels of information confidentiality and hierarchy.

Scholars provide possibilities of managing organisational material to build on corporate culture which will impact corporate identity. Firstly, Needle (2004) builds on corporate culture by stating that shared experiences, interactions, and values contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of the organisation. Thus, the scholar posits that one way to develop, the first level of, corporate culture in an organisation is to embolden employee interactions, enhance shared experiences and shared values. The scholar advocates for a social and psychological approach to corporate culture development and management. Secondly, Drummond (2009) advocates for the creation of a unique social and psychological environment by promoting a set of collective values, beliefs, and principles for all organisational members. He states that these collective aspects should be communicated through anecdotes and stories, emphasis on quality of products for customers, and the selection of specific types of employees to fit the chosen culture (ibid). The scholar adds that culture is communicated through the specific management style adopted which may be directly or indirectly impacted by national culture (ibid). The study surmises that corporate culture, at the first level, is communicated through strategies such as visual corporate material, corporate stories, product quality, and management style and may be directly or indirectly impacted by national culture. However, van Wyk (2009) notes that in a transforming university, forming a culture is challenging as diverse groups have different meanings and perceptions of organisational communication, thus making it difficult to explore shared interaction, and such culture should not be expected to develop overnight. This study identifies with the fact that artefacts and storytelling

are said to be close to the African heartbeat. Thus, the study presumes that storytelling could foster shared interaction in the African context and it be explored as a communication channel for multicultural and multi-layered levels in the organisation to manage corporate culture and identity.

However, Martin and Terblanche (2003) note that values and beliefs are the second level of culture management and may not be obvious to the eye but may be experienced through organisational surroundings and behaviour within and beyond the organisation. Bouchet (2014) argues that this level of culture in employees remains static over long periods, and may cause transitional challenges. A transforming university which has diverse groups created through organisational structure and, thus, different interpretations of corporate values by these cadres of employees, may require an examination of new communication strategies to address corporate culture.

The newer ideas on corporate culture move away from the behavioural perspective which incorporated customs, rituals, and values that organisational members share and which new members are obliged to accept. Bouchet (2014) distinguishes proper behaviour as a product of social interaction, mediated through communicative acts and information interpretation. This paradigm shift from the old notion in which the dominant coalition prescribed employee behaviour through events and rituals. The scholar states that, previously, employee interpretations of corporate values were shaped through public statements articulated by the dominant coalition (Schein,1985). In addition, corporate culture was articulated during employee training through the use of dominant individuals to promote a dominant culture (ibid). Scholars critical of corporate culture such as Thompson and McHugh (1995) had argued that corporate culture encouraged cohesion and conformist thinking or conformist behaviour, while Deal and Kennedy (1988) had perceived culture as successful manipulation to yield more productive work. Thus, Weinberg and Graham-Smith (2012) perceive corporate culture as a mechanism to manipulate employees rather than a coordinated organisational system for internal integration. Van Wyk (2009) argues that corporate culture, in universities, was introduced as a form of inculcating 'managerialism' rather than collegiality which promoted excellence through coherent employee interaction.

Bisel, Messersmith, & Keyton (2010) posit that corporate culture was thus understood as creating coherent employee interaction articulated through symbols tangible and observable artefacts such as the logo or the physical office arrangement. The scholars state that these symbols convey

meanings through words, pictures, and gestures which all members observe and interpret. The scholars perceive corporate culture as largely unwritten and argue that its interpretation and meaning are based on each member's interpretation of the symbols. Therefore, the interpretation of corporate culture is assumed to be based on members' or internal stakeholder's feelings and attitudes towards corporate symbols and artefacts. Thus, Lee (2016) argues that the new corporate management practices in universities have caused changes in culture, from collegiality to bureaucracy which pertains to rules and regulations on fiscal control, in staff appointment and promotion, in research management and curricula development. Thus, bureaucracy may involve compartmentalisation between faculty and management instead of facilitating shared values and meaning between university employees. This new approach to university management introduces rules, regulations and leads to management giving economic justifications for activities thus derailing selected aspects of university life (ibid). During organisational transformation, the new management practices, policies, regulations on fiscal controls, and new staff appointments challenge the development and management of corporate culture. Mukhwana *et al.* (2017) posit that vested interests in university governance and leadership, a lack of strategic management documents, and low research curtail higher education. These aspects may negatively impact corporate culture and identity of a transforming university. Therefore, the present study proposes a participative approach that incorporates management, old and new employees to negotiate and communicate a new corporate culture. The communication of a new culture to the three groups involves a communication strategy that promotes interaction and uses an interactive communication channel. Thus, the study interrogates strategies used to communicate the rules and regulations that facilitate members to effectively interpret corporate culture and promote corporate reputation.

Despite the alleged disruption of collegial culture resulting from bureaucracy according to Lee (2016), several studies demonstrate a positive correlation between organisational culture and employee excellence. Qawasmeh, Darqal, and Qawasmeh (2013) argue that there is a positive correlation between overall corporate culture and organisational excellence if the university management clarifies mission, values and strategic objectives through workshops and seminars and if the cultural change in the organisation is gradual. Bisel *et al*. (2010) argue that organisational culture and excellence in an employee is attained through six dimensions, namely, teamwork, morale, information flow, involvement, supervision, and meeting. These scholars perceive the six

dimensions as communication strategies that encourage employee participation and relationship-building to create shared values and clarify corporate identity which may have an impact on reputation management (ibid). This present study identifies with Bisel *et al.* dimensions which may contribute to corporate identity management during organisation transformation. Therein, the study identifies the role of communication practitioners during transformation; to encourage employee engagement by devising communication channels to enhance information flow, building employee involvement and teamwork.

However, Newstrom (2010) argues that corporate culture gives the old employees traits of organisational identity and helps new employees understand and identify what goes on inside. Willmontt (1993) emphasises the tendency to doublethink, which means employees devote themselves to the organisation to achieve 'autonomy' and be 'winners' yet are on guard against corporate control in the mind. This study identifies with Kenny's (2018) argument that corporate culture is a manifestation of a structure of power relations and economic oppression, by the dominant coalition to employees, which complicates the relationship-building process and employee excellence. The study recognises that relationship building and employee excellence have an impact on corporate identity and corporate culture, especially during transformation. It is presumed that relationship building and employee excellence emanate from management planned communication through encouraging shared experiences, interactions and values which are required to build the corporate culture and competitive advantage for a transforming institution. Hence, the study will examine how university management has communicated corporate culture in the face of complexities during organisation transformation.

Corporate culture management, in the face of complexities during organisational transformation, may be addressed at various levels. Hofstede (1990), an organisational culture scholar, outlines organisational culture as holistic, historically determined, and related to anthropology, socially constructed, soft and difficult to change. This denotes that organisational culture has various attributes that corporate communication practitioners have to consider during transformation. Corporate cultural attributes are historically determined, socially determined and difficult to change. Later, Hofstede (1998) argued that these characteristics functions at different organisational levels, namely, at the corporate level, specific divisions and the workgroup. In addition to the attributes, the corporate communicator has to address these different levels, namely,

the corporate, workgroups, specific divisions, and individual levels. At the group level, Smiricich and Hirsch (1983) stated that culture works towards a common goal; at an individual level culture works towards giving shared meaning to organisational experience through norms. The scholars conclude that organisation culture is made up of norms, languages and shared meaning rather than rules, structure, and technology (ibid). The scholars denote that effective communication of corporate culture must consider communication at various levels in an organisation. In a hierarchical organisation, with organisational levels, rules, structure and technology seem clearly articulated as opposed to bearing shared meaning. In addition, a hierarchical organisation has the option to use the levels to either promote an asymmetrical or a participative approach to corporate communication. On the other hand, Handy (1985) recognises that task culture exists in project teams or task forces to undertake a specific purpose and are common in the public sector. Therefore, if management does not articulate culture at all organisational levels, corporate culture management may appear as a task to be attained during transformation rather than a feature that promotes corporate identity, corporate image, corporate reputation, and competitive advantage. Corporate culture, at corporate and individual levels, positively impact on the corporate identity during transformation. Motilewa, Worlu, Agboola, Adeniji (2016) argue that the clear articulation of organisational values and vision across all levels of employees and an authoritarian approach to ensuring organisational culture have a positive effect on employee performance and motivation. Although the said study was conducted in a Christian university which articulates religious values, the articulation of values and vision at all levels encourages symmetrical communication in any institution. However a coercive approach, in a tech-conscious generation, to ensure compliance with organisational culture complicates internal communication management, employee relations at various levels (inclusivity), and relationship building. The corporate communicator has to incorporate these challenges and opportunities during corporate identity and corporate culture management in organisational transformation.

Communication strategies, apart from addressing various levels, must incorporate the employees' diversity and sub-cultures. Mou (2010) describes a subculture as a group in a community, region or society that bears cultural or social behaviour features that distinguish itself from others, and was born out of resistance against mainstream culture and hegemony. The university culture arises from the dominant group, but a subculture may compose of groups that may have different norms and values due to office location, job level, generation group, gender or religion which

management may positively utilise by incorporating their information needs into the institutional mainstream culture (Mou, 2010). In addition, Drummond (2009) argues that the orientation of research and teaching staff is different from that of accountants; also, the orientation of arts and social science departments is different from the engineering and science counterparts. However, Meek (1988) argues that these sub-cultures become manifest as they compete for resources and prestige and thus amplify the dominant coalition which may bring corporate disharmony. Goffee and Jones (1997) caution that competition for resources and prestige has resulted in different employee attitudes. For example, employees, at various sections, assess differently the tangible values such as time, authority, acceptance of power inequalities, desire for orderliness and the need for wider social belonging. Waldt (2004) argues that effective organisational transformation will entail empowering employees by addressing group norms and values to persuade them to accept organisational objectives. Also, the scholar advocates for the upgrading of the corporate communication discipline to a strategic managerial role if it is to facilitate organisation transformation by interpreting and developing communication policy and strategy to build relations among stakeholders (ibid). De Veiga and Martins (2017) conclude that change must take into account the subculture elements through interaction, dialogue and employee training to create relationships, manage status divisions and the exchange of information, including information security.

In regard to diversity, Robbins (2009) proposes the value of workplace spirituality which does not refer to organised religious practices but to employees finding meaning and purpose in life, and a desire to connect and be a part of a community. Robbins (2009) posits that workplace spirituality provides for a balanced diversity, contemporary lifestyles of single-parent families, and new technology that may create distance between employees, among other factors. The author states that the conscious management of diversity and subculture will minimise organisational politics, therefore, reducing decreased job dissatisfaction, work-related anxiety, employee turnover, and reduction in work-related performance. The researcher notes that diversity and subculture are challenging issues to discuss in the workplace due to religious and cultural concerns and may raise anxiety during transformation. However, the study examines how employees as key stakeholders at MMU interpreted the organisation's messages and symbols, and the impact of these message interpretation on the corporate image.

O'Dell and Leavitt (2004) advance the employee-empowerment type of corporate culture rather than a performance-oriented culture for competitive advantage. Furthermore, Hynes (2008) argues that an employee-empowerment corporate cultural approach adheres to cordial relations between the trade union and the institution's management. On the other hand, Schein (1985) had proposed a corporate life-cycle from birth and early growth, in which corporate culture was deemed to be the unifying force. The scholar proposed that during midlife, the dominant culture weakens and is subject to change. The scholar concludes that during maturity, cultural transformation occurs and employees either drop old culture or develop a new culture. The present study identifies with the scholars' arguments that during early growth, corporate culture can be a unifying force. hence the importance of examining corporate culture as part of corporate culture management and employee empowerment during transformation. However, it is important to interrogate communication strategies that MMU management may use for employees to be glued together to understand corporate philosophy, achieve organisational objectives and to strengthen corporate culture. This aligns with Apolo *et al.* (2017) argument that corporate philosophy provides the overall beginning of the organisation and it is established by senior management to attain organisational goals and objectives to make the organisation unique. The elements of philosophy include corporate mission, corporate vision, and values (ibid).

In conclusion, Coman and Bonciu (2016) state that competitive advantage is achievable if an organisation observes and communicates the following four elements of corporate culture: communication of the organisational mission which helps employees define the overarching ideology of the university, the history, values and management articulates theses three aspects to the internal and external stakeholders. Secondly, leadership enacts scripts, through an interpretive lens, by acting and communicating in one way in the organisation. This means that the leadership defines the corporate strategy and information using cultural interpretations. Leadership enacts the script by communicating cultural norms on how decisions get made and by whom, who is privy to information, and how information gets conveyed during organisational change. Thirdly, the leadership uses the organisational structure to emphasise corporate values. This organisational structure influences how the leadership will communicate values such as flexibility, freedom and cooperative teamwork. This means that structural arrangements influence verbal and non-verbal communication in an organisation and this has an impact on corporate culture. However, this contradicts corporate-university culture which adopts a management orientation with parallel or

dual structures. A university structure is composed of the conventional administrative hierarchy and the academic structure. In other words, universities in Kenya have an administrative section composed of finance, planning and human resources which support the academic services; and a section composed of academic and research services which undertake the core business of the institution. Fourthly, the scholars state that socialization in the organisation determines how the employees interpret the corporate value. This prioritisation of corporate values will positively or negatively impact on corporate culture. In summary, Coman and Bonciu (2016) state that a university, like any other organisation, will have a competitive advantage if the leadership communicates with its employees through a flexible organisational structure, to articulate the corporate history, strategy and elements, and projecting the corporate values by interacting with employees in the various sections.

In summary, this section has examined the relationship between corporate identity and corporate culture based on a participative approach to communication during university transformation. As previously stated, the corporate identity is a critical element in corporate reputation management. The study argues that if employees understand the university mission, management communicates and aligns corporate strategy with group norms by accommodating the element of workplace spirituality and has a collegial approach to organisational culture to develop shared values, then this builds relations which in turn positively impact on the corporate identity. A transforming organisation in Kenya will require the management to evaluate the shared values, interrogate communication to diverse cultures, manage power relations, and information flow as part of the process of attaining a positive corporate identity which will have an impact on the corporate image and reputation. The next session examines the relationship between corporate identity and the corporate image in a transforming organisation.

3.3 The Corporate Image in an Organisation

This section discusses the concept of the corporate image and attempts to differentiate it from the term corporate reputation. To begin with, the corporate image has been associated with falsehood (Bernstein, 1984), sophisticated techniques of manipulation (Olins, 1979), and imitation (Cutlip, 1991). Chun (2005) argues that corporate image is the communication of beliefs and impressions that internal stakeholders have about their organisation. Secondly, the reflective view of the corporate image addresses the mutual and long-term relations of the organisation with its

stakeholders, beginning with employees. Olins (1990) states that the corporate image is the "articulation of what the organisation is, what it does and how it does it and it is linked to the way an organisation goes about its business and the strategies it adopts". The present study posits that a transforming organisation must articulate, to its internal stakeholders, how its identity is changing through its mission, vision, philosophy, and objectives. In turn, the internal stakeholders articulate and project these strategic aspects to the external stakeholders so that the latter associate the emerging organisation with these aspects. Thirdly, Van Riel *et al.* (2007), from the interpretive perspective, describe the corporate image as "… a set of meanings by which an object is known and through which people describe, recall or relate to it" The interpretive approach emphasises meaning and recall, which demonstrates the importance of internal stakeholders' interpretation and projection of organisational goals which is critical during organisational transformation. Cheney (1991) had described the corporate image as the way in which an organisation is perceived by the market. Bernstein (1984) contends that image is the totality of a stakeholder's perception of the way an organisation presents itself either deliberately or accidentally.

The corporate image, in the present study, is perceived from a reflective and internal stakeholder perspective with emphasis on relationship building and employee empowerment during the transformation of the organisation. Management desires the positive corporate image which is attained when corporate communication facilitates employee-management interaction (van Riel & Fombrun, 2008). Capriotti (2013) expounded on the desired corporate image by adding the lived corporate image which means employee projecting the desired image (in Apolo, 2017). Thus, this means that employees project the desired image by articulating and enacting corporate vision, mission, and marketing organisation products during an interface with customers, this is at the artefact level of corporate identity. Furthermore, the articulation of the corporate image, at the artefact of corporate identity, is through the representation of corporate logo, corporate typology, name of the organisation written with a particular typology and in a special way, and corporate colours and chromatic range and corporate structures (Capriotti, 2013). However, Christie (2002), in his study on corporate image management, using a trilateral model, argues that a positive self-image influences the projected image and may have an impact on the perceived image. The present study was undertaken in a university and an organisation attempts to differentiate three perspectives of the corporate image and the relationship between the three, namely, self image, projected image and perceived the image in organisation for effective image management. The

study differentiates between what management desires and how employee behaviour through self and projected image impact on the corporate image. Though some scholars use the desired image while others self and projected the study concludes that employee participation and empowerment are critical in image management. Thus, this study identifies with the aspect of employee projection of corporate identity through artefacts and espoused values during organisational transformation. Thus, the present study advocates for a communication strategy that facilitates relationship building and employee empowerment for employees to project the desired corporate image to align with corporate objectives and manage reputation. Waldt (2004) argues that corporate communication has a role during transformation to integrate organisational messages and activities which have an impact on how stakeholders perceive the organisation.

During the organisational transformation, one of the roles of corporate communication is to monitor factors that may affect the corporate image. Garbett (1988) outlined the following factors that may impact on the corporate image: organisational size, structure and services provided; corporate newsworthiness, services and products; message diversity, communication, time and memory decay. To monitor these factors, Cornelissen (2011) argues that every organisation through the communication practitioner may audit the images that the stakeholder has of the organisation. The scholar states that the audit will then provide a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication (ibid). The study argues that the audit ought to begin with internal stakeholders to establish their image of the organisation and how to maintain favourable relationships with stakeholder groups upon which the organisation is dependent. Therefore, Abratt and Mofokeng (2001) state that the coordination of communication activities results in the favourable corporate image which is a valuable organisation asset and can boost customer satisfaction and loyalty. Amini, Darani, Afshani, & Amini (2012) posit that the coordination of the organisational objects (nonverbal), products and communication activities without taking into account relationship-building among internal stakeholders may challenge the corporate image management. This study observes that relationship-building and image management among internal stakeholders becomes a challenge during organisational transformation due to multi-layered and diverse internal stakeholder groups. The challenge is further compounded if the corporate identity and culture are yet to stabilise and the role of the practitioner, who coordinates the activities, is not clearly understood and undertaken. Thus, the

study identifies with Cornelissen's (2011) perspective on the role of the practitioner to consistently undertake corporate image audits as part of identity and reputation management.

Literature attempts to explain graphically or through conceptual frameworks the close relationship between corporate identity and the corporate image. The relationship between was initiated in the previous section by stating that employees project the desired image by articulating and enacting corporate vision, mission, and marketing organisation products during an interface with customers, this is at the artefact level of corporate identity. Thus, it may be stated that the relationship between the corporate image and identity creates what is referred to as a mutable identity. The relationship is mutable which means image depends on identity. Gioia, Schultz and Corley (2000), in the article "Organisational identity, image and adaptive instability", employ various forms of the image to provide a theoretical description of the processes by which identity and image are interrelated. In addition, Simoes, Dibb & Fisk. (2005), from a strategic management perspective, argue that expression and endorsement of consistent behaviour of corporate mission, values, and goals are expressed through corporate brand and image. Thus, Abimbola, Trueman, Iglesias & Abratt . (2012) suggest that employee projection of consistent behaviour of strategic elements and espoused values at a particular point in time results in the establishment of an image. The scholars posit that the corporate image is about consistent expression and endorsement of corporate objectives at a particular point in time as viewed by stakeholders. The scholars introduce the element of employee consistency in behaviour and stakeholder perception of the said behaviour. However, Mumby (2013) observes that consistency in behaviour provides predictability as employees strongly identify with, and enact, organisation goals but this can also result in either employee burnout or employee engagement in undercover forms of resistance which may or may not impact on the desired corporate image. For example, Murphy (1998) studied flight attendants' resistance to corporate control, in which the study concludes that the attendants violate the rules behind the scenes when there is no direct organisation control. Therefore, this study explores how employee empowerment and relationship-building can be communication avenues for the participation in and articulation of, collective values in a university to minimise on ambiguity and create understanding during transformation.

Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004) expound on the difference of identity, image, and brand from a relational perspective. The scholars state in casual expression that identity is 'who we are'; a brand

is 'what you say you are and want to be'; an image is 'what stakeholders think of whom you…' reputation is what 'all stakeholders think of whom you are and what have you done'. These scholars address the differences from the communication sender and receiver perspective. This means that identity is communicated by the sender, the image is projected by the sender, the brand is what the receiver is interpreting of the message. In the same vein, van Heerden (1999) provides a model that outlines the role of visual and behavioural cues in determining the corporate image. He posits that the corporate image is communicated through both visual and behavioural cues, attained through customer service and employee behaviour which includes attractive buildings, uniforms, logos, and slogans, all of which express and endorse what employees are projecting to stakeholders. Okoth (2007) in a study of Telecommunication Company, states that the marketing communication role is critical in building the corporate image of an organisation. Okoth (2007) states that a proactive approach to marketing communication is achievable through excellence in service provision, successful employee relations, advertising, and positive publicity. Thus, the present study acknowledges that marketing has a role in image management by interrogating organisational excellence in service provision and employee relations. Thus, the study examines how a transforming organisation like MMU articulates and expresses the strategic objectives, artefacts and behaviour to employees so, as to clearly express the corporate image in a competitive environment.

Marketing scholars Hatch and Schultz (2001) develop a toolkit as a way of analysing an organisation's image by examining potential misalignment of vision-culture, image-culture, and image-vision gaps. This examination may inform the management of the corporate image gaps by aligning the image to the culture and the corporate strategic management process. The alignment of the corporate image and strategic management process, during transformation, is best assured at the beginning of the strategic process to provide for differentiation and competitive advantage (ibid). The present study proposes that the alignment enables management, through the corporate communication role of marketing communication, to strategically attend to the corporate image management and increase visibility for competitive advantage during corporate transformation. From a marketing perspective, Mumby (2013) posits that branding attempts to create a 'sense of seduction' but this study argues that branding is an arbitrary relationship between a particular product and the organisation to create loyalty and differentiation through dialogue. This means that employees may use dialogue to communicate differentiation and loyalty among themselves

(rebranding) in order to project a favourable image to customers. During a transformation, the current study suggests that these communication strategies, if effectively communicated, may enable employees to increase corporate visibility and project positive behaviour which can impact, positively, on corporate reputation.

3.4 Reputation Management and Corporate Communication

Literature demonstrates that corporate reputation management research has been undertaken from different perspectives, disciplines and contexts. Van Riel (2007) outlines six principles of communication associated with high reputation ranking:

a. Visibility through public and market prominence,

b. Distinctiveness: attributes that make it unique,

c. Authenticity through corporate identity in which the organisation leaves no uncertainty on who they are, what they say, and what they do,

d. Transparency: stakeholders access information for accurate assessment,

e. Consistency in both word and deed through employee coaching, and

f. Responsiveness: open to dialogue and feedback.

Lillis *et al*. (2015) explore the importance of reputation management from an internal stakeholder's perspective in an academic institution. The study adopts a qualitative approach in a Eurocentric context in which eight professors from different disciplines in different European universities are interviewed. The findings highlight reputation management as subjective and multidimensional concept. The study asserts that reputation management is both an individual and a collective responsibility of each employee (ibid). Therefore, the Lillis *et al.* (2015) scholars argue that reputation management in university narrows down to three critical aspects: communication, building interrelations and employee responsibility. This present study identifies with the findings of Deirdre *et al* (2015) on the interdependence between employee relationship-building and reputation management. However, the present study proposes that effective communication should incorporate participative and inclusive.

Helm *et al.* (2010), marketing scholars, perspective examine corporate reputation by investigating the relationship between corporate reputation, customer satisfaction and loyalty. The scholars conclude that reputation of an organisation has a direct effect on client loyalty and an indirect effect on client satisfaction (2010). Helm *et al.* (2010) used a quantitative study with questionnaires on 762 consumers. The authors conclude that key reputation drivers are value for money, product quality and credibility of advertising claims. Helm *et al.* (2010) focus on how employees can impact on customer loyalty and product quality to impact positively on reputation. Thus, reputation management during transformation will involve managing customer loyalty and product quality. Furthermore, Helm *et al.* (2010) investigate both the relationship between corporate reputation, consumer satisfaction and loyalty. The findings suggest that reputation has a direct effect on loyalty and an indirect effect on consumer satisfaction. The scholars urge organisations to manage the key drivers for reputation, namely, value for money, product quality and credibility of advertising claims. Thus, results show that half of the effect of reputation is loyalty, mediated by satisfaction. This present study agrees with the assertion that reputation drivers include employee loyalty, managing customer satisfaction and loyalty, product quality and credibility of advertising.

Reputation studies from a stakeholders' perspective attempt to explain the impact of internal stakeholders on corporate reputation. A case study was undertaken in a German consumer goods manufacturer to compare consumers, employees and private investors' reputation perception towards the organisation (Helm, 2007). Helm (2007) categorised the stakeholders and their level of interest in positive reputation management. The investors rated highest, then employees and, lastly, consumers impacted the importance of the corporate maintaining a positive reputation. It had been expected that employee rating is higher than the rate of the other two stakeholders because of their comparatively high commitment and dependency on their employer and detailed knowledge of the institution (Helm, 2007). These findings demonstrate that internal stakeholders have a clear role in reputation management, just like the investors in reputation management due to the perceived stake. The study adds that positive corporate reputation results in employees' pride, job satisfaction, and affective commitment (Helm, 2011). Conversely, employee pride, job satisfaction and affective commitment may be elusive during organisational transformation, but strategic and participative communication of management to and with employees may assist to navigate the corporate reputation.

On the other hand, Gardberg (2001) and Helm (2011) address employees' roles in reputation building and management, using different approaches. Gardberg (2001) disputes claims that support internal/hybrid stakeholder or 'investoyees' role in corporate reputation management. Instead, the scholar advocates for management to concentrate on reputation building and the management of groups within the organisation that have a less favourable impression of the said organisation. Thus, the scholar emphasises the importance of reputation management at various levels and cadres within the organisation, stating that reputation management should be addressed with different groups with different strategies to create a positive impression. On the other hand, Helm (2011), in "Employees' awareness of their impact on corporate reputation" states in an online survey carried out on employees working for a highly-ranked Fortune America firm, state that employees' awareness of their impact on the institution's reputation is influenced by pride, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and perceived corporate reputation. Helm (2011) links reputation management to aspects of internal motivation such as job satisfaction and affective commitment, which may present motivational challenges during organisational transformation. Cravens and Oliver (2006) similarly demonstrate that the link between reputation and employees must be managed, arguing that employees and the corporate reputation both unique resources that generate positive financial performance and create competitive advantage (ibid).

Several studies on reputation management and employees in universities in Africa foreground ideology and tradition as critical aspects. To manage ideology and tradition, Soha (2010) in a survey on three campuses, states that during mergers the management - employee interactions can be improved. The scholar states that the relationship may be improved if management enhances and embrace internal communication (ibid). The scholar argues that internal communication improves productivity and contributes to a positive organisational climate (ibid). Nzulwa and Atikiya (2013), in a qualitative study carried out on 200 middle-level management in the four oldest universities in Kenya, propose that the corporate reputation tools are image, tradition, ideology, corporate visual identity, and employer brand, all of which positively influence employee commitment levels.

This present study proposes that internal communication at different levels within the organisation may influence ideology and tradition and strengthen the reputation and brand during organisational transformation.

3.5 Corporate Reputation Management Strategy of a Transforming University

3.5.1   Reputation Management Plan

Argenti (2007) argues that effective corporate reputation management for a transforming organisation, especially a university, begins with undertaking an audit of stakeholders, internal and external. Argenti, a management and corporate communication scholar, identifies the primary constituents (internal stakeholders) as employees, customers, shareholders, and the local community, while the secondary constituents (external stakeholders) are counted as media, suppliers, government, and creditors (ibid). Thus, Peters and Waterman (1982) state that the building of internal stakeholder relationships, as part of a reputation management plan, will incorporate preparing a strategy for each business unit. In the same vein, the present study advocates for a communication strategy for each unit to provide for diversification and differentiation within the university for competitive advantage. This promotes employee engagement and inclusion which may facilitate the building of a strong reputation during transformation. Internal stakeholder relationship building, during transformation, may involve managing employee expectations and aligning them according to the various business units and professional sections within the university.

3.5.2   Employee Expectations and Alignments During Transformation

Effective reputation management will involve the communication practitioner to advocate for employee and university management to align their expectations, especially during a transformation. Thus, Newstrom (2010) states that employee psychological expectations during organisational transformation are loyalty, creativity, job security, fair treatment, rewarding relationships with colleagues, organisational support and effort in return for economic rewards; while management's expectations are both economic and psychological rewards. Neswtrom (2010) states that the dominant coalition's expectations of all employees include high performance, continuous quality improvements, commitment to the organisation, friendly service to the customer. In the same vein, MMU management's expectation of the employees are professionalism, commitment and loyalty, quality and timely service, to be brand ambassadors, and to adhere to the terms of service (MMU strategic plan, 2017). The challenge is to establish the balance between staff and management expectations, since an imbalance has a dysfunctional effect

on MMU. Newstrom (2010) touches on the importance of corporate culture during transformation by asserting that employees can either be creative and productive, or unwilling to use their talent and thus resistant.

Furthermore, during organisational change, scholars contend for a 20 – 50 – 30 rule, described below, is a prescription for employee alignment and commitment to influence corporate reputation (Newstrom, 2010). Scholars state that the reaction to the change formula means that 20% are receptive, 50% are open-minded, and 30 may resist or even attempt to sabotage. During transformation, each party examines the rewards versus the costs. This impacts on productivity and quality, gradually affecting identity and reputation. In addition, in an African setting, the elements of ideology and tradition, such as ethnic and interdisciplinary considerations and dominant coalition dynamics play out. Thus, the formula, further, demonstrates the importance of a participative approach by directing communication strategies and messages to influence different employee cadres (constituting 50% and 30%) towards the 20% receptive staff.

3.5.3 The Corporate Reputation Audit as Step Towards Change Management

Scholars advocate for two types of reputation audits which may adhere to a behavioural and participative approach. Firstly, Doorley's (1998) prescriptive reputation audit advocates for a behavioural approach and, also, attempts to incorporate identity, image and reputation mix in its approach. This audit on stakeholders measures the image perceptions of all stakeholder groups as well as corporate identity from the internal stakeholder's standpoint. This study uses Doorley's approach to stakeholder and identity measurements but modifies it to incorporate the Kenyan context and academic perspective. Secondly, Doorley's (1998) reputation tool evaluates reputational capital by analysing employee statements on reputational challenges, goals, and opportunities; and corporate message strategies. This may be a bird's eye view of the challenges that a transforming university during change should undertake and do follow-up audits periodically. However, this approach may, also, be viewed as a top-down rather than a participative approach to reputation audit. If management heavily involves and incorporates internal stakeholders, the audit process is participatory and reputation is expected to be enriched due to the 'we' effect of a collective culture.

Doorley's audit is, to a large extent, relevant to a transforming university in the Kenyan context. This is due to its accent on academic quality and employee talent (identity), product quality and social responsibility (image), communication, integrity, innovation and governance (reputation). It builds on the Kenyan philosophy of pulling together and the constitutional requirement of public participation in public organisational activities contrary to the Fortune reputation audit approach that focuses on the dominant coalition and external stakeholders, financial investors, to manage reputation. Doorley's (1998) respective audits involve the following: innovation, talent, management and financial performance.

Innovation seems a controversial concept as it is associated with cultural imperialism. Godin and Vinck (2017) argue that innovation is a catchword for international organisations and governments to bring about best practices in science, technology and innovation policy. The authors caution scholars in emerging economies and urge them to seek alternative approaches to the pro-innovation bias by proposing imitation that preserves the organisation, self-preservation strategy, rather than adopt major changes. Their argument is confirmed in findings by scholars who state that contracting of Research and Development between universities and industry harms innovation performance due to the corporates reluctance to share relevant knowledge compared to cooperation which promotes interactive and participative knowledge sharing (Vega-Jurado, et al., 2017). This study explores how a transforming institution engages in university-industry cooperation and innovation to foster reputation management and the creation of a competitive edge.

Obeidat, Hanshem, Alansari, Tarhin, and Al-Salti (2016), in a study on the relation between knowledge management and total quality management, conclude that customer satisfaction, training, and employee education, the commitment of top management, teamwork and continuous improvement were important quality management practices. The study provides insight into the importance of organising employee information and experiences within the organisation and how management may tap into this information during organisational transformation to manage identity and reputation.

Employee talent management seems to promote equality and diversity in the workplace. An inclusive people perspective views all employees as talented and such talent may be further developed to contribute to corporate objectives (Collins, 2014). In the same focus on inclusivity,

Mavin (2015) cautions against a gender-blind approach which reinforces male leadership in the workplace. Thus, the current study argues that reputation management has to incorporate, to a great extent, diversity, and inclusivity, in the transforming organisation through effective communication. To manage diversity and inclusivity human resource practitioners propose leadership sharing and collaborative design which is a talent-centric approach to employee engagement and empowerment (Graen & Grace, 2015). The practitioners recommend leadership sharing, which targets building partnerships within the organisation to promote cooperation towards attaining corporate objectives, and thus a participative approach. Also, the scholars recommend a collaborative design approach that promotes innovation and a flexible management system among teams which in turn provides for inter-generation interaction. These designs promote mutual respect, support and feedback among employees and promote individual and collective talent in the organisation. This study agrees with the scholars that employee respect, support and feedback are critical elements that promote cooperation during institutional transformation, as part of reputation management and the attainment of corporate objectives.

Furthermore, Muthali-Chikwanda (2013), in her study using self- administered questionnaires to middle-level administration managers and faculty of one private university in an emerging economy in Africa, states that financial and resource management are critical in improving academic staff competencies, facilities maintenance, staff retention, participation in research and community engagement. These findings demonstrate a correlation between financial management and reputation management in a university in an emerging economy.

The second type, the Fortune Reputation Audit template by Fortune Magazine, provides for an elitist, heavily commercial and non-participatory approach. This form of audit surveys senior executives, board members and security analysts, thus dealing with external elite stakeholders and not focusing on other major stakeholders, thus ignoring employees. The executive approach favours a masculine culture such as the European and American contexts with established capitalistic economies and individualist approaches. The present study proposes that a public and young academic entity, like MMU, in an emerging economy like Kenya need not subscribe to this approach in corporate reputation management, although it has been dominated by male leadership in the past. Lastly, the approach does not seem to fit emerging academic entities, especially those transforming due to emphasis on long term assets and investment and financial soundness. The

undertaking of a reputation audit merely provides direction for the corporate communicator to ascertain the reputation status and formulate and implement a strategy for each stakeholder group, beginning with the internal ones.

The diagram below outlines the two corporate reputation audits types, discussed above, administered to respective stakeholders in international corporates and organisation. The common aspects of these two templates are quality of management, employee talent, social responsibility, product quality, and innovation. These five aspects, in the audits, touch on employees input towards reputation management. Doorley's template recognises communicativeness, with stakeholders, as a key component in reputation assessment.

Figure 4: customized reputation management templates reviewed in literature

Table 1: Customized reputation management templates reviewed in literature

Fortune Magazine Template	Doorley Template
Innovativeness	Innovation
Quality of Management	Quality of Management
Employee Talent	Employee Talent
Financial soundness	Social responsibility
Use of corporate assets	Product quality
Long term assets	Communicativeness (Transparency)
Long term investment value	Governance
Social responsibility	Integrity (Responsibility, reliability, credibility, trustworthiness)
Quality of service/product	-

Figure 4 (above) identifies that the key components of reputation are innovation, management quality, employee talent, financial performance, product quality, communicativeness, social responsibility, and integrity. The present study interrogates how management communicated with employees to manage these key aspects in reputation during organisational transformation.

3.5.4 Corporate Ambassadors as Reputation Management Strategy

One of the study objectives was to evaluate how MMU management managed the internal communication challenges and opportunities and their impact on reputation. Thus, the study interrogates the management-employee role in reputation management during transformation. The

corporate communication practitioner may corporate ambassadors as one opportunity that a transforming organisation may explore in reputation management. This aligns with Davies *et al.* (2010) and Fieldman *et al.* (2014) who advocate for reputation management strategies from an internal stakeholders' perspective with emphasis on enhancing visibility. To begin with, Helm (2011) places emphasis on the employee as a critical resource and key link to reputation management. The scholar outlines, from a marketing and management perspective, insights into reputation management for profit-making organisations but adaptable to public academic organisations. Helm (2011) upholds employees as 'corporate ambassadors' and 'corporate advocates' for organisations. The scholar outlines the characteristics of a corporate ambassador as living the brand, engaging in appropriate behaviour when in contact with the stakeholders, talking favourably about the organisation, buying the products and services, defending the organisation against negative comments, identifying corporate procedures to improve institutional reputation and voicing concern for teammate about harmful corporate conduct that jeopardises reputation.

An ambassador is said to be an emissary who at all times positively represents his/her organisation and strongly advocates for the institution's message, philosophy and values. This may, however, be interpreted, differently, such that employees are merely indoctrinated to carry the master's message to attain the corporate objectives, enhance corporate profit and drive the reputation but do not act in this regard out of their own will. Thus, the corporate ambassador approach may be an opportunity as well as a challenge for a transforming organisation during corporate branding. Therefore, Mishra, Boynton and Mishra (2014) recognise the role of managers in building trust through interaction with subordinate staff in their departments to manage employee misinterpretations at different levels and sections in the organisation. Thus, these scholars presume that the coaching of managers to become corporate ambassadors is critical in driving reputation management. In the same vein, it is assumed that the manager-employee interaction will lead to the subordinate employees taking a role in becoming brand ambassadors during the transformation.

Bosch *et al.* (2005) state that key brand ambassadors are the dominant coalition and the corporate communicators who must advocate for corporate behaviours that create and maintain a solid, sustainable and unambiguous reputation. The present study agrees with the scholars that appropriate brand behaviour begins at the corporate and management levels. Thus, Zerfass, Vercic, and Wiesenberg (2014) propose that CEO communication and positioning be a brand strategy in

corporate reputation management. The scholars undertook a quantitative survey on 512 heads of communication in 21 countries and a qualitative survey on 42 communication leaders in 12 countries in Europe. The scholars observe that the top executives primarily present themselves based on their credentials and ethical competencies (ibid). Thus, the study proposed that corporate practitioners position the executive by preparing, presenting and documenting credentials on the organisational website. In addition, the executives are coached on self-presentation techniques and media relations to enhance personal reputation, which will impact on corporate reputation (ibid). Although the study was carried out in a European corporate setting, as well as in a profit-making sector, university (corporate) management and corporate communication practitioners in Kenya could examine these practices to facilitate a transforming organisation to manage its brand and reputation for competitive advantage. However, the present study notes that Argenti *et al.* (2010) caution against behavioural vices in organisational leadership such as negligence and deceitful virtues which will impact negatively on brand and reputation management. The scholars posit that negligence or business-as-usual behaviour result in employee complacency and customer dissatisfaction (ibid). Furthermore, the scholars warn of unethical practices by management which may result in brand manipulation, aggressive philanthropy, and the use of advertising activities to manage corporate and product brand and corporate reputation (ibid). Instead, the scholars advocate for favourable competition, observation of regulatory requirements and the development of internal capabilities to enhance corporate communication that has a positive impact on corporate reputation (ibid). The present study thus notes a challenge as well as an opportunity in corporate brand management during organisational transformation. At the national and institutional levels, Kiambi (2010) had observed the element of institutionalised corruption at the said levels. At the organisational level, MMU's first strategic plan for 2011 – 2016 communicates management's goal to promote corporate and management integrity. The present study observes that the challenge and opportunity is for management to observe these positive management practices, communicate leadership reliability, and management predictability which will empower the new corporation to have an edge against competitors, attract customers and motivate employees. Thus, the challenge is for a complex and transforming public academic university, despite changing governance and governance structures, to adopt positive management practices that communicate favourable management practices for effective corporate and brand competition and corporate reputation management. Thus, it is observed that transformation involves not only a review of management and management practices, but of structures and systems through policy.

3.5.5   Communication Policy and Strategy Development

Since transformation usually involves structural and systemic reviews in an organisation, policy formulation and implementation could incorporate a mixed pot of behavioural and communicative approaches to reputation management. To begin with, Kottler (1995) posits that a behavioural and communication approach, during organisational change, begins with the communication of policies that empower employees to act on the changing corporate vision, provide for risk communication management, promote change agents to positions of leadership, and reward new or changing employee behaviours. In other words, a policy that provides for modification of corporate structures and systems to empower employees to act as change agents. Hence, in a transforming organisation, including a university, the management may offer an opportunity to create policies that enable change agents to provide leadership to employees and, also, provide incentives to motivate employee change in behaviour. These changes provide for employee participation in corporate transformation and corporate reputation management.

The present study argues that management communication of policy and policy changes to employees may provide either an opportunity or challenge in effective corporate transformation and reputation management. For examplthat, in a South African university, the national transformational agenda to rectify the racial employment imbalances of the past, targeting previously privileged and thus "undesirable" individuals such as South African white staff, South African Indian staff or, in this case, regime critics, became a transformational challenge to the university. Employees perceived the policy as not inclusive, as a section of employees felt that it worked against the attainment of the set transformational goals. These hardened the sceptics to a further new 'transformation' agenda, while the transformation process imposed a new group of elites in the workplace. The new group was perceived as the 'desirable' young yet inexperienced by their colleagues. Collectively, the situation provided for profound apprehension and cynicism amongst such groups, giving way to passive and silent protests, psychological strains, and a negative impact on the institution's image and reputation. These groups will not take transformation neutrally but remain scarred by the pain of initial experience, which brings about the desire to exit an institution. Thus, this incident demonstrates the importance of policy formulation that is inclusive and participative. A policy that provides an opportunity rather than a challenge in employee participation in organisational transformation.

Consequently, Sevier (2009) proposed that policy formulation and implementation in universities be focused on academic quality and integrated marketing communication areas to build a reputation. The author states that academic quality assurance integrates a careful selection of students (admissions) and selection of faculty (employees) to provide for a strong product brand. In addition, the author expounds on quality faculty members as those fwith a strong quality of research papers. The papers are published in academic journals, which results in significant reputation building that attracts other academically accomplished faculty, research funds, and media attention. In other words, the policy provides an opportunity for reputation management through the selection and retention of a specific calibre of students and employees to protect the product brand, promote research funding, and provide for publicity. Publicity is attainable through the consistent use of a comprehensive integrated marketing communications strategy that employs an array of media. In addition, a co-branding strategy may be used that marries the institutional name with another, perhaps more prestigious name of particular interest to a target audience. In other words, the author seems to encourage policy in corporate and industry partnerships in research and corporate social responsibility. The present study interprets this to be stakeholder management in reputation management. Finally, the author promotes publicity through the use of non-academic functions to enhance the reputation, for example use of sports public relations and endowment. This suggests that reputation management in a transforming university will include policy formulation and implementation in academic quality, marketing communication, stakeholder management, and non-academic activities. A transforming university may, thus, not only have to evaluate its academic quality, research, and marketing activities but also effectively communicate these critical aspects to its stakeholders, especially the internal stakeholders.

In conclusion, policy formulation and implementation, for effective communication to internal stakeholders, involve incorporation of corporate ambassadors, brand ambassadors, use of change agents, evaluation of the academic quality and publicity activities. These policies are expected to result in a communication strategy, message and the development of a reputation management plan.

3.5.6 Visual Design Interpretation and University Reputation Management

Corporate communication practice, as mentioned previously, focuses on a holistic approach to communication management in an organisation. To manage corporate identity and image, the corporate communicator may begin by interrogating how internal stakeholders interpret organisational information that is projected through visual designs. The aim of a corporate communicator should be to facilitate visual design interpretation that creates shared meaning among various cadres of staff in the respective sections rather than, merely, a top-down transfer of information. Therefore, the use of visual design to communicate change may be one communication strategy in internal communication.

Bouchet (2014) notes that communicators presume that internal stakeholders will correctly perceive, portray and project behaviour that is steadfast and identifiable with dominant coalition expectations. The scholar states that visual design is expected to communicate information and ideas using symbols, artefacts and imagery to create employee cohesion during transformation (ibid). In an African context, the use of pictures, role play, audio cassettes, videos, teleconferencing, and broadcast media is presumed to be an effective tool in communicating with all cadres of employees. Thus, the present study presumes that a strategy that incorporates these channels may transmit information to employees that create the desired behaviour which will positively impact corporate identity and image during change. Visual design communication may be asymmetrical , yet it has elements that promote interactivity and may encourage interdepartmental participation. For example, the interactivity, it is assumed, maybe through a two-step flow of communication in which members seek each other's opinions during symbols interpretation. However, according to Klein (1996), line authority must be retained for effective communication and interpretation. The scholar's views align with Davidow's (1992), who states that sharing meaning involves real people talking to real people, providing visible benefits for change, ensuring appropriate timing to communicate is critical, and the use of specific media. The author provides ingredients for management to use in attaining shared meaning. This implies that the communication strategy provides for the use of symbols because they are an interactive channel, may provide for visible employee benefits, and could provide for the timeliness or timeless aspects of an artefact. Thus, visual design may be incorporated in the formulation of a communication strategy to attain shared meaning, provide imagery, and be a sign of cohesion during change.

Despite management's desire for behavioural consistency in employees, Welch cautions that the challenge is that employees may neither interpret the visual messages accordingly nor project behavioural consistency that builds, maintains and protects the targeted reputation of the institution. For example, Howard University in Washington DC which began in 1867 to serve the black community, portrays an impression of a close-knit institution and an established faculty, as demonstrated university website (Howard website, 2016). The picture illustrations show African American lecturers holding hands to form a 'human chain', a rare gesture and posture in academia (ibid). Howard University's management actively plans for a desired corporate image that demonstrates a closely-knit family in the university. Likewise, employees may interpret the gesture to mean a closely-knit and cohesive family. This is expected to build corporate reputation, particularly in the African-American context which strives for cohesion and family nurture in view of its national social context. However, the use of the human chain could have different connotative and denotative meanings to different employee cadres. The challenge is to align visual design with organisational policy and a communication strategy whose emphasis is cohesion.

Visual designs through the use of corporate symbols may strengthen identity if correctly interpreted and projected by employees. For example, the symbolic use of the 'clock tower' is not a geographical marker but pride in building and an interpretation and demonstration of knowledge prowess passed from generation to generation (Howard website). The study suggests that the clock association is important, too, in the African academic context. For example, the symbolic 'chiming clock' at Makerere University's main building is identifiable and recognisable (SCIFODE, 2016). The symbol seems a constant reminder of the importance of time management which should be communicated consistently to employees. The challenge is for both dominant coalition and employees to interpret of the clock and other symbols and imagery, accordingly, and provide for shared meaning.

Cornelissen (2014) states that the communication officer has to prescribe policies that outline codes and symbols used in corporate designs, corporate advertising, and internal communication to enhance 'oneness' and manage reputation. Therefore, the communication scholar states that consistent use and exposure to the university symbols and communication codes can be a reminder to employees to pursue oneness which is then portrayed to external stakeholders (ibid). Cornelissen explains the communicator's role, as an expert prescriber, in the use of non-verbal communication

to promote shared meaning, organisational unity, and corporate reputation. However, Ochara (2017), an African scholar, recognises the challenges of attaining 'oneness' in a setting of multiple identities. The present study notes that the challenge of the expert prescriber, in an African context, is to prescribe policies and symbols that are all-encompassing as part of reputation management during organisational change.

3.5.7 Corporate Values Communication and Reputation Management

The corporate communicator's role as an expert prescriber goes beyond, merely, recommending the use of codes and symbols to the articulation of corporate values to promote reputation management during organisational transformation. Butterick (2011) outlined corporate values that must be communicated and depicted to manage corporate reputation. The scholar outlined the following corporate values as critical in reputation management. The scholar itemised corporate values that focus on external stakeholders, which include: support for worthy causes, promote full disclosure, strive for high-quality products and innovativeness, and promote sound customer relations (ibid). In addition, the corporate values that focus on internal stakeholders include: promote, reward, attract and retain staff, outpace competitions, promote financial soundness and contract fulfilment, and provide for established management, good governance, and ethical conduct (ibid). The present study states that these corporate values must be articulated by management and corporate communicator and interpreted by employees within the organisation before presentation to the external publics. Butterick (2011) argues that if these corporate values are not interpreted and enacted accordingly by internal stakeholders, then institutional endeavours are bound to fail, impacting negatively on corporate reputation. The challenge for management and the corporate communicator is how to articulate the corporate values to the employees and create the desired behaviour during organisational transformation. Christensen and Cornelissen (2011), in the article, "Bridging corporate and organisational communication: review development and a look into the future", argue that interpretation is individual and based on personal experience. The present study notes that interpretation is personal and is based on personal experience. Consequently, it explores how the interaction between management, corporate communicator and employees in the university may provide for an opportunity to enhance shared meaning and information exchange horizontally and vertically to communicate corporate values.

Activities such as support for worthy causes, promotion of full disclosure, production of high-quality products and innovativeness present a challenge and an opportunity in a hierarchical university setting and in a Kenyan context where information is, generally, classified as confidential. Furthermore, innovativeness, a pillar in reputation management, is a challenge to universities in Africa due to finance and funding constrains, yet some have overcome the challenges. For example, both the Universities of Cape Town and Makerere receive industry funding which has boosted their world university ranking and corporate reputation (New vision, Makerere, 2017). The challenge for young universities, like MMU, is to compete with the old and established universities in the production of high-quality products and innovativeness. Hence, the importance of articulating the corporate values to employees during organisational transformation to set a pace by demonstrating these values.

It is assumed that the mission, vision and corporate values give strategic direction and corporate identity to corporate universities. The World University Rankings do outline five pillars of excellence: teaching, research, citations, industry income and international outlook. Hence, regionally and globally, Makerere University in Uganda generates a favourable reputation through strong research, citation and industry income pillars and was placed as the third university in Africa, breaking the dominance of South African universities in rankings (New vision, Makerere, 2017). The present study notes that this information was placed in the internal newsletter/magazine of the university. The use of newsletter, print media, as a communication channel to announce the ranking, demonstrates Makerere's management recognition of the importance of internal communication. Moreover, it may be concluded that this act highlights management's endeavours to foster oneness, promote full disclosure, produce quality products and enhance innovativeness. The New Vision Magazine (2017) writes that a vibrant research culture began in the 1990s with the building of research groups to address local problems and the production of qualified lecturers. According to the article, "Linking science to society Makerere University: Rebuilding a reputation", the research culture resulted in the increase of qualified faculty and attracted donor funding of about US$ 56 million (SCIFODE, 2016). The article emphasises that research focus and competitive research proposals have transformed Makerere University. Thus, the present study argues that corporate value through a vibrant research culture, if aligned to the vision, mission and corporate policies, transforms and facilitates positive reputation management. In addition, research culture directly or indirectly promotes high-quality products, innovativeness,

citations and international outlook. However, the study is cognisant of the danger of donor funding and other foreign/external funding that may derail the recipient institution from its core mission and corporate identity. The challenge for the emerging university, that is transforming, is how to promote its corporate values, communicate policy, and purposively inculcate a research culture to employees to differentiate it from that of the 'mother' institution that it is separating from.

3.6 Corporate Reputation Strengthening and Employee Identity in MMU

Van Riel and Fombrun (2008) states that strategic communication of corporate identity is critical during organisational transformation due to tensions of survival, stability, expansion, and growth. During Multimedia University College transformation as a constituent college of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), JKUAT staff and policies were incorporated into those of Kenya College of Communication and Technology. The new management sought for stability and expansion of the institution, but it is unclear how management embarked on the transition process. There seems to be no documentary evidence of employee orientation on the new arrangement to inculcate the new corporate identity and culture.

The expansion and growth continued with the change from Multimedia University College and the arrival of the Multimedia University of Kenya witnessed several documents. To begin with, the strategic direction for MMU was prepared in the corporate strategic plan (2011 – 2016). This was followed by the announcement on the change of institutional status through the granting of the university charter given in 2013 by then-President, Hon. Mwai Kibaki. Next, MMU management prepared visuals/designs and emblems to create its new corporate identity and image. The first challenge was how to communicate effectively with new and old employees. The next challenge was how these employees would interpret the symbols and messages, accordingly, in order to strengthen the corporate identity. Another key challenge was how corporate identity and image are articulated through corporate elements such as corporate history, philosophy, technology, and organisational nomenclature. It is presumed that the constant exposure to these messages, symbols and images create familiarity and strengthens corporate identity.

However, communicators must realize that internal stakeholders' perceptions and associations of organisational oneness are tested by in-groups and sub-groups. In-groups are those who are perceived to align with the transformation agenda, while sub-groups are those that are perceived

as indifferent. Albert and Whetten (1985) differentiate between holographic identity where subgroups across an organisation share values, and ideographic identities where employees share an identity according to the units they belong to. On the other hand, Balmer and Wilson (1999) recognise that university employees may indeed have one identity but with minor variations due to departmental and professional differences. Consequently, Pratt and Foreman (2000) outline four aspects of management's response to these multiple identities. Therefore, a stable and distinctive corporate identity is created by harnessing the internal characteristics and uniqueness of employees in the organisation by the creation of a strong and stable corporate culture. In addition, Birkigt and Stadler (1986) had proposed a corporate identity mix of symbolism, communication and employee behaviour to enhance inclusivity and for better corporate identity management. The present study argues that the challenge for the corporate communicator in a university is to identify the various groups in the organisation and their perceptions towards corporate identity. The challenge for management is to create trust between the various groups to manage the new corporate image.

Balmer's (1995; 2008) taxonomy outlines seven schools of thought on corporate identity namely: the behavioural school focusing on the nurturing of a distinctive culture and which this study recognises as identity and image communication strategy formulation. Secondly, the strategic school focuses on corporate mission and philosophy, which is critical during transformation. This school of thought would advocate for MMU to formulate and implement new strategic elements in line with the desired institutional identity. Thirdly, the corporate communication school enacts mission and philosophy via formal corporate communication messages, both verbal and non-verbal, to which MMU corporate communication may align with to effectively manage the new identity. Fourthly, the design, from the fashion school approach, advocates for visual cues to manage corporate identity. This seems a challenge for the corporate communication office and university management. Fifthly, the strategic communication school provides for the communication of organisational mission and philosophy visually. The approach proposes that MMU display strategic elements for internal stakeholders to see and memorize which impacts on employee behaviour and corporate identity. Sixthly, the visual behavioural school advocates for visual communication of organisational culture, which suggests the preparation of communication strategy that provides for the effective use of university events to communicate corporate identity. Seven, the strategic visual school focuses on strategic change via visual means. Balmer's taxonomy lays a strategic framework for corporate identity formulation, implementation, and

management. According to the framework, the path to strengthening corporate identity is through management articulating corporate culture, corporate elements, verbal and non-verbal elements of the organisation with the aim of, positively, impacting employee behaviour. Thus, the present study seeks to evaluate how internal stakeholders interpreted these symbols during university transformation.

In addition, Balmer's (1995) corporate identity taxonomies or strategies may also be summarized into Birkigt and Stadler's (1986) corporate identity mix of symbolism, communication, and behaviour of the academic organisation. The design, strategic communication, visual and strategic vision are about symbolic communication strategy; strategic school and corporate communication use communication strategy; and behavioural strategy which deals with the cultivation of culture. Thus, it is pertinent that a corporate communicator's role during institutional transformation is to analyse the changing status of the institution and provide a communication strategy that best enhances corporate identity for differentiation and corporate advantage. Schiele (2017) proposes that a transforming university which aligns with an Afrocentric-orientation incorporates an organisational culture whose emphasis is shared values, collective identity, shared community responsibility and a xenophilic character of being friendly or loving to strangers. The scholar argues that this xenophilia approach provides an opportunity for relationship building, employee interactions for mutual respect, and prevents oppressive tendencies (ibid). This orientation neatly interweaves communication that propagates for collective meaning sharing, promotes symbolism and cross-cultural interaction in corporate identity management. Hence, the present study analyses how management, over ten years, communicated to its employees the shared values, meaning of symbols, and which channels were used in corporate culture and identity management during the transition of a complex institution. The study distinguishes itself from other corporate identity studies in view of the specific complexities brought about by subgroups within the Multimedia University of Kenya due to ethnic, religious, gender, generational, professional, disciplinary, and demographic prejudices.

3.7 Communication through Corporate Culture to Project Identity

At the corporate level, corporate culture may denote shared values among senior university management conveyed through symbolic genres like stories, myths, legends, and anecdotes. Zentes *et al*. (2010) define effective communication as shared values that provide meaning, direction and stimulates the development of a unique and distinct personality (sense-making). Thus, to develop a distinct personality, the challenge is for management to effectively communicate to employees. The study presumes that employees will, accordingly, interpret these genres and attain the shared meaning among employees of all cadres. To address this challenge of employee interpretation of management communication, Keyton (2011) advocates for horizontal and vertical communication in the organisation. The scholar further contends that discussions during new employee orientation programmes include training of corporate symbols, corporate policies, messages, mission statements, corporate history, and protocol on marketing products. Also, the scholar maintains that corporate activities and statements through senior management's visual, verbal and behaviour to all personnel leads to the strengthening of corporate identity during transformation. However, the present study notes that shared meaning becomes a mirage if power games among senior management are displayed to the workforce. The power games and relations may be articulated through the communication genres and non-verbal communication, which may negatively impact on employee relationship building and shared meaning. Mumby (2004) cautions against domination which if not addressed during the institutional growth and development of the distinct personality will impede corporate culture.

Therefore, the study observes a close relationship between identity, culture, and communication. Culture becomes a vehicle for harmonisation of all management and corporate communication directed to all cadres of employees. Zentes and Swoboda (2001) propose that management constant dialogue on culture, over time, expresses the philosophy of management and defines corporate identity. Thus, Denison (1996) concludes that culture either transforms or develops organisational climate. This study opines that organisational climate is a component of the corporate culture. Denison (1996) demonstrates the correlation between culture and attitude using an organisational cultural model which is based on four key cultural traits, namely involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. He states that these four traits if articulated to employees and they understand then they will impact product quality, employee satisfaction and overall performance (ibid). Wilkinson, Gollan, Kalfa and Ying (2018) further build on Denison's line of thought and state that, at the macro level, employee participation and involvement are designed from corporate

policy and regulatory requirements. The scholar states that deep historical and cultural roots influence employee participation at the organisational department and individual levels. The scholars advocate for non-programmed interactions between managers and employees for passing information and consultation rather than through the traditional models of agenda-setting and the use of structures to involve employees (ibid). The present study notes that to manage historical and cultural roots influences is a challenge for management, organisation, and corporate communication. Historical injustices at the group and individual level pause a communication challenge and the attainment of shared meaning. Wasserman, Gallegos and Ferdman (2008) recommend that management creates relational eloquence by encouraging and facilitating opportunities for dialogue, directing teams to make decisions, demonstrate flexibility, and create an inclusive narrative in which each group member is encouraged to be aware and mindful during the conversation in the entire organisation. The study, thus, analyses the challenges and opportunities that management may utilise for effective internal communication administration during university transition.

The present study posits that an organisational culture of participation, consistency and adaptability provides for employee satisfaction and overall performance. For example, Jackson (1999) states that in South Africa, inclusive paradigms have been adopted to combine collective bargaining with direct participation (in Wilkinson *et al.*, 2017). This study notes that cultural traits influence corporate identity. Therefore, universities, especially in Africa, have a challenge and an opportunity, if they address the four traits to an academic niche. Roberts (2009) states that consistency and adaptability to teaching methodologies, adherence to employee involvement, and alignment to mission leads to market segmentation. The four traits facilitate effective corporate culture projection leading to a positive and stable corporate identity. The author notes that a stable identity drives a positive image and, in the long run, impacts reputation. However, the challenge is for emerging universities, like MMU, to have communication strategies that facilitate effective harmonization and projection of culture traits that work towards the corporate niche and a stable corporate image.

3.8 Communication of the Corporate Image to Strengthen Reputation

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Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004) contend that image is perceived as asymmetrical, while reputation is a symmetrical relationship with stakeholders and management through the practice of open-door policy. Thus, to build on a corporate image for an educational institution, Servier (2009) states that a transforming institution must concentrate on certain aspects of image formulation and management. Servier (2009) argues that image management necessitates an institution to specialise in certain kinds of products or students to be recruited, the teaching methodology or the geographical location of its institutions. An emerging university, MMU has to evaluate its student recruitment policies and processes to attract the crème de la crème at school-leaving level, build competent students, especially in technical fields, to create a base for an educated society. The higher education policy states that only students with 'C' plus grade qualify to join the university, while the rest join tertiary and village institutions. Focus on academic, methodological and proximity dimensions may either promote or negate the corporate image management. Similarly, the changing character of student life, extracurricular activities and access to scholarships impact on the corporate image. Thus, innovative organisations constantly evaluate policies and strategies on student life and activity management, internal communication, and teaching methodology to strengthen the corporate image.

Furthermore, technological advancements also impact on image management in practice. Image management strategy may incorporate corporate website and social media management to forge strong employee relations. Internet and digital media have revolutionized employee relationship management by effectively and promptly dispensing corporate and financial information through website, e-newsletter and other mass media (Welch, 2012). However, employees may not read them as promptly, which becomes a challenge to communication management. In addition, there is employee feedback through Facebook, tweeting, blogging and WhatsApp, among others (Van der Merwe, Pitt & Abrate, 2005). However, literature demonstrates that technological advancement serves as double-edged sword to the corporate image by enhancing two-way communication which may embarrass the organisation (Jo and Jung, 2005); even though some studies positively assess the impact of social media as well as encourage its use in universities in the African context (Visser, 2012; Matthee, 2011).

3.9 University Reputation Management of Identity and Image

Cornelissen (2011) posits that corporate reputation is a unique and long-lasting image that employees form about their organisation which is created through a harmonious series of communication programmes and strategies. The present study specifies that the employee is a common denominator in all the three concepts, namely, identity, image, and reputation. This is because employee behaviour is a key part of institutional identity formation and maintenance., the employees are part of the constituents that carry an image of the university. Thirdly, the employee manages and maintains the university reputation through daily communication and behavioural practice. The current study concludes that the employee either upholds, r hampers the amplification of corporate identity, image, and reputation of a transforming university. Thus, the study seeks to establish whether Multimedia University of Kenya management communicated effectively with its employees to nurture its corporate identity, image, and reputation during a period of rapid transformation.

Friedman and Miles (2006) categorise stakeholders into three types: equity shareholders who have direct ownership of organisation; economic shareholders who have a monetary interest in organisation; and influencer stakeholders who have interest in the actions of the organisation, for example, trade unions and professional groups. In a public university, an employee may pass for equity stakeholders by being taxpayers and/or directors. An employee is an economic stakeholder due to financial interest one has in the university; and an influencer due to the professional and trade union groups that employee associates with. The employee, as a stakeholder in the three categories, impacts institutional identity through the equity and economic stake; impacts image through the influencer stake; and the impact of the two stakes in the long-run impacts on the university's reputation.

Identity, image, and reputation relying on the human nature of their stakeholders, all focus on psychological associations between an individual and the organisation leading, to relationship formation. The associations, which are from the receiver's perspective of identity, focus on insider's or internal recipient's interpretation and behaviour towards the organisation, while the image may, to a large extent, focus on external recipient's interpretation of the organisation based on service/product quality and internal stakeholder receptiveness. Therefore, it may be stated that the internal recipient's actions (identity) results into the external recipient's reaction (image) and the two sets of insights culminate in cumulative perceptions, namely, reputation. Balmer (1998)

differentiates between image and reputation by stating that image focuses on the latest beliefs about an organisation and may result in the use of metaphors, while reputation is a control mechanism which takes place is in a variety of situations.

Balmer (1998) further outlines the basic tenets of reputation using the DEAR principle: D – Decision; E – Evaluated; A – Against; R – Reputation. The marketing scholar states that managers should evaluate their decisions by asking how the decision undermines reputation. Balmer seeks to demonstrate that there is a relation between reputation management and decision-making by dominant coalition. Brown (1998) relates corporate reputation with corporate associations and individual feelings about a particular organisation; thus bringing reputation management to the individual employee level. Grunig (1993) equates reputation to the symbolic relationship between the organisation and its publics through communicative interaction; on the premise that promoting communication interactivity strengthens reputation. Therefore, the decision-making, individual feelings and communication interaction, all participative, impact on corporate reputation.

3.10 Challenge of Corporate Reputation Management Strategies

3.10.1 Historical Challenges of a Transforming Public University

Reputation management in universities in developing countries faces specific socio-political and technological challenges. These challenges include inadequate funding, research production and skilled graduates to meet market demands; and no funding to sustain innovation to contribute towards Africa's development due to low technological connectivity, lack of local content, and few human resource development programmes (Nakweya, 2016). In Kenya, university reputation management strategy should incorporate communication in a devolved government system, regulatory framework, employee rights and labour movements (CUE, 2017). A devolved system is a system in which the central government has devolved some functions to the counties. The constitution created 47 counties headed by a governor, supported by a Members of Counties who represent wards. The Senate plays a watchdog role, while the members of parliament represent the national government. The devolved system was to take services closer to the people. The devolved system created competitive pressures due to proliferation of universities in the counties to address increased demand for education quality and service (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Quality and service may have been a challenge due to brain drain, staff poaching, sectional interests and

divisional struggles negatively which influence university reputation management (Nzulwa & Atikiya, 2013).

Multimedia University of Kenya faces the full range of these challenges, as well, which may be addressed through communication policy and strategies to manage corporate reputation during change. Literature proposes a number of strategies and approaches through which MMU management may approach reputation management through assessment of corporate culture, establishment of positive employee relationships; and relational and reflective management of stakeholders by merging organisational objectives with internal stakeholders' expectations (Butterick, 2011; Mugaga, 2011). Therefore, corporate reputation management during transformation calls for a variety of communication facilitators to maintain corporate visibility, distinctiveness, authenticity and competitiveness through employee branding, improved internal communication, utilisation of technology and retraining of communicators (Abdullah, 2009; Visser, 2012; Nzulwa & Atikiya, 2013).

3.10.2 Corporate reputation measurement challenges

Industry competition challenges Kenyan universities to continuously evaluate, measure and manage corporate reputation (Doorley, 2003). Likewise, transforming universities ought to check, build and manage their corporate reputation. Corporate reputation may be measured using various approaches and tools. For example, the *Annual Fortune Magazine* Surveys only three constituencies of an institution, namely, the senior executives, board members and securities analysts (Chun, 2005). This evaluation is unsuitable for academic institutions as they have no security analysts and the organisational hierarchy is different from the ordinary organisation. Furthermore, in Kenya, the public universities have a heavy government presence as it elects board members and senior executives.

On the other hand, the Harris – Fombrun Reputation Quotient (author, year) examines eight attributes, namely, products and service; financial performance; workplace environment; social responsibility; vision and leadership; and emotional appeal. The present study heavily borrows from this tool as it incorporates various aspects of university organisation and incorporates the context. This study advocates for Lewis's (2001) approach which states that corporate reputation

be measured by studying the actions of each constituency. The study advocates for measuring corporate reputation from an internal stakeholder's perspective and information transparency, approach rather than from public relations campaigns (de la Fuente Sabate *et al.*, 2003).

In the creation and management of corporate reputation, scholars propose a composition of marketing and image components. Johan and Noor (2013) use variables such as advertising, public relations and corporate social responsibility to demonstrate that corporate reputation is a variable. These scholars demonstrate the importance of external stakeholders through corporate social responsibility (CSR) to reputation management.

This study proposes that the corporate reputation management strategies of a transforming organisation incorporate the following:

a. Image (evaluating actual and desired)
b. Identity [employee behaviour + visual communication items: logos and uniforms + vision + culture]
c. Employee perception of advertisements and external communication
d. Employee perception of Corporate Social Responsibility
e. Performance (corporate policies and structures)
f. Communication through symmetric communication during change

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter, which was a continuation of literature review, has examined corporate reputation perspectives and the related concepts of corporate culture, identity and image in relation to transforming universities in Kenya, specifically MMU. The chapter outlines the organisational culture components which include teamwork, morale, information flow, involvement, supervision and meetings which have to be addressed at corporate and individual levels in the organisation. However, critical theory scholars warn against manipulation of culture to suit dominant coalition's interests. The dominant coalitions are expected to attain the desired corporate image by working on factors that affect image such as organisation size and structure, message diversity, communication, memory decay and time. Research in African context adds ideology and tradition as factors that influence desired the corporate image. Since this study takes a poststructuralist

approach, which advocates for internal stakeholder's role in reputation management, the chapter examined reputation management strategies which emphasise on participative policy formulation and effective internal communication to create shared meaning. To examine reputation management and effective communication, the following chapter outlines the research methodology and research design used in the study.

<center>**CHAPTER FOUR**</center>

<center>**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**</center>

4.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the rationale for applying a mixed method research approach to the study on managing corporate reputation of a transforming organisation. The mixed method approach aligns to a corporate communication research paradigm which is comprehensively discussed and its relevance to reputation management outlined. Furthermore, the chapter explains why the study opted for a mixed method approach, both qualitative and quantitative, to answer research questions on strategies MMU used to manage corporate identity, image and reputation. In addition, the researcher delves in basis for opting for a case study, MMU, in order to address the complexities of a transforming organisation. A case study research design may interrogate a physical setting over a period of time, its descriptions and employee interpretations (Stake, 1995). Employee description and interpretation involves explaining the identification and justification of the research population, sampling, sampling methods, data management and analysis research ethics used in the study.

4.1 Communication Research Paradigm

Kuhn (1970) in his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution,* developed the concept of paradigms to distinguish the developments of social science from those of natural sciences. A paradigm is a worldview or belief system that guides a researcher (Ibid). The developments in communication discipline concentrated on location of where communication occurred to guide worldview. Thus, the worldview guided the researcher in determining the type of research questions, how these questions are understood, data collection methods and interpretation to determine answers from the questions (Bergman, 2010). The communication location facilitates communication interpretation based on four worldviews, namely, mechanistic, system-interaction, system-interpretive and psychological (Krone *et al*, 1987). Cornelissen (2000) expounds on the four paradigms: mechanistic views communication as transmission process across space, while the systems-perspective concentrates on the sequences. The psychological paradigm focuses on individual interpretation and information processing interpretive-symbolic is on role-taking and sharing meaning or consensus of meaning. These communication paradigms emphasize message

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transmission and interpretation referred to as traditional paradigms (Grunig, 2009). As stated, worldviews guide research questions and methodology.

To examine the whether MMU communicated excellently and how it nurtured corporate identity, image and reputation during rapid transformation, this study evaluates message transmission and interpretation which encompass aspects of traditional paradigms. To examine message transmission during transformation, a research question on identifying MMU communication strategies was employed. Another research question examines organisational messages and symbols interpretation during MMU's transformation (Fiske, 1990). This study evaluates how employee interpretation of messages, symbols, and artefacts and their impact on image. Apart from examining message transmission and interpretation, the study incorporates a strategic management perspective. Corporate communication studies may adopt a strategic management paradigm which evaluates decision-making, dominant coalition, the stakeholder and message management (Grunig, 2009). The strategic management behavioural perspective examines organisational communication, employee participation in decision-making and relationship building (Grunig, 2009). This research questions on analysis of how MMU management communicated corporate identity and culture with employees during MMU transformation adopts a strategic management behavioural. The researcher is persuaded that research questions from the two sets of paradigms are articulated comprehensively through mixed method approach.

4.2 Mixed Method Research Approach

Mixed method combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, concepts or language into a single study (Burke & Onwuegbuze, 2004). The combination is important since reputation research has increasingly become interdisciplinary, complex and dynamic hence the usage of complementary research methods (Meintjes, Niemann-Struweg, & Wet, 2012). Complementary research methods in the study serves different purposes in a quest to answer the research questions. Quantitative research approach focuses on deduction, theory testing, prediction and data analysis (Burke and Onwuegbuze, 2004) which this study makes use of to answer certain research questions on reputation. The qualitative research is about induction, discovery, exploration, theory generation, qualitative data analysis and the researcher collects data (Burke and Onwuegbuze, 2004). Though most reputation studies prefer quantitative approach (Men,

2014; Romenti, 2010, Luoma-aho, 2008), some adopt a mixed methods approach emphasising on online survey and interviews to interrogate various employee interpretations on reputation management (Helm, 2011; Helm, 2005).

4.2.1 Rationale for Mixed Method Approach

This study implements a mixed method research approach to accommodate objective and subject facets of social research to comprehensively interrogate identity, image and reputation navigation during organisational transformation. The researcher identifies with social scientists who acknowledge that objectivity facilitates generalization of results, while subjectivity provides for creation and interpretation of meanings in research (May, 2001). In addition, subjectivity provides for interpretation of observable material differently in different times and contexts (Erickson & Kavalainen, 2015). The study applies objectivity by utilizing survey method and subjectivity by using document review. Therefore, a qualitative approach to interrogate whether and how management communicated with employees during transformation and the challenges and opportunities faced during the same period. The Interrogation is through observing human behaviour in an organisational setting (Hammersley & Gomm, 2001; Creswell, 2014); interpreting human behaviour within the organisation (Jwan & Ongondo, 2011) and analyzing organisational documents. Jwan and Ongondo (2011) state that qualitative research approach attempts to penetrate the layers of employee meaning and identity on organisational culture and organisational transformation.

Therefore, the qualitative aspect of mixed method was appropriate due to the characteristics that both the design and this study possess (Bailey, 1994). According to Bailey (1994), qualitative research advocates for subjective view of reality as researcher becomes immersed in data collection, analysis and interpretation. Secondly, the above stated concepts of identity, image and reputation adhere to thematic analysis and categorization (ibid). Thirdly, the scholar observes that observations are determined by information richness of settings, and the types of observations used are modified to enrich understanding (ibid). Thus, this present study analyses observational data from corporate artefacts. Fourthly, data presentation is in words and quotes from documents, interviews, and questionnaires and adopts a thematic analysis approach. Fifthly, the unit of analysis is holistic concentrating on MMU as an institution and its employees in corporate communication. Consequently, the study sought to interrogate the link between MMU's employees,

communication and reputation management during university transformation. The link is further interrogated from an objective approach, a post positive approach.

A post-positivist worldview which emanated from nineteen century writers such as Comte and Locke, advocates for rational considerations to shape knowledge which supports the notion that communication practices and patterns have objective reality (Creswell, 2010). Nachmias and Nachmias (2015) argue that the rational considerations to knowledge acquisition in corporate communication adhere to logical and scientific conventions. This study sought to use deductive explanations, historical dimension of human behaviour, subjective nature of human experience and multiple viewpoints to interrogate MMU complexity and transformation (Creswell, 2007; Nachmias & Nachmias, 2015). Thus, the study examines MMU employees' insight through surveys, management in-depth interviews, document analysis and observation (Baxter and Babbie, 2003; Creswell, 2010). The mixed method draws from strengths and minimises on the weaknesses of both approaches within a single study. In line with this, the study accommodates quantitative data collection, analysis and interpretation through the questionnaires. Yin (2009) advocates for mixed method in case study to detail observational evidence, explain causal links and description of real-life contexts. Therefore, the researcher concludes that mixed method which involves triangulation enables convergence and corroboration of results. The method enhances complementarity through elaboration, illustration and clarification of data, findings and interpretation and accommodates contradictions in findings. In conclusion, the study apportions a quantitative perspective to study reputation in line with the other reputation studies (Gupta, 2011; Roese *et al.*, 2014; Christensen, 2014).

4.3 Case Study Design

A research design is the 'blueprint' that enables the scholar to resolve the problem and guides through the various research stages (Nachmias & Nachmias, 2000). This deems a single case study as appropriate for the interrogation a transforming entity to accommodate its unique characteristics and applicable in another similar organisation. The case study method tends to emphasize on spatial, temporal, personal and organisational factors (Thomas, 2011). A case study's spatial and temporal nature provides an in-depth understanding of a particular individual, program, event, or organisation at a specific site and for a defined period of time (Creswell, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In addition, its personal and organisation nature accommodates in-depth exploration of

concept and corporate from multiple perspectives on complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a "real life" context (Simons, 2009). Thus, Stake (2005:443) states that a:

> Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied. . . By whatever methods we choose to study the case. We could study it analytically or holistically, entirely by repeated measures or hermeneutically, organically or culturally, and by mixed methods—but we concentrate, at least for the time being, on the case .

4.3.1 Rationale for Single Case Study

The study opted for a single case study type to participate in knowledge and theory building. A single case study analysis a unique case by observing a phenomenon and reflects on the changes over time (Yin, 2008). On the other hand, a multiple case study approach may dilute the overall analysis of the study but enhances generalizability (Creswell, 2007). Yin (2008) argues that certain types of case studies afford generalizability to theoretical propositions and not to populations but expand theory. This builds on theory as it analyses an organisation such as MMU and a phenomenon, organisational transition and reputation nurture within the entity. In the same vein, this study interrogated on relationships to build a reputation model add to reputation management theory during organisational change. Furthermore, the study adopted an embedded case study to examine the structural and perceptual divisions within an organisation over time. The embedded approach delves into the subunits rather that the abstract or global level approach to organisation studies (Yin, 2009). The study looked at MMU holistically but also as divided into about 35 sections composed of teaching and non-teaching units.

A case study is an in-depth analysis of one's own place of work in which the researcher is already 'soaked' and is in a good position to 'poke' (Thomas, 2011). The researcher, being a staff member of the organisation, assumed that an insider interrogation of MMU involves 'soaking' and 'poking' to understand a phenomenon over time. The soaking and poking in the case study allows for the insider perspective. Thus, case study provides for analysis of unique case from a 'unique' researcher. In addition, the single case study entity subject is MMU and its departments during the transition period from constituent college to fully fledged university in which the researcher was present during the organisational and leadership changes (Thomas, 2011).

Utilisation of single case study facilitates effective evaluation of organisational and leadership changes and their impact on identity and reputation. An evaluation of how these changes were communicated to employees involved data collections from employees through surveys and management interviews to capture overall and divisional attitudes towards change communication. Hence, a descriptive survey design is appropriate to describe characteristics and behaviours of a population in a systematic and accurate way and is preferred for collection of data from a large population (Shaughnessy *et al.*, 2003; Adeosun & Ganiyu, 2013). According to Berger (2005), descriptive survey design may aid in capturing the description of communication strategies that MMU management used on internal publics, specifically employees, to communicate organisational transition and the corporate culture. Also, data from secondary sources, namely, MMU strategic plan and selected policies enable cross-checking of attitude as well as address validity test. Furthermore, the document review facilitates explanation of management perspective on MMU communication, their sense of identity and image management from the various sources over time using thematic categorization. The document review facilitated the study to analyse corporate culture from an institutional ethnographic approach (Huang, 2011) as well as analyse groups and subgroups in MMU and the power play involved during transformation (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Apart from utilising a single case study approach, the study analysed the population as described in the following section.

4.4 Study Population and Sampling Procedures

4.4.1 Study Population

- A population is a set of cases which are of interest to the study and are composed of an entire group of persons, events and objects possessing observable characteristics (Shaughnessy, 2002). The population is a unit of analysis; thus, the unit of analysis in the study is the internal publics of MMU composed of:MMU management   08
- Faculty or teaching staff   93
- Administrative or non-teaching staff   229   (As at June 30 2017)

The employees are based at Multimedia University of Kenya Main campus and Central Business District Campus.

4.4.1.1 Sampling Size

The sample size for a total of 330 employees was determined using the *Slovin's Formula* (n=N/(1+Ne^2). The total population was 330 composed of teaching and non-teaching. The calculation of the total population was at confidence level of 95%, interval of 5% and an error tolerance of 5% indicated that 225 was suitable sample size for this study. A total of 225 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to MMU employees composing of 75 for teaching staff and 150 non-teaching staff. Apart from questionnaires, a total of 30 in-depth interviews were to be carried out using an interview guide. This study, being a single case study, employed purposive sampling for in-depth interviews of MMU senior and middle management and employees to interrogate corporate culture and communication strategies used during MMU transformation (Creswell, 2007; Pinnegar and Daynes, 2006 in Creswell, 2007). Apart from employee survey and management in-depth interviews, the study undertook document analysis as discussed in the next section.

4.4.2 Sampling University Documents

The study considered document review of university documents either used or available during the transformation. A thematic approach was used to the sample documents which include:

MMU strategic plans of 2011 - 2016 and 2017 – 2021;

The above documents were reviewed to evaluate how corporate identity and reputation were addressed.

4.5 Data Collection Procedure and Tools

4.5.1 Survey

A survey utilises questionnaires and interviews for data collection about people's attitudes, lifestyles, behaviours, feelings and beliefs (Creswell, 2002). The study used survey method to interrogate and explain how management communicated with MMU employees during the transition from a constituent college to university status. The survey incorporated in-depth interviews for senior and mid-level managers and self-administered questionnaires for both teaching and non-teaching employees.

4.5.2 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were used in the study because they provide for systematic asking, recording and documenting of responses as well as probing for deeper meaning and understanding (Creswell, 2002). Asking questions enables the researcher to directly access respondents' perceptions and values (Silverman, 2011). During interview session, it is pertinent to record and document organisational occurrences and activities in order to understand institutional relations, and interrogate corporate identity and culture (De Vault & McCoy, 2006; Huang, 2011). In addition, in-depth interviews assist the researcher to interpret the experiences of specific individuals within the organisation so as to understand interviewees' interpretation of identity and image messages. It is important to note that an interview guide was used to ensure that the interviewer covered all aspects of the topic in the same order to preserve the same conversational context for each interview, enable interview session to flow seamlessly, to guide direction and scope of discourse, and for interviewer to pay attention to responses (Huang, 2011).

This interview research technique is normally used to gain information from an informant and to address research objectives (Berger, 2000). Interviews can be either informal with few controls, semi-structured, which utilize a list of questions in a casual context mainly for focus groups or structured with specific set of questions (Berger, 2000). This study utilized structured interviews to gain detailed explanation from MMU management and officers on how MMU communicated in order to nurture its corporate identity, image and reputation during the rapid transformation. Even though interviews are time-consuming and may curtail freedom of expression due to the bureaucratic nature of MMU, they provide profound information on reputation management. This aligns with Zainal (2007), a human development scholar from Asia, view that this explanatory approach examines the surface and deep levels of a phenomenon and interprets and develops conceptual categories. To examine and document, through in-depth interviews, the communication strategy used to nurture corporate identity, image and reputation, the selection of participants was as detailed in the next section.

4.5.3 Document Review

Apart from surveys, the study undertook document analysis on various MMU documents that were available. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), document analysis is a field research

technique for systematic classification of communication content according to predetermined categories from public and private documents available. This study opted to analyse university documents in order to evaluate text material despite the challenges of determining a representative sample in textual material and their availability (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). The study, systematically and objectively, carried out document review to identify specific identity and reputation values within text and objects through structured observation (Bailey, 1994). Johnson (1984) states that documents include any official papers which provide direct evidence of decisions, transactions, status, thoughts, debates or actions that directly or indirectly relate to a research inquiry).

Document review, in a study, involves the observation and recording of data from primary sources such as annual reports, strategic plans, minutes of meetings, personal diaries, videos, photographs, catalogues among others (Johnson, 1984). The study reviewed the following documents: MMU Strategic Plans: Plans for five-year period 2012 – 2017 and 2018 – 2022 period: this was to identify and examine selected articles and the values espoused in these articles to promote reputation. This was to examine how MMU management over the last ten years has communicated corporate culture, identity and image to the employees.

4.6 Selection of Participants

The in-depth face-to-face interview had a structured interview guide composed of eight open-ended questions and probes for follow-up and clarification. The face-to-face interviews were administered to a total of about 30 key informants. An in-depth interview of about thirty is a suitable sample size for case study and ethnography as recommended by Morse (1994) and Bernard (2000). The key informants were purposively sampled to get detailed accounts of how a transforming university communicated, communicated effectively, to nurture and manage corporate reputation. In purposive sampling, the researcher used prior knowledge about respondents to pick those that met the purpose of the study (Bailey, 1994). The participants were as follows.

4.6.1 University Management Board Members

Two university management board members, namely, two current registrars (academic and administration registrars) were selected to shed light on policy concerning MMU's identity, image

and reputation management (research question 1 and 4). The registrars are part of the dominant coalition and involved in policy and strategy development, and interact with employees regularly. The Registrar-Academic is in charge of overseeing academic affairs of faculty and students, he was about a year in the insitution and came as part of the new management team in the university, and he was recruited from the former parent university. Thus, he was one of the new employees in the university management board but came from the Parent University, JKUAT. The Registrar – Administration was in-charge of university operations and in-charge of the non-teaching staff. The Administration Registrar is an engineer by profession, a senior lecturer in Engineering Department, and had been the Registrar–Aacademic, for over five years during the transition from the constituent college and was also recruited from Parent University, JKUAT. He currently handles the post-graduate department and Registrar-Administration in an acting capacity.

4.6.2 Key Informants

The study interviewed MMU ambassadors, these are persons who interact with stakeholders directly; they are MMU's image. MMU has six academic deans, of which two were interviewed. The Dean of Engineering, the oldest faculty, and Dean of Science, the youngest faculty, were interviewed on corporate culture and identity of a complex transforming university. Tthe two deans were purposively selected to analyse communication challenges and opportunities. The second type of corporate ambassadors included Dean of Students and CBD Campus Director, who were interviewed on communication strategies used during transformation (Research question 2).

The third type of corporate ambassadors were the non-teaching section-heads that project MMU image through contact with internal and external stakeholders were interviewed on image management. These participants included Information, Communication and Technology manager, Linkages officer, Gender and Disability manager, Students Residence manager, Printing House manager, Estates officer, Human Resources Lecturer (who was also a former administration employee union official and part of MMU Hotel management) and the University Museum manager.

The fourth set of corporate ambassadors were three officers in the corporate communication department to articulate corporate communication policies and strategies uses to manage corporate identity, image and reputation and how MMU manages internal communication challenges and opportunities and how it impacts reputation (Research question 1 and 4).

4.6.3 University Labour Representation

In-depth face-to-face interviews were carried out on three out of seven executive officers of MMU union representatives. The three were: two Kenya university staff union executive members and one university academic union executive member. The executive members were to articulate employees' and union interpretation of organisational messages and reputation management during transition (Research question 3) and opportunities and challenges of internal communication (Research question 4).

4.7 Data Collection Procedure

4.7.1 Interviewing Procedure

Before the interview session, the interview consent form and interview procedures were presented to the participant. The participant was informed that he/she was allowed to withdraw from the session at any time and was under no obligation to answer the questions which one was uncomfortable with, if any. The participants signed the consent form as demonstration of willingness to participate. The in-depth interviews were recorded using an audio recorder, with participant's consent, so as to avoid note-taking and enable transcribing thereafter. Tape recording would enable observation of non-verbal language. The study is cognizant of the fact that equipment usage has failure challenges during recording and transcribing. Consequently, equipment was tested in advance and research assistants taught how to transcribe recordings (Creswell, 2002). The recorded material transcribed using two research assistants. The assistants were to translate the information verbatim. The interviews were used to corroborate information, employee information, on self-administered questionnaire.

4.7.2 Self - Administered Questionnaire

The study opted for a self-administered questionnaire because it may be administered to a large group and captures complex details (Berger, 2005). The self-administered questionnaire provides for confidentiality to respondents and is appropriate in describing trends, attitudes and opinions despite the frequent sampling errors and low response rate (Suher, Bir & Gunes, 2017). The study administered questionnaires to MMU employees to interrogate research question one,

communication strategies and interpretation of messages. To begin with, using stratified sampling method, teaching and non-teaching staff filled the questionnaires to enable study:

- To identify internal and external communication strategies used at MMU (research question 1).
- To analyse employees' interpretation of organisational messages, symbols and channels (research question 3).
- Evaluate communication challenges and opportunities and how this impact on corporate reputation of a transforming university (research question 4).

The study used stratified random sampling to separate teaching and non-teaching employees. Stratified sampling of employees was based on: approximately 93 teaching staff and about 229 non-teaching members as at June 2017. A total of 178 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to MMU employees in the two sections using simple random sampling to provide employee perspective on communication, identity, and image and reputation management during university transformation. The teaching is in five academic faculties and questionnaires distributed to all the five faculties. Nine questionnaires were distributed to lecturers in each faculty; in each faculty lecturers were selected using simple random method. Simple random sampling is one in which a representative group that has specific characteristics is picked (Berger, 2005). Therefore, a total of 45 questionnaires were distributed to the faculties composed of a total of 93 lecturers which results to approximately 48% of lecturers. In addition, about 133 questionnaires were distributed using simple random sampling method of 229 non-teaching staff. This represents about 58% of non-teaching staff who were targeted. The questionnaires were distributed to the faculty and non-teaching staff using simple random sampling by trained research assistants.

4.7.3 Research Assistants

The questionnaires were distributed by two research assistants that the researcher trained. The two research assistants, former undergraduate students, were to identify themselves, request participant to fill the questionnaire and request when to collect the form from the respondents. The research assistants were trained: to explain to the respondent that this was a research project, assure them of confidentiality, leave the form, and request to collect the said form the next day. Each assistant was allocated teaching and non-teaching sections, respectively, to administer and to avoid duplication and given 90 questionnaires each.

4.8 Data Analysis

4.8.1 Questionnaire Composition

The questionnaire used in the study comprised of one open-ended question on how MMU may enhance reputation management and the respondent was to provide a suitable response. Open-ended questions allow respondents to express, freely, their thoughts and attitude on the communication within MMU and how to manage reputation of a transforming university. In addition, closed-ended questions were used in which MMU respondents selected one or more of the specific categories provided by the researcher (Bailey, 1994). The questions are on a five-scale – Likert Scale continuum of Strongly Agree to Disagree. The Likert scale is used in a structured questionnaire to rate a particular statement by respondents selecting one of the options given from a continuum of: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The scale is used to either evaluate behaviour and attitude or assess if respondent agrees or disagrees with a statement (Du Plooy, 2002). The study used close-ended questions because they are quick to answer but force the respondent to choose from the given alternatives (Bailey, 2000). The questionnaire was composed of questions on biographical data; phrases on communication challenges and opportunities; statements on corporate identity and interpretation of identity messages; statements on the corporate image interpretation and measurement; statements on reputation management; and one open-ended question to explain how to improve MMU reputation.

4.8.2 Interviews

Interview data views respondents as repositories of facts, reflections and opinions about structures, policies and actions in organisations on reputation management (Silverman, 2011). Interviews were based on standardized questions to increase research reliability (Ibid). The statements were coded and analysed using NVIVO – 10 to shape the qualitative data (Creswell, 2002). The researcher sought for meanings and establish to patterns and interpretation of the words and themes obtained (Ibid). In the study, the data from in-depth interviews was gathered, recorded, coded and transcribed accordingly. The transcribed information was categorized and analysed for themes and recurring words. The material was classified and categorized by use of the stated software. In addition, the participants were classified according to their profession and status in the organisation so as to get their perception on communication, culture, identity, image, and reputation management during transformation. The information was coded using Creswell's process of coding so as to identify patterns, classifications, themes and categories in the material (Creswell,

2007). Apart from undertaking interview analysis, the study reviewed and analysed documents as discussed in the next section.

4.8.3 Documents Review and Analysis

This study carried out document analysis to evaluate MMU communication strategies and policies, visual symbols and artefacts and their impact on reputation management. Document review borrows some aspects of content analysis which is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Weber, 1990). The researcher analysed and set categories of words observed on the selected documents, recorded and counted (Bailey, 1994). The study utilized discourse and interpretive analysis which examines meaning through text and how messages are encoded by the audience (Johnson, 1984). It is important to note that observations, questionnaires and documents all seek for similarities where they exist as well as to identify diversity and variation of a phenomenon (Ibid).

4.8.3.1 Document Analysis Guides

The researcher collected data from the following documents to interrogate university reputation management. The documents, in some cases, will be evaluated from the previous periods as well as the current period, for example, the strategic plan.

Table 2: MMU Strategic Plans as Part of Transformation Publications

Items	MMU strategic plan 2011 – 2016	Terms used	Interpretation
Mission			
Vision			
Items	MMU Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021	Terms used	Interpretation
Mission			
Vision			

These documents are analysed for specific language, behaviours, themes and patterns. Document review is preferred in this study as the information already exists, elements of bias are minimized,

and it provides insight into persons' thoughts and actions and is useful in corroborating information (document review article).

4.8.3.2 Questionnaires

In a descriptive study, the researcher is concerned with descriptions of occurrence of phenomenon rather than correlations (Bailey, 1994). Therefore, the SPSS 17 software was used to evaluate the responses for percentages, central tendencies, mean, mode, median and standard deviation (ibid) to evaluate communication challenges and opportunities; employee interpretation of corporate identity and reputation messages; and measure the corporate image.

4.9 Pretesting

Pre-testing of the questionnaire is critical to check and correct flaws in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. The study conducted a pre-test of the questionnaires on twenty MMU staff to check readability and comprehension levels. The pre-test was conducted in MMU in the same manner as the real exercise and this group would not take part in the main study. There were minor adjustments done to the questionnaire and it was found suitable for the study.

4.10 Validity and Reliability of Data

The study used surveys because they aim to be both valid and reliable. Reliability refers to the fact that different participants being tested by the same instrument at different times should respond in the same way to the instrument (Mouton, 2002). Mouton further states that reliability is affected by measuring instrument, subjects, researchers and research context (ibid). On the other hand, validity seeks to find out if the questionnaire measured what it was intended to measure (May, 2001). The study used standardised surveys on communication, identity, image and reputation to manage reliability and validity.

4.11 Ethical Considerations

The researcher had clearance from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University ethics committee reference number H/16/ART/JMS-004 (see appendix 6), Multimedia University of Kenya (see appendix 7 and 10) and National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (see appendix 8 and 9), respectively. MMU participants were requested to read and sign the consent form before participating in the study. In addition, the researcher read part of consent form to

inform the interviewees of their voluntary participation in the study and that they were free to decline or withdraw from participation at will. In the same vein, the key informants in the in-depth interviews were requested to fill in the consent to provide for recording of the interviews. Finally, the questionnaire respondents were to read the consent area before filling, and the research assistants informed the respondents that their responses were strictly for achieving the objectives of the study. The questionnaires were confidential and no names were to be put in the documents.

4.12 Summary

This chapter has discussed the mixed method research approach by outlining the design and methodology used in the study. The study used a case study in which survey and document analysis was carried out in order to meet the objectives of study. The sample size and sampling procedure were discussed and the data collection and data analysis clearly outlined. The pretesting of instruments and ethical considerations have been described. The next chapter will deal with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings from the self-administered questionnaires, in-depth interviews and document reviews.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to establish how MMU communicated with its employees the corporate identity, image and reputation and where it fell short of this strategic institutional objective during a period of rapid transformation. Thus, this chapter presents the analysis of the research findings which were collected through a mixed method research approach using self-administered questionnaires to employees, in-depth interviews with management and a content analysis of selected MMU publications. The sample size of 243 which comprised of 225 respondents who were stratified from a simple random selection and 18 respondents purposely selected. Summarised quantitative data was presented in the form of tables, pie-charts and bar graphs. Further, qualitative data was presented descriptively in form of the themes.

5.1 Respondents Overview

The sample size for the study was 243 respondents from a population of 330 MMU employees which was composed of faculty and staff. When broken down, this sample size comprised of 225 respondents for quantitative data and 18 for key informant interviews. Out of the 225 questionnaires distributed, 160 questionnaires were filled in and returned, but only 153 were duly completed; 7 were rejected due to errors. All the 18 key informant interview guides were returned. The response rate for the respondents was as follows:

Table 3: Response rate of self-administered questionnaires

	Number of Respondents
Sample Size	243
Key Informant interview guides returned	18
Number of questionnaires distributed	225
Questionnaires Returned	160
Number of questionnaires not returned	65
Number of questionnaires analysed	153
Number of questionnaires not analysed	7
Questionnaires and interview guides analysed	181(153+18)

Response rate (%)	72.4%

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 3 above shows that the response rate was 72.4% out of a sample size of 243 respondents. A response rate of 72.4% is acceptable as it surpasses the recommended 50% threshold (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

5.2 Data Analysis

The primary data in this study sought to address the following research objectives:

a. To identify the internal and external communication strategies that MMU has used to manage its corporate identity, image and reputation;

b. To analyse how management, over the last ten years, has communicated to its employees its corporate culture and corporate identity in order to manage the corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation;

c. To evaluate how employees as internal stakeholders at MMU interpret the organisation's messages, symbols, channels and artefacts and how it impacts on the corporate image;

d. To analyse how MMU manages its internal communication challenges and opportunities and how this impacts on corporate reputation.

5.2.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

This section of the study describes the demographic details of respondents. The researcher grouped the respondents into, age, gender, marital status, academic qualification and occupational categories. The demographic profile of the participants was as follows:

Table 4: Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
Between 21 - 30 years	9	6
Between 31 - 40 years	61	40
Between 41 - 50 years	65	42
Between 51 - 60 years	18	12
Total	153	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As shown above in table 4, the age class of (41 – 50) formed the highest number of participants in this study with a percentage of 42% and the age class of (21 – 30) formed the lowest number of participants in the study with 6%. This means that most employees at MMU are aged between 41 to 50 years.

Table 5: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	96	63
Male	57	37
Total	153	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

In the categorization of gender, table 5 indicates that female formed the highest number of participants in the study with 63% and males with 37%.

Table 6: Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Single	19	13
Married	130	85
Widowed	2	1
Unspecified	2	1
Total	153	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From table 6, the above, it can be noted that 85% of the MMU employees were married, 13% single, 1% widowed and 1% their marital status was unspecified.

Table 7: Education of the Respondents

Highest educational qualification	Frequency	Percent
Secondary school certificate	2	1
College/University certificate	21	14

	12	8
College/University diploma	12	8
College/University higher diploma level	5	3
Bachelor's degree	26	17
Master's degree	72	47
Doctorate	15	10
Total	153	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

In relation to the education levels, the highest education level of MMU employees was at masters degree at 47%, bachelor's degree at 17%, college/university certificate at 14%, doctorate at 10%, college/university diploma at 8%, college/university higher diploma at 3% and, secondary school certificate at 1% respectively.

Table 8: Employment Category of the Respondents

Employee category	Frequency	Percent
Academic staff	48	31
Administrative staff	105	69
Total	153	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As shown in table 8 on the employment category of the respondents, 69% were non-teaching staff and 31% were academic staff. This suggests that the non-teaching staff formed the highest number of employees at MMU.

Table 9: Working Duration of the Respondents (Period Respondents Worked at MMU)

Years Worked at MMU	Frequency	Percent
1 – 5 years	50	33
6 – 10 years	80	52
11 – 15 years	9	6
Over 15 years	14	9
Total	153	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The table 9 above, shows that 33% had worked in MMU for less than five years, 52% had worked within the age bracket of (6 – 10) years, 7% had worked within the age bracket of (11 – 15) years

and 9% had worked for over 15 years. This section focused on the profile of respondents; the next section will focus on the findings in light of the objectives of the study as stated earlier.

5.2.2 Further Presentation of Quantitative Data

5.2.2.1 Analysis of Objective 1

This objective sought to investigate the internal and external communication strategies that MMU has used to manage its corporate identity, image and reputation and this was arrived at through the frequency feedback results table as presented in the tables and figures that follow. It was operationalised using questionnaire items 7 – 15.

Table 10: Communication Challenges often Associated with an Employee's Work

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
Information from my superiors is usually accurate	11	52	24	10	3	2.43	0.923
Information from my subordinates is usually accurate	2	49	35	12	2	2.63	0.794
The university management encourages interaction among employees on the same job level	6	37	27	21	10	2.92	1.097
The university leadership emphasizes and engages in communication with employees	7	35	29	20	10	2.9	1.105
The university leadership motivates and inspires employees	4	25	25	28	18	3.32	1.151
The university management constantly communicates any major changes taking place	11	35	27	16	12	2.84	1.176
Overall						2.84	1.041

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Key SA= Strongly Agree (1), A= Agree (2), N= Neutral (3), D= Disagree (4), SD= Strongly Disagree (SD), Std Dev= Standard Deviation

The findings shown in table 10 above on communication challenges and opportunities established that the respondents agreed to a great extent that information from superiors is usually accurate as shown by a mean of 2.43. The respondents also agreed to a great extent that information from subordinates is usually accurate, as shown by a mean of 2.63. The respondents agreed to a great extent that the university management encourages interaction among employees on the same job level as shown by a mean of 2.92. also, the respondents to a great extent agreed that the university leadership emphasizes and engages in communication with employees, as shown by a mean of 2.9 and that the university management constantly communicates any major changes taking place, as shown by a mean of 2.84. The respondents indicated neutrality on the university leadership motivates and inspires employees, as shown by a mean of 3.32.

Table 11: Hours Per Day (of eight hours) Spent Communicating Using Different Medium

Method	Less than 1 hr	1 – 2 hrs	3 – 4 hrs	5 – 6 hrs	Over 6 hrs
Written memo	60	18	12	5	2
Face–to-face	26	24	20	16	13
Telephone	50	18	16	9	7
GroupWise	57	19	12	6	5
Meeting	35	27	20	9	6
Other	42	17	10	7	5

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From table 11 above, it is noted that 60% of respondents use less than one hour a day communicating through written memo while 50% communicate through telephone. Also, 57% of respondents use less than one hour to communicate through 'GroupWise' and 42% use less than one hour to communicate through other (unspecified) channels. It is noted that 35% use less than one hour to communicate through meetings. It is, further, noted that 26% use less than one hour to communicate through face-to-face.

Table 12: Through which channel does management communicate changes within organisation?

Channel	Frequency	Percent
Written memo	124	81
Face- to-Face	49	32
Telephone	46	30.1
Intranet (GroupWise)	99	64.7
Meeting	67	43.8
Mass Media	37	24.2
Other (specify)	18	11.8

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the above frequency distribution table 12, it can be noted that MMU management frequently uses written memos to communicate changes internally at 81% followed by intranet at 64.7% and the others as indicated in the table. Email was specified as the other channel used by management to communicate changes at 11.8%.

Table 13: Which, in your opinion, are the most preferred channels of communication for MMU employees?

Channel	Frequency	Percent
Personal visits by MMU staff	64	42
Contact through phone	102	67
Exhibitions	30	20
Seminars	45	29
University Events	52	34
Brochures	37	24
Media Advertisements	40	26
Social Media	49	32
Other, specify	12	8

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The Table 13 on preferred channels for internal communication at MMU shows that: contact through telephone was the most preferred at 67%, followed by personal visits by MMU staff at 42%, university events at 34%, social media at 32%, seminars at 29%, media advertisements at 26%, brochures at 24% and exhibitions at 20% respectively. Other channels which were specified

in the questionnaire were emails, meetings, 'GroupWise' and notice board had the least percentage of 8%.

5.2.2.2 Analysis of Objective 2, 3 and 4

This section addresses research objective two which analyses how management, over the last ten years, has communicated its corporate culture and corporate identity to its employees in order to manage the corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation. The section, furthermore, analyses objective three which evaluates how employees as internal stakeholders at MMU interpret the organisation's messages, symbols, channels and artefacts and how it impacts on the corporate image and objective four which analyses how MMU manages its internal communication challenges and opportunities and how this impacts on corporate reputation. This was arrived at through frequency feedback results tables as presented in the tables and figures that follow. It was operationalised using questionnaire items 16 – 60.

Table 14: How would you describe the institution before it became a university compared to after it became a university?

Statement	After becoming MMU (%)	Before becoming MMU (%)
An organisation that is a personal place like an extended family	63	29
An organisation that is very dynamic and entrepreneurial where people are willing to stick their neck out and take risks	62	30
An organisation that is formal and has structures in which procedures generally govern what people do	55	37
An organisation that is production oriented where major concern is with getting the job done, people are not personally involved	51	41
I am not sure	3	4

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The above table 14 indicates a notable transformation of MMU from a KCCT to a fully-fledged university. Twenty-nine (29%) of respondents stated that the organisation was like an extended family before becoming a university, while 63% stated that MMU had transformed to be a more

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personal place like an extended family; 30% of respondents stated that the organisation was dynamic before becoming a university, while 62% indicate that to some extend MMU as an organisation has grown to be very dynamic and entrepreneurial, where people are willing to stick out their neck and take risks. Thirty-seven (37%) stated that prior to becoming a university, the organisation was formal and had structures in which procedures generally governed, while 55% indicated that MMU as an organisation has grown formally and has structures in which procedures generally govern what people do. Forty-one (41%) indicated that it is production oriented while 51% indicated that MMU was an organisation that has evolved in its production orientation because its major concerns are with getting the job done, where people are not personally involved.

Table 15: How would you describe MMU's way of doing things at the moment?

Status	Frequency	Percent
Result oriented	90	59
Work oriented	32	21
One organisation	86	56
Separate divisions	41	27
Innovative	83	54
Traditional	46	30
Entrepreneurial	79	52
Bureaucratic	45	29
Motivated	80	52
Passive	44	29
Fast	71	46
Slow	45	29
Focus on customer	74	48
Focus on internal affairs	34	22

Source: Field survey, 2017

From the highest frequencies in above frequency distribution table 15, it can be noted that MMU seems as a result-oriented organisation at 59%, an innovative organisation at 54%, and an entrepreneurial and motivated organisation at 52% each. Further, within the description parameters, MMU scored the least in terms of work orientation at 21% which is an indication that the work ethic is a challenge. The score on internal affairs was 22% which is an indication that respondents perceived management as focused and give external publics priority over employee concerns.

Table 16: State whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the option that reflects your feeling

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
The vision of MMU is important to me	31	2	20	4	3	2.05	1
The mission of MMU is important to me	27	48	20	5	1	2.05	0.8
Management encourages employees to focus on goals and objectives to be achieved	15	38	30	11	8	2.6	1.1
Management encourages productivity, creativity and development initiatives	12	31	25	20	13	2.91	1.2
Management encourages employees to be involved in decision making	10	18	31	23	18	3.21	1.2
Management encourages employees to be responsible for their own quality of work	10	40	24	17	9	2.75	1.1
The corporate logo is appropriately placed in university stationery	29	39	19	9	3	2.17	1.1
MMU's corporate values impact on corporate identity	14	39	27	15	6	2.6	1.1

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Key SA= Strongly Agree (1), A= Agree (2), N= Neutral (3), D= Disagree (4), SD= Strongly Disagree (SD), Std Dev= Standard Deviation

Table 16 above indicates the feelings of the respondents on MMU's corporate identity and culture. It can be noted that the respondents agreed that the MMU vision and mission are important to them, as shown by a mean of 2.05. Furthermore, the respondents agreed that management encourages employees to focus on goals and objectives to be achieved, and that MMU's corporate values impact on corporate identity, both are indicated by a mean of 2.6 respectively. The respondents agreed that management encourages productivity, creativity and development initiatives, as shown by a mean of 2.91. The respondents agreed that management encourages employees to be responsible for their own quality of work, as shown by a mean of 2.75 and that the corporate logo is appropriately placed in university stationery, as shown by a mean of 2.17. On management encourages employees to be involved in decision making, the respondents showed neutrality, as indicated by a mean of 3.21.

Table 17: I am aware of that my actions impact on MMU's image

Status	Frequency	Percent
Yes	129	84
No	24	16
Total	153	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The table 17 above, indicated that 84% of the respondents indicated that they were aware of how their actions impact on MMU's image while 16% indicated that they were not aware.

Table 18: I see my role contributing to the process of building the image of MMU

Statement	Frequency	Percent
I can influence the process	14	9
I cannot influence the process	93	61
I do not want to influence the process	30	20
I cannot say	16	10
Total	153	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 18 above on the process of building image, 61% of the respondents indicated that they cannot influence the process of building the image of MMU. Another 20% of the respondents indicated that they do not want to influence the process and 10% of the respondents indicated that they cannot say anything in relation with the process. Lastly, 9% of the respondents indicated that they can influence the process.

Table 19: I see my role contributing to the process of building the image of MMU

Who do you think is responsible for building and maintaining the image of MMU?

	Frequency	Percent
All employees	137	90
Top management	64	42
Marketing team	53	35
All persons in the front office/reception areas	48	31

Corporate communication dept	44	29
Others, who?	23	15

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 19 above on building and maintaining image shows that 90% of the respondents indicated that all employees are responsible for the building and maintaining the image of MMU. Another 42% of the respondents believed that it is the responsibility of the top management while 35% of the respondents noted that it is the duty of the marketing team. Also, 31% of the respondents indicated that it is the responsibility of all the persons in the front office area while 29% of the respondents believed it is the responsibility of the corporate department. Lastly, 15% of the respondents specified that the customer/student and supplier had the responsibility of building and maintaining the image of MMU.

Table 20: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the option that reflects your feeling

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
The current top management have a strong sense of the institution's history	11	24	24	23	18	3.1	1.264
The employees are knowledgeable about MMU's history and traditions	9	34	33	18	7	2.8	1.044
MMU has leaders who are visible and accessible	5	25	28	24	18	3.2	1.164
The university has a comprehensive integrated marketing communication strategy that employs appropriate media	5	22	29	27	17	3.3	1.139

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Key SA= Strongly Agree (1), A= Agree (2), N= Neutral (3), D= Disagree (4), SD= Strongly Disagree (SD), Std Dev= Standard Deviation

The figures in table 20 above, indicate that, merely, 35% of respondents agreed that current top management had a strong sense of institutions history while 43% agreed that the employees were knowledgeable about MMU's history and traditions. Furthermore, 24% of respondents indicated neutrality on the statement that the current top management has a strong sense of the institution's history. In addition, 28% of respondents indicated neutrality on the statement that MMU had

leaders who are visible and accessible and 29% indicated neutrality on the statement that the university had a comprehensive integrated marketing communication strategy that employs appropriate media.

Table 21: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the option that reflects your feeling

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
MMU is a socially responsible organisation	10	37	32	14	7	2.7	1.059
MMU contributes actively and voluntarily to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the society	7	33	34	16	10	2.9	1.079
MMU has high-quality graduates who meet market needs	22	58	13	5	3	2.1	0.878
MMU relates well with parents/sponsors	12	42	29	6	11	2.6	1.13
MMU is a customer-oriented institution	15	38	27	14	5	2.6	1.075
This institution treats students courteously, communicates with them and takes care of their safety and health	8	46	26	16	5	2.6	0.995
MMU generates positive feelings in its stakeholders	7	32	40	14	8	2.8	1.019
This university generates respect, admiration esteem and confidence from the students	10	35	34	17	4	2.7	0.996
MMU is an institution with good and innovative leadership	11	25	30	21	13	3	1.19
MMU is an ethical organisation	10	39	27	11	13	2.8	1.167
MMU has strong values, obeys the laws, is transparent and respects stakeholders	10	37	28	12	14	2.8	1.189
This institution supports good causes that benefit society	10	40	32	9	9	2.7	1.079

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Key SA= Strongly Agree (1), A= Agree (2), N= Neutral (3), D= Disagree (4), SD= Strongly Disagree (SD), Std Dev= Standard Deviation

As indicated in table 21 above on corporate reputation, the respondents agreed that MMU has high-quality graduates who meet market needs, as shown by a mean of 2.1. The respondents also agreed that MMU relates well with parents/sponsors and that MMU is a customer-oriented institution,

that this institution treats students courteously, communicates with them and takes care of their safety and health, as shown by a mean of 2.6 for each of these. Moreover, respondents agreed that MMU is a socially responsible organisation, that this university generates respect, admiration esteem and confidence from the students. The respondents indicated that the institution supports good causes that benefit society, as shown by a mean of 2.7 respectively. In addition, the respondents agreed that MMU generates positive feelings in its stakeholders. The respondents indicated that MMU is an ethical organisation and that MMU has strong values, obeys the laws, is transparent and respects stakeholders, as shown by a mean of 2.8 respectively. The respondents indicated that MMU contributes actively and voluntarily to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the society, as shown by a mean of 2.9. On MMU as an institution with good and innovative leadership, the respondents indicated neutrality, as shown by a mean of 3.

Table 22: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on employee perception by circling the option that reflects your feeling

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
The morale of MMU staff is good/high	5	28	22	0	16	3.26	1.165
The university retains talented staff and faculty	5	24	25	1	15	3.28	1.129
The management is responsive to staff complaints	6	18	31	0	15	3.29	1.108
The management is fair and just in dealing with students	10	33	29	8	10	2.84	1.133

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Key SA= Strongly Agree (1), A= Agree (2), N= Neutral (3), D= Disagree (4), SD= Strongly Disagree (SD), Std Dev= Standard Deviation

From table 22 above, the findings on corporate reputation indicate that respondents agreed that the management is fair and just in dealing with students, as shown by a mean of 2.84. The respondents indicated neutrality on the statement that the morale of MMU staff is good/high, as shown by a mean of 3.26. The respondents indicated that the university retains talented staff and faculty, as

shown by a mean of 3.28. The respondents indicated that the management is responsive to staff complaints, as indicated by a mean of 3.29.

Table 23: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on employee conflict by circling the option that reflects your feeling. Conflict is …

Conflict is …	Agree	Disagree
Controlled by intervention of higher authorities and often fostered by them to maintain their own power	38	62
Suppressed by reference to rules, procedures and definitions of responsibility	39	61
Resolved through full discussion of the merits of the work issues involved	30	71
Resolved by open and deep discussion of personal needs and values involved	27	73

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Key SA= Strongly Agree (1), A= Agree (2), N= Neutral (3), D= Disagree (4), SD= Strongly Disagree (SD), Std Dev= Standard Deviation

Table 23 above on conflict management indicates that 62% disagreed that conflict is controlled by the intervention of higher authorities and is fostered to maintain power. Also, 61% disagreed that conflict is suppressed by reference to rules, procedures, and definitions of responsibility while 71% of respondents disagreed that conflict is resolved through discussions of the merits of work. Lastly, 73% stated that conflict is resolved by an open and deep discussion of personal needs and values.

Table 24: State whether you would personally recommend other people to work at MMU

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	77	50
No	43	28
Not Sure	33	22
Total	153	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As seen from table 24 above, 50% of the respondents noted that they would personally recommend other people to work at MMU. Another 28% of the respondents indicated they would not recommend other people to work at MMU and 22% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure.

5.2.2.3 How can MMU enhance its corporate reputation? Please explain

This was an open-ended question to indicate ways of enhancing reputation. Forty-two (39%) of respondents indicated that MMU can enhance its corporate reputation by motivating, involving, training employees, having qualified employees and addressing employee complaints and paying part-time allowances. Twenty (16%) of the respondents indicated that reputation can be enhanced through publicity and a strong corporate communication section for advertising and marketing activities. Twenty-six (21%) of respondents indicated that corporate reputation may be enhanced through stakeholder involvement in decision making, corporate social responsibility, and relationship building. Nine (7%) of respondents indicated that reputation may be enhanced through communication and transparency. Thirteen (10%) of respondents stated that reputation may be enhanced through a change in organisation systems by stopping discrimination, improving appointment process and cohesion. Nine (7%) of respondents stated that corporate reputation may be enhanced through research, development, branding, curriculum and quality graduates.

5.2.2.4 Significant Change, Correlation Analysis and Regression Analysis

Table 25: Significant Change

One-Sample Test

				Test Value = 0		
					96.5% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
An organisation that is a personal place like an extended family	32.686	142	0.000	1.33	1.25	1.41
An organisation that is very dynamic and entrepreneurial where people are willing to stick their neck out and take risks	32.578	141	0.000	1.34	1.26	1.42
An organisation that is formal and has structures in which procedures generally govern what people do	33.159	141	0.000	1.42	1.33	1.5
An organisation that is production oriented where major concern is with getting the job done, people are not personally involved	33.798	141	0.000	1.46	1.37	1.54

Source: Field Survey, 2017

P-value<0.05 implies that there was a significant change before and after. The parameters changed to what is listed by the statements after the MMU becoming a university.

Table 26: Correlation Analysis

		Corporate Reputation and Employee Interpretation	Communication Challenges and Opportunities	Corporate Identity and Employee Interpretation of Identity Messages	The Corporate Image Interpretation and Measurement
Communication Challenges and Opportunities	Pearson Correlation	.588**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000			
Corporate Identity and Employee Interpretation of Identity Messages	Pearson Correlation	.658**	.542**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		
The Corporate Image Interpretation and Measurement	Pearson Correlation	.650**	.648**	.595**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	153	153	152	153
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)._					

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the correlation matrix, it can be noted that all variables are positive and statistically significant. The perceived communication challenges and opportunities positively affect the corporate reputation and employee interpretation (r=.588, p<0.05). Corporate identity and employee interpretation of identity messages also positively affects the corporate reputation and employee interpretation (r=.658, p<0.05). Furthermore, the corporate image interpretation and measurement also positively affects the corporate reputation and employee interpretation (r=.650, p<0.05). This implies that corporate reputation as interpreted by the employees is a function of the

perception of communication challenges and opportunities, corporate identity and how it is interpreted by the employee and the corporate image.

Table 27: Regression Analysis

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.746a	0.556	1	1

Source: Field Survey, 2017

a. Predictors: (Constant), The Corporate Image Interpretation and Measurement, Corporate Identity and Employee Interpretation of Identity Messages, Communication Challenges and Opportunities

R2 (coefficient of determination) of 0.556 implies that perceived communication challenges and opportunities, corporate identity and the corporate image combined are responsible for 55.6% of MMU corporate reputation. Positive R (coefficient of correlation) implies that improving perceived communication challenges and opportunities, corporate identity and the corporate image will improve corporate reputation.

Table 28: ANOVAa

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	49.224	3	16	61.829	.000a
Residual	39.276	148	0		
Total	88.499	151			

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 29: Coefficientsa

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.507	0.179		2.84	0.005
Communication Challenges and Opportunities	0.187	0.075	0.186	2.495	0.014
Corporate Identity and Employee Interpretation of Identity Messages	0.386	0.073	0.375	5.319	0.000
The Corporate Image Interpretation and Measurement	0.256	0.065	0.308	3.957	0.000

Source: Field Survey, 2017

a. Dependent Variable: Corporate Reputation and Employee Interpretation

These coefficients could be used to develop a statistical model for predicting corporate reputation at MMU by assessing the levels of perceived communication challenges and opportunities, corporate identity and employee interpretation of identity messages, and the corporate image interpretation and measurement using a scale of 1-5.

$$Y_s = 0.507 + 0.187X_1 + 0.386X_2 + 0.256X_3 + e$$

Where Ys is corporate reputation (the prediction variable), X_n is predictor variables which include perceived communication challenges and opportunities, corporate identity and employee interpretation of identity messages and the corporate image interpretation and measurement respectively, e is the error term.

5.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

5.3.1 MMU Management Interviews

This qualitative section of the study sought to identify the internal and external communication strategies that MMU has used to manage its corporate identity, image, and reputation. The section begins by explaining the profile of the interviewees.

5.3.1.1 Position of Interviewees in the Organisation

Purposive sampling was used to select and interview a total of 23 MMU employees of various cadres. One senior manager, the Registrar Academic was interviewed; the managers of four directorates, namely, ICT, Postgraduate studies, Gender, quality assurance and CBD campus were interviewed; Management includes Deans of students and Mechanical Engineering Faculty; Mid-level Management includes corporate affairs, ICT Museum; and two corporate affairs officers.

5.3.1.2 Responsibilities of the Interviewee

The management responsibilities outlined by the interviewees were as follows: 15 had academic-related responsibilities of coordination of academic programmes, student welfare and student counselling, faculty management, lecturing, and research. Four had administrative duties and were responsible for infrastructure and IT support, staff training and policy development and the oversight role of ensuring the adherence to procedures, administrative, academic document preparations, and strategic plan implementation respectively. In addition, the four indicated that their responsibilities included corporate marketing and brand management as well as social media and website management respectively.

5.3.2 Management Communication of Corporate Identity and Culture

This question addresses research objective one which was to identify the internal and external communication strategies that MMU used to manage its corporate identity, image and reputation.

5.3.2.1 Which prior experience did you have of institutional brand communication?

Eleven interviewees indicated that they had previous experience in institutional brand communication while 7 had no experience in institutional brand communication.

In regard to how they managed the institutional brand communication, 6 indicated that institutional brand communication management was about creating relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

Interviewee 17 stated,
"as a public relations manager at ... bank of Kenya, where we did a lot of brand communication with our various stakeholders... My responsibility was to ensure that the institution has a specific brand in terms of product, creating a relationship with stakeholders in terms of having a uniform way viewed by both internal stakeholders and external stakeholders. So that when somebody talks about the institution, it is very clear in their mind what this institution stands for."

Another three indicated that institutional brand communication management involved creating long term perception of the organisation while one stated it was intended to create a common view of the organisation through corporate culture.

5.3.3 How were you trained to communicate MMU's brand at various stages of transformation?

There were varied responses as to how MMU trained the interviewees on brand communication at various stages of organisational transformation. Four of the interviewees stated that they had received training while 13 stated that they had not been trained on how to communicate the brand during the various stages of transformation.

Interviewee 17 stated,
"I did not get any training... Maybe because I was a lecturer. But there was no training to help us know what it meant to transform from KTTC to Multimedia. The only thing we were advised, was the change of structure of training from the college to University. There were structures that came in, in terms of administrative work, bureaucracy, policies..."

Interviewee 17 further stated,
"I think there was a meeting for all the staff. Where the explanation was given. It was communicated that from now on we are not KTTC, we are now Multimedia University College then, under JKUAT... I think from constituent college to university, there was no meeting that involved all the staff. I think there were meetings at the management level. Management were the ones who now communicated to their staff. I can't remember having a school meeting. Because at that level they were training the university council. So the university council was an additional structure that came in MMU. I think the university council was introduced to the staff, especially the chairman to do an introduction to the staff, to know that this is now your employer."

5.3.4 Creation of awareness of university strategic elements

This section answers objective 3 that sought to evaluate how employees as internal stakeholders at MMU interpret the organisation's messages, symbols, channels and artifacts and how it impacts

on the corporate image. This question sought the ways that interviewees used to create awareness of MMU's symbols which included the logo, artefacts, and corporate colours. Six interviewees indicated that they created awareness to key stakeholders through the use of technology or mediated communication which included the use of email, group-wise, intranet, social media, and website.

Interviewee 11 stated,
"…the new template, letterhead, and logo were circulated through 'GroupWise'."

Six interviewees indicated that they created awareness of university symbols using written communication through internal memos and meetings on the use of the logo, maze and university colours to key stakeholders.

Interviewee 12 stated,
"the logo changed during the transition from Constituent College to a fully chartered University. It even got an emblem, though it is not used much. The communication of this change was done through our internal memo specifically for staff. The hope was that as the students and staff interacted, the news would spread primarily through email and 'GroupWise'. "

On the contrary, one stated that there was no communication to employees during the change of artefacts

Interviewee 11 stated,
"the change of artifacts was not communicated"

5.3.4.1 Creation of awareness of vision and mission among employees
The question sought to find ways used to create awareness of MMU's mission and vision among employees. Nineteen interviewees indicated various ways they used to create awareness to employees of MMU's mission and vision. Four interviewees indicated that they create awareness through or during instruction sessions in workshops /seminars or class. For example, of the four, one stated that they did not directly create awareness of vision and mission to employees

Interviewee 17 stated,
"I do not think I have been actively involved in communicating the MMU mission and vision, because as a lecturer. I only share that with students when I am teaching, I look at it to see how applicable it is in teaching"

One of the ways of creating awareness of vision and mission to employees was through interactive sessions such as meetings. Two interviewees stated that they create awareness at quarterly faculty meetings while one interviewee stated that the creation of awareness is done at monthly meetings and quality management meetings, respectively. For example,

Interviewee 4 stated,
"I share the mission and strategic plan with staff in the department during meetings ... and employees must operate within the mission, vision and core values of the university to customers"

Interviewee 6 stated
"I sensitized and created awareness to university publics and stakeholders when university college started in 2007"

Interviewee 8 stated,
"... that during management meetings in which heads of department attend, reference was made to mission, vision, strategic plan and university statues"

The structure of departmental meetings varied, while some management officers hold a departmental meeting for all sections, some hold it at individual sections where the vision and mission are communicated in compliance with a manual.

Interviewee 16 stated,
"... I have separate meetings for printing and laundry. And we talk about the mission and vision because as per the ISO standard, there is a book given to you, which we refer to as the MMU bible or manual"

A second way that was indicated in the creation of awareness was through employee induction programmes. Three interviewees stated that the creation of awareness of mission and vision to employees was done during employee induction, job evaluation, and competitive recruitment process and as part of compliance.

Interviewee 9 stated,
"we create awareness of vision and mission during employee induction ... during monthly meeting to discuss departmental concerns in which reference is made to mission, vision and strategic plan... the ISO certification exercise compliance demands staff to know mission and vision"

Interviewee 10 stated,
"as part of job evaluation and quality management as per ISO requirements is to find out whether employees know and comply with mission and vision"

Another way indicated to create awareness was through written communication. Two interviewees stated that vision and mission were communicated through internal memos and email though the message may not have reached all as another interviewee stated that employees were using the old strategic elements. One interviewee stated that employees were using the old mission and vision in written communication:

Interview 1 stated,
"…employees were writing memo using the old letterhead and mission statement, slogan and vision"

Interviewee 11 stated,
"the change of vision, mission and values was done through email, GroupWise, and memos through departments"

The seems to be a gap in internal communication as one interviewee stated of a plan to introduce intranet which is interactive contrary to the email which is asymmetrical.

Interviewee 12 stated,
"... the plan is to introduce intranet because ... it's flexible when it comes to what to communicate ... joyful things that happen to our staff go unnoticed due to the official nature of messages received from management..."

Interviewee 12 noted,
"... the intranet will help when having events, whereby you can post where the event will take place if it's for staff in the specific field only... "

Apart from written communication, one interviewee stated that the creation of awareness was through public placement and public display of the strategic elements.

Interviewee 12 stated,
"we have placed the information about (mission and vision) the campus at strategic locations including the entrance of the building and banners at the premise ... we have bought advertising spots on the street lines along the street near the (CBD) campus"

There were indications that there had been no creation of awareness about the vision and mission of the transforming institution.

Interviewee 2 stated,
"there was no deliberate attempt to create awareness on mission and vision to employees and no formal manual for staff orientation"

On the contrary, one interviewee stated that the creation of vision and mission had been consultative and inclusive; Interviewee 5 stated,

"… the mission and vision was created in Nakuru through a consultative process of staff and professional bodies"

5.3.4.2 How does management create awareness of mission and vision among students?

This question responds in part to the research objective one on communication strategies and stakeholder management. Eleven interviewees stated that they create awareness of mission and vision to students through various approaches. For example, 3 (27%) of interviewees stated that they create awareness, using a participative approach, during student involvement with professional bodies through internship and industry interaction, stakeholder forums during curriculum review and development.

Interviewee 7 stated,
"we send students to these stakeholders and create involvement to live the MMU mission and vision... students on internship propagate mission and vision in the market place"

A second way of communicating vision and mission to students was at the interpersonal level through employee and student interaction during leadership training, student leadership orientation and new student orientation.

Interviewee 9 stated,
"… student leadership training was held to create awareness of mission and vision for all leaders in clubs and student council ... we have a direct working relationship with the student council in which we make reference to vision and mission"

Interviewee 9 stated further noted that,
" there was a university template and each club's constitution had the mission and vision"

One interviewee stated that the creation of awareness of the mission and vision to students was communicated through and during university activities such as clubs and sports activities.

Interviewee 9 stated that,
"University management involves students in activities that inform them on the dangers of drug and substance abuse as well as work with the related organisations. This enables the students to get involved in institutions that deal with reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases such as hospitals"

A third way to create awareness was through benchmarking and publicity activities with other institutions. Three interviewees stated that creation of awareness was through interaction during benchmarking with local and international universities, during workshops and by encouraging students to take a professional examination set by these professional bodies.

Interviewee 7 stated,
"we create awareness through student involvement by inviting participants in workshops and through innovations during innovation week to showcase the talent of students and invite industry players to see their work... the external publics come as judges, present gifts/awards and talk to students about patents"

Interviewee 2 stated,
"we encourage students to do professional courses such as KASNEB in finance and accounting…"

5.3.4.3 How does management create awareness of mission and vision among professional bodies?

Apart from students, the creation of awareness stakeholders such as professional bodies is through relationship building. Three interviewees stated that the creation of awareness of mission and vision to stakeholders was undertaken through relationship building at stakeholder forums and when publishing for research.

Interviewee 3 stated,
"we talk of MMU at telecommunication forums to telecommunication experts (Alumni) ... on where we are coming from and where we are going"

Interviewee 5 stated,
"… we involve them in open day stakeholder meetings... for example, engineering regulatory body...

Interviewee 10 stated,
"… we carry out extensive research and publish findings within academic forums, for example, EACO (East Africa Communication Organisation), CTO (Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation) as well as inter-university forums ... in all the publications, the introduction always involves the mission and vision of the university."
Another way to create awareness to professional bodies is through compliance with regulatory government institutions; Interview 6 stated,

"… we work with the following central government departments: commission for gender, national council for persons with disability, national integration and cohesion commission..."

Another way to create awareness was through affiliation to professional bodies. For example,

Interviewee 17 stated,
"I have shared it with the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK), where I am actively involved. I normally, let the members know, anytime we have a members' meeting as to who we are and what we stand for and how we can cooperate and partner with members because AMWIK draws its members from different organisations..."

Apart from students and professional bodies, parents and service providers were seen as important

stakeholders. Interviewee 13 stated,

"… parents are some of our external stakeholders as well as suppliers for example, we have cleaning services, which we outsource ... the people in the neighbouring offices and estates may use the services... they are made aware of our mission and vision because of the manner in which we have displayed it ..."

5.3.5 How do you orient new employees to fit into the way things are done here?

The section sought to analyse how management, over the last ten years, has communicated to its

employees its corporate culture and corporate identity in order to manage the corporate image in

the face of the institution's complexity and transformation. The section begins by interrogating

how the mission and vision are communicated to new employees at the departmental level as part

of corporate culture and identity management during university transformation.

One of the ways used to communicate corporate culture and identity was through interactive and

interpersonal one-on-one sessions between the manager and staff.

Interview 2 stated,
"I talk to the employees about the rules and regulations of the department but we do not have a formal manual"

Interviewee 3 stated,
"I talk to new employees tell them of mission and vision and history and current affairs and upcoming of MMU"

Interviewee 5 stated,
"… there is general orientation as well as an individual orientation which includes a culture of truthfulness, work ethics, trust and inculcate joy. All must understand the importance of joy. They come into the organisation to know that they do not change bosses but learn to work with them so as to benefit the organisation … On joining the organisation, they must eradicate 'high school' and 'university-student mentality' and work as a team and be consultative. Know that they are working for the organisation rather than the individual"

On the contrary, one interviewee stated that apart from holding a conversation with the new employee, they provide a quality manual, a written document to communicate corporate culture and identity. Interviewee 4 stated,

"I welcome them and take them through a quality manual to make them understand their role so as to give quality service to customers; I give them a university manual to inform them to give their best... I invite senior officers in legal finance and gender to articulate key university issues."

On the contrary, another interviewee stated that there was no manual but rather enable staff personal interaction and internal training to fit in with the corporate identity, as well as accommodate diverse professional groups into the department. Interview 6 stated,

"Person-to-person induction to induct them on what we do in the department as there is no formal induction process once one reports. The departmental employees are trained to understand the functions since there is no formal induction. The employees come from diverse professional backgrounds such as psychology/nursing but understand what we do in gender and disability."

One interviewee stated that one way to communicate corporate culture and identity is through interactions at departmental level in which the supervisor states departmental expectations. Interaction at departmental level is important as there is skills diversity and different expectations. Interviewee 16 stated,

"… we tell the person our goals and what the expectations are, then we take the person round the department and explain what each equipment does … We caution them of places not to go or touch dangerous equipment, and let them know if they do not know how to use a gadget, they should not use it and just stay in their area. But I wish every employee would get to know what we do because, for example, I am an economist, I deal with finances but since coming to my department, I have learned how to do things within my department even procurement..."

A second way of communicating corporate culture and identity to new employees at the departmental level was through meetings, introduction to other faculty members and elaborating on written orientation programmes and procedures. Interviewee 8 stated,

"I have meetings with the new staff and introduce them to relevant staff in the faculty... orientation is an on-going continuous process of learning through heads of department."

Interviewee 3 stated,
"I talk to new employees and tell them of mission, vision, current affairs and upcoming programmes of MMU"

Interviewee 10 stated,

"We have three key diagrams that new employees interact with: the organisational structure which we show the employees so that they understand the hierarchy; we also have the electronic relationship diagram to capture data and data normalization. Lastly, the organisation visual flow to show the employees the procedure with which clients should be taken through once they express interest in the organisation."

A third way to communicate corporate culture and identity to a new employee is to standardise the orientation programme for all branches and entities. Interviewee 13 stated,

"We have new employees, we have an orientation program, which is coordinated from the main campus. Therefore the new employees are usually allowed time off on schedule to attend the orientation program at the main campus."

Corporate culture and identity are also communicated through observation. Two interviewees had an unstructured approach because orientation was an on-going process and they stated that orientation is about continuous learning and about giving time to the new employee to learn.

Interviewee 7 stated,
"… we orient new staff by giving them time to learn on aspects and sections of the ... department"

It was noted that the institution had not done well in employee orientation and every section had its own orientation approach. Interviewee 15 stated,

"There I must accept we have not done very well as an institution. As a faculty, we try when a member comes in, we will show them what is expected of them using the letters of employment. Show them their stations, make them comfortable. But as an institution, we have not done very well. In that, because we needed forums where members are inducted into what goes on in the organisation even members who are promoted need to be inducted into their new positions. That so far has not been happening. But in the faculty, we do our best… just the general and meetings we will just mention that so and so has joined us. But I will call them here, talk to them and encourage them to talk to their direct supervisor for guidance on what is expected of them. Remember people are employed one by one so you can't keep on calling meetings because so and so has come in and we need to orient them and something like that."

The diversity and complexity of the institution in creating corporate culture and identity was highlighted. Interviewee 16 stated,

"as ... member of the committee of the Occupational and Safety health committee. We work with high-risk equipment, which are not used in the same as household equipment so one cannot be allowed to use a machine without knowing how to use it."

5.3.6 Ways used to build these relations across the changing institutional status?

This question was to address communication through relationship building during the transition. It is part of research objective two which analyses how management, over the last ten years, communicated to its employees its corporate culture and corporate identity in order to manage the corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation. It also evaluates (research objective 3) how employees as internal stakeholders at MMU interpret the organisation's messages, symbols, channels and how it impacts on the corporate image.

5.3.7 How do you build positive relationships among employees?

Twelve interviewees stated that having interactive sessions and cross-function approach through meetings, arbitration, communication and interactions during projects are ways of building positive relationships among employees in various sections. Interviewee 9 stated,

Arbitration to bring staff together to talk of any pressing issues to forge harmony... Use the administrative process to address conflict if arbitration fails

Interviewee 3 stated,
"A Cross-functional approach to ICT projects to build synergy through undertaking projects together and work across sections as is the nature of ICT. Most projects are technologically related. For example, Networking and configuration of a telephone system and ERP has brought about sharing work creating trust and collaboration building strong relations. It is important to understudy and collaborate especially at the help desk."

While three stated that the use of written instruction and hierarchy in decision making would build positive relations among various sections. Three interviewees stated that positive relations are enhanced through training, professionalism, and staff welfare.

Interviewee 15 stated,
"… we live like a family. We go beyond our calls of duty in the institution. By also finding out how people are faring in their different aspects of life ... so that when someone has an issue then we come together as a faculty. Originally science was a faculty under engineering. So we formed an association called the Faculty of engineering welfare association."

Interviewees generally observed that there had been no structured and systematic communication approach to building relations across the changing institutional status. For example,

Interviewee 17 stated,
"If there can be some education or some awareness raised as to why did we have those changes and if we have the changes, what new things are we adding to MMU. Because they are still holding

up to KTTC, even 10 years ago, that we wish we were still in KTTC. That awareness can be put so that they can be brought together under one umbrella to be a subsidiary, to be given an opportunity to understand what is MMU, where is it now, what is the chief of MMU so that they can feel part of MMU."

Since there was indication that there was no structured way to build relations during the changing status, one interviewee stated that personal initiative was one approach that was used to build relations. For example, Interviewee 3 stated,

"Building relationships have not been smooth and challenging on building bridges across KCCT and MMU employees. There were KCCT and MMU camps and no bridge between. No formal way of building relations but just took personal initiative to relate with both groups. "

Another interviewee indicated that building relations was personal initiative but at the departmental level. Interview 15 stated,

"we have not done very well as an institution ... as a faculty, we talk to them..."

Interviewee 16 stated,
" ... most people realized the change when we received the charter. In fact, the only thing that really shows the change is the ISO, because now you have to change the way you do things, and you have to do them in an orderly way. Like the documents and the way you do customer service. So in terms of the working environment, nothing changed",.

The interviewees, generally, observed the importance of employee interaction and communication to enhance relations. Interviewee 3 stated,

"... in hindsight there should have been deliberate efforts to introduce new employees to old staff through communication and information.... communication through memo to introduce new employees for information... Information to communicate entry and exit of staff rather than meet the in meetings... This will build teamwork so as to mesh personalities, that is, introverts and extroverts"

Interviewee 13 further stated,
"that relationship is trust between different sections and also … between management and the staff. In my opinion, communication will play a key role because it is about understanding and perception."

One interviewee stated that relation may be enhanced by communicating the changes through strategic documents and interactive sessions through a meeting. Interviewee 3 stated,

"… a new strategic plan should be shared as at the moment, she is yet to see the strategic plan. Management should meet staff and tell them of the changes in strategy and their role in the change"

One interviewee stated that relationship-building with internal stakeholders, namely employees

Interviewee 3 stated,
"that the importance of Building relationships across changing status: Building relationships has not been smooth, it has challenging on building bridges across KCCT and MMU employees. There were KCCT and MMU camps and no bridge between. No formal way of building relations but it just took personal initiative to relate with both groups."

It was indicated that relationship building during a change may be through explicit and elaborate

orientation programme: Interviewee 7 stated,

"that there was no formal induction: there is poor communication between departments and staff relations. There is a major gap". "University management has no formal induction and staff introduction and communication. For example, a senior member of staff such as the registrar should be formally introduced on his arrival. He did not know his whereabouts of Postgraduate Office Director and I did not know him either until he introduced himself."

It was indicated that apart from the interactive sessions through meetings and induction

programmes to employees, relationship building may be through the storytelling of institutional

history. Interviewee 7 stated,

"the importance of telling ... people of the rich history as part of it has built the current status. We have a telecommunication background and now we are an ICT centre and a centre of choice as a university"

Interviewee 10 stated,
"… during induction, we use the museum to showcase the background/history of the university ... As a member of the Dean's committee, we use progress reports to show what has been happening throughout the university to key stakeholders…"

5.3.8 Building positive relations in the organisation during status change

The following were comments on how to build positive relations in the organisation during transformation:

The following stated that Employee sensitisation would build positive relations. Interviewee 5

stated,

"On joining the organisation, they must eradicate 'high school' and 'university-student mentality' and work as a team and be consultative ... minimise on antagonism by managing prejudices by avoiding ethnicity which brings separation and destroys organisation due to mistrust

Interviewee 7 stated,

"… employees should be involved and be prepared for the transformation as it can be painful and therefore information is important. Change can be painful but they should be involved to enhance ownership…"

Another set of interviewees stated that building relations would involve the sensitisation of management:

Interviewee 6 stated,
"… gender directorate carries out ... seminars and training among senior management, management and shop floor ... to sensitive staff of gender and diversity issues in the workplace"

One of interviewee stated that regulatory compliance would build relations, for example,

Interviewee 6 stated,

"MMU endeavours to comply with national cohesion and integration act, 2008 ..."

Another stated that it will be important to build internal relations to project to external stakeholders

(the corporate image). Interviewee 7 stated,

"... Linking ourselves both internally and externally. We invite departments to give views on what they think could add value especially for Nairobi International Trade Fair Preparations International Show."

Some state that relationship- building seems to focus more on the external stakeholders.

Interviewee 1 stated,
"that stakeholder communication is undertaken at linkages office – most responsibilities have been given to linkages rather than the corporate communication office... there is need to work with the linkages so as to formulate the most effective approach."

Interviewee 7 stated,
"MMU started as a telecommunication institution, thus, we looked and saw all electronic waste generated through old computers and telephones and choose to get involved to see how to dispose of through waste disposal committee .... the linkages office is working with stakeholders on e-waste be stating that ... MMU is to receive all e-waste from Kajiado county to serve as a collection center sponsored by Safaricom"

5.3.9 How can these matters be addressed to change the situation?

The interviewee agreed that there was a need to unite employees but differed in the approaches to bringing about this unity.

Three Interviewees stated that bonding sessions, a teambuilding approach would enhance unity during change. For example, Interviewee 2 stated,

"… the opportunity to manage communication challenges be, 'deliberate efforts by human resources to have formal orientation programmes to help build relationships between old and new' and 'team-building exercises within and across departments; intra-groups and inter-group development to help build relations'

Two interviewees indicated that bonding session could be during meetings and seminars where old and new employees share information; another interviewee stated interdepartmental activities such as sports and during meal times where employees share ideas. Another interviewee stated that teamwork can be managed by minimising antagonism and prejudice. Interviewee 5 stated,

"Minimize antagonism by managing prejudices by avoiding ethnicity which brings separation and destroy organisation due to mistrust"

Three interviewees indicated the importance of participative communication approach to building relations by stating,

Interviewee 1 stated,
"… there was inadequate communication in critical strategic changes and organisational implementation ... communication is a challenge ... the change should be well managed through employee silos"

Another interviewee stated that participative communication approach indicates management listening and encouraging expressiveness.

Interviewee 9 stated,
"New employees come with new culture therefore help them to fit in to minimize conflict but do not ignore the old staff to know what is going on and their role ... Listen to employees and understand their concerns ... Give them opportunities to express themselves and their struggles, especially during change process instead of just demanding output alone."

Management communication was deemed as important during the status change to reach out to employees. Interviewee 2 stated,

"… no formal management arrangement to reach employees and no formal written manual. No news of or for the new employees."

As part of communication flow, two interviewees indicated that communication be through the organisation chart where the communication flow horizontally from senate and deans meeting to the other sections of the institution. Interviewee 6 stated,

"If you want to get the train moving you have to go to the front. It is important to use Senate and Dean so that it may flow from up down which works better than bottom-up. This way information works better..."

Apart from communication flow, one interviewee stated that building positive relationships is about Management informing employees of organisational direction.

Two interviewees observed the importance of employee orientation through the human resources section. Orientation using an orientation programme. Thus, interviewee 2 stated,

"Deliberate efforts by Human Resource to have formal orientation programmes to help build relationships between old and new should be introduced"

Another stated that orientation done through written communication such as either print memo to inform employees of new employees or intranet or blog where employees can interact. Another human resource function in an effort to build relations was through retraining. Two interviewees stated that building positive relations be through identifying career gaps and retraining staff.

One interviewee recognised the importance of managing the grapevine during institutional changes Interviewee 5 stated,

"Building and learning certain virtues on relationship for example truthfulness, trust, gossip avoidance, smiling to release positive energy and confidence that people believe in them in offices increasing productivity, smiling this helps increase employee productivity and connectivity... Minimize gossip so as to dedicate time and energy for productivity due to lack of information."

One interviewee indicated the importance of corporate storytelling to build relations.

Interviewee 7 stated,
"… tell people of the rich history as part of it has built the current status. We have a telecommunication background and now we are an ICT centre and a centre of choice as a university. We should tabulate where we have come from and where we are going which would have a positive image as we are improving and getting better with time which is informed by the past."

One interviewee indicated the important role of management in building relations during organisational change. Management has a role during recruitment to build synergy.

Interviewee 17 stated,
"If management acknowledges that it's upon them to identify the right people, bring in the right people, take them through a proper orientation program and let them understand their role so that they can be part and parcel of this. The challenge we have is also the frequent change of management which can stall the process of building a strong MMU family"

Apart from management building relations through employee recruitment by exercising meritocracy, employee representation is important. Interviewee 5 stated,

"The change should be through organisational structures, staff unions as representatives to articulate concerns during change, representative representation. "

Interview 16 stated,
"the CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) is having problems because it cannot breach the gap, where employees feel they are not comfortable, and it is one of the policies that HR should consider. And you see they think the union is opposition and forget that we work together to make these workers more productive. So reputation management in terms of HR is not very good but other HoDs, other unionists, we work very well because they give us time to lead them, and we lead them together… because the union has a place in the university. But if you involve the union, there will be harmonious and industrious relations and work will go on especially for our dear students who are the major stakeholders..."

Interviewee 3 stated
"During transformation, change is expected thus staff are expected to change therefore if staff are not transformed then there will be a challenge and lead to new employee recruitment and get rid of them. Thus, they are involved as they are part and parcel of institution and input sort to be part of the transformation due to the decisions to be made to benefit them. Next, new and old employees are vessels by which the change will be actualized thus be involved."

5.3.10 How are you increasing MMU's competitive advantage in the following areas?

Two interviewees indicated doubts on how MMU could build on competitive advantage due to

financial challenges. For example, Interviewee 3 stated,

"Being a public institution, it has many financial challenges (laugh). I am not sure how we can have a competitive advantage. Maybe, need for anything extra such as grants and loans through industry linkages"

Also, another interviewee stated that competitive advantage would be a challenge due to internal

stakeholder dissatisfaction. Thus, the interviewee, who is part of the marketing team stated that,

Interviewee 7 stated,
"there is need to enhance our marketing capacity by beginning with internal staff who are our best marketers... but employees are not very positive or happy"

5.3.11 How MMU may have a Competitive Advantage:

This section seeks to analyse how MMU manages its internal communication challenges and opportunities and how this impacts on corporate reputation (research question 4). Thus, the question examines employee perception on how MMU could strategise to manage communication for competitive advantage in student enrolment, curriculum, marketing, industry collaboration and university facilities.

5.3.11.1 Student enrolment for competitive advantage

MMU may have a competitive advantage if it rides on technology in the admission application process. One interviewee indicated the importance use of technology to enhance efficiency in student enrolment for competitive advantage. Interviewee 3 stated,

"... The student should be able to process admission online without physically being at the admissions office. This will put us on global technology as a technological institution. We need to be leaders in technology through enrolment procedures and processes."

5.3.11.2 Marketing strategy for competitive advantage

Six interviewees indicated that marketing would enable MMU communicate competitive advantage. Before using publicity and collective marketing activities, internal communication would be the best marketing tool to enable MMU to have a competitive advantage.

Interviewee 2 stated,
"as a marketer, I begin with internal marketing which begins with the way management handles staff. The things we do and the way management handle facility is all marketing. For example, the admission office needs re-evaluation ... KCCT was very clean. Institution became dirtier with changes."

In addition, one interviewee stated that,

Interviewee 4 on Brochure Usage and Distribution by Staff stated:
"I go with brochures to all events to introduce academic courses when invited to participate. Make participants know that MMU is a public university and not a private one. Also, staff are encouraged to give brochures to clients, visitors and students who visit university facilities such as the Hotel or ICT Museum."

Apart from the use of internal communication, MMU infrastructure and facilities would be used to communicate competitive advantage. Two interviewees stated that Marketing through MMU facilities would enhance competitiveness. For example,

Interviewee 10 stated,
" ... In 2016, Multimedia broke the CUE record of being the only university where all of its courses were picked in the first position by students who were completing their secondary school education. This was because of their interaction with the ICT Museum when they visited Multimedia University. The museum has built trust and visibility with external parties to the extent that 25-50% come as First-year students because they have been exposed to the ICT museum..."

In addition, another interviewee stated that facilities play a role in student enrolment enhancement. For example, Interviewee 9 stated,

"Management should provide adequate student welfare services ... enhance outside of class comfort such as have student sheds on the university grounds for students to use when outdoor ... provide adequate service in the dining hall, halls of residence, classrooms ... provide financial and social support to clubs and club activities"

MMU may improve its competitive advantage through external marketing. Three interviewees highlighted the aspect of word of mouth to market programmes by internal stakeholders and the articulation of equal opportunity policy was indicated as an important way to enhance competitive advantage. Interviewee 6 stated,

".. the sale of university programmes through word of mouth to parents and peers. During the engineering programme recruitment, we encourage the recruitment of both genders.

External marketing and personal selling was emphasised by another interviewee who stated that,

Interviewee 7 stated,
"We need to enhance our marketing capacity by beginning with internal staff who are our best marketers. Staff members who are positive towards MMU is a clear plus as they are the best recommender of the courses. However, people are not very positive or happy"

In addition to word of mouth, student experience was indicated as one way to enhance student enrolment. Interviewee 8 stated,

"… we enhance the current student experience through interaction with industry through industry expert talks and interaction ... Industry internships"

Two interviewees stated that corporate social responsibility was as one way to build competitive advantage and enhance enrolment. For example, Interviewee 17 stated,

"Even in terms of making a CSR activity with schools or in admissions where we have leaders of those schools like with headmasters association, we forge a relationship and explain to them about MMU. So that when it comes to the time when the students are selecting the university they want to go to they choose MMU

One interviewee indicated the importance of a marketing plan to enhance competitive advantage. For example, Interviewee 2 stated,

"The marketing plan is critical in order to be systematic, purposeful and targeted."

In addition to a marketing plan, advertising through television, radio and print was critical. For example, Interviewee 2 stated,

"… advertising should be consistent hence, the need for a plan. Advertising should be sustained and often. It should be through radio for the wider audience even in ethnic stations to cast the net wide. Currently, universities are aggressively advertising, we should do the same"

Apart from consistent marketing, it was indicated that there is a need for aggressive marketing as well to enhance competitive advantage. Interviewee1 stated,

"MMU needs to go out there either through electronic, word of mouth and exhibition. Let us define what MMU is to internal and external publics. Most people do not know what MMU is, it is referred to as a private institution rather than a public and some as "Posta" or KCCT which is the original institution. The place is referred to as "Posta" more than MMU. If you ask for MMU, people are lost."

5.3.11.3 Curriculum Strategy for competitive advantage

Four interviewees stated that the MMU curriculum could be used to enhance competitive advantage. One interviewee stated that the relevance of curriculum and staff retraining enhances competitive advantage. There is concern that the university does not provide for free education to lecturers as part of staff welfare. For example, Interviewee 2 stated,

"… the relevance and reorganisation of the curriculum is critical... retrain lecturers to remind and enlighten them and provide them with a comfortable environment and facilities to motivate them...and ... university management should sponsor all lecturers to do doctoral programmes to build capacity. "

In addition, one stated that curriculum relevance involves the incorporation of cultural sensitivity through gender and ethnicity studies. The need for gender studies by certain groups brings to light a call for inclusion. There is recognition of transgender communities, inclusion, in academic institutions. For example, Interviewee 6 stated,

"there are three curricula being processed in the gender, disability and ethnicity to be ingrained in faculty of social sciences"

Another interviewee indicated that the curriculum incorporate instruction using technology to enhance competitive advantage. For example, Interviewee 3 stated,

"MMU being technologically inclined we need to be more than the four walls of a classroom. Have classrooms and lecture halls with equipment such as laptops, screens, video conferencing, show videos among others and use multiple media to enhance learning through technology so students can benefit by receiving instructional material through technological linkages within and without. Staff to use to instruct and students to benefit through instructional material through technological linkages"

Also, another interviewee noted that market-driven courses by emphasising technology components would enhance competitive advantage. For example, Interviewee 3 stated

"MMU has market-driven courses by emphasizing technological components. For example, Faculty of Business and Law in which students with legal and technological bias in which experts in cybersecurity, regulatory framework; Media studies with technological bias giving an edge as well as the practical aspect of it"

5.3.11.4 Industry collaboration for competitive advantage

The question sought to examine how MMU could enhance industry collaboration for competitive advantage. Two interviewees noted that MMU could participate in problem-solving ventures, for industry, through research. Interviewee 3 stated,

"MMU ... being an institution that deals in technology, media and engineering, MMU could have a research wing that solves real problems in the industry and understand the real problems/issues facing the industry. Students do projects by solving industry problems ... Industry linkages and research can be used to resolve and stimulate innovation by solving local and real issues and put information on, platform, a website to make us globally known and increase our webometrics rankings"

Apart from problem-solving, one interviewee stated that film and animation courses, being a rare gem, could collaborate with the tourism and conservation industry. Interviewee 6 stated,

" the film and animation course is a rare field in Africa ... a joint venture with KWS (Kenya Wildlife Service) to generate money for the university hotel ... visitors who visit the parks and ... come up with appropriate technology ... solar system and biogas for power supply and keep away from Kenya Power and Lighting and cooking gas..."

One interviewee indicated that the film and animation department was in undertaking a marketing venture with a financial institution. Interviewee 7 stated,

"A local commercial bank ... requested ten students on an internship from Film and Animation department to team up with its marketing team to produce animation advertisements"

5.3.11.5 Academic Staff and Staff Welfare for Competitive Advantage

Two interviewees indicated that academic staff and staff welfare could enhance competitive advantage. The interviewee stated that faculty facilitation and retraining could motivate teaching staff. Interviewee 2 stated,

"Apart from retraining, please provide a comfortable environment and facilities to motivate them, for example, give lecturers some offices and other equipment for comfort. The employees operate from their houses to a class which is unfortunate. Also, management should sponsor all lecturers to do doctoral programmes to build capacity. In addition, management should avail time, like one year, for academic staff to pursue studies."

Another interviewee stated that staff are treated equally by following staff policy as stated. Interviewee 6 stated,

"... standardise the manner in which employees are handled during difficulty such as a death in the family. Management should prepare policy for managing staff so that there is equalisation "

One interviewee stated that teaching staff have a manageable class size to enhance learning quality. For example, Interviewee 7 stated,

" ... Classes should remain small of about 50 students by growing academic staff numbers so as not to overload faculty with too many students to manage academic quality. Small classes are our niche but growing student numbers work against it."

Apart from class size, one interviewee noted the importance of a legal and policy framework on remuneration. For example,

Interviewee 6 stated,

"the ... need for policy on remuneration, faculty benefits, institutional patents and copyrights. There are bureaucratic walls so it is difficult to have conversation across departments including research and department"

5.3.11.6 University Facilities for competitive advantage

Two interviewees stated that the use of university facilities could enhance competitive advantage. For example, one interviewee indicated the need to upgrade library facilities to support academic work. Interviewee 4 stated,

".. as a young university, facilities are constrained. There is need to enhance library facilities through supporting budget to enable it to acquire more textbooks and bring in more supporting material to existing and new faculties; new faculty of social sciences by budgetary requirements

support and facilitate equipment and offices as well as support resources such as books for teaching by advocating at the management level"

On the contrary, one interviewee stated that MMU is a leader in manufacturing engineering and generates income for the university as three local universities use the facilities. Interviewee 5 stated,

"About three universities ... use our state of art equipment... in telecommunication, mechanical and manufacturing training."

One interviewee stated that the MMU hotel could be a facility to enhance competitive advantage.

Interviewee 7 stated that {MMU} Hotel be delinked from the university to market hotel and conference facilities. This is a competitive area but it has an advantage of housing five hundred and six hundred seating in conference hall which is unique but we need a marketing strategy.

5.3.11.7 Financial Performance for competitive advantage

Only one interviewee stated that financial performance could be enhanced if facilities were utilised fully.

5.3.11.8 Globalization and competitive advantage

The interviewees agreed that the university must compete among other universities in the international arena. The use of technology and research provides an opportunity for the university to have a competitive edge. Interviewee 3 referred to possible online content for public use by stating,

".. the use of the website to put appealing course content for a local and international audience; and have a repository where published papers by staff can be put making us known…"

5.3.12 Decision-making process during institutional transformation

The interviewees recognised the importance of including internal stakeholders in decision making during institutional transformation. as a critical component in decision
Interviewee 4 stated,
"Yes, employees are key stakeholders, a critical component in transformation or change for the better. For example, involvement during the strategic planning process help to map out a road map for the institution and where we want to be in the next five years. Employees must be part and parcel of development. Also, employee participation during vision, mission and objective development is critical, especially during evaluation and performance."

Interviewee 6 stated,

"need to reason together to forge the organisation ahead and the need for communication is a platform which we can use to work… it is important to have university culture through the leadership. Management to come up with a culture, song and philosophy headed by corporate communication, management and council

Interviewee 7 stated,
"It is very, very important to involve employees. Because your first public is your employee. Thus, as Branson of Virgin Atlantic, states, if you satisfy your internal publics, you are halfway done with your marketing ..." and MMU is a great institution of higher learning and has a lot to offer to the public and young generation. I am also a parent in this university and I am confident of what is being impacted in my daughter ..."

Interviewee 8 stated,
"… an academic dean, stated that …employees, especially lower cadre, interact with the public, prospective customers and students more than the senior staff. Thus, they are better placed to know what is going on and could advise management. Thus, it is healthy for a down-up approach to decision making as it is consultative and is bound to solve more problems"

5.3.13 How should they be involved in the further process of image building...?

Seven interviewees stated that the process of image building should involve changes in visual and strategic elements which include colour, logo, slogan, vision and mission. For example,

Interviewee 7 suggested,
"... prepare a logo through public participation as provided by the constitution (of Kenya) to enhance ownership ... change colour and brand using down-up approach through research to identify distinct features that stakeholders prefer, most logos are done top-down in which the CEO dictates but public participation is important"

However, one interviewee stated that there was, to some extent, participation to the level of deans

While three interviewees stated that interactive sessions through departmental and faculty meetings should be involved in image building. One stated that internal communication should be enhanced to further the image building process. Interviewee 6 stated,

" ... people do not know what MMU is, it is referred to as a private institution rather than public and some as Posta or KCCT which was the original institution…We have to repackage content as there were two ladies in corporate communication who created an impact in the industry. For example, a Kenyatta University staff wondered how a small university can have such impressive content... The department does not have personnel, resources, materials, competencies and skills required in marketing. They need to involve specialists from departments in exhibitions rather than research department personnel. Deans state in, Deans' committee, that they are not involved in exhibitions. The marketing activities do not involve specialists and thus we are disjointed."

5.3.14 Strategies used to communicate MMU's corporate identity to stakeholders?

One measure of the effectiveness of corporate communication is its ability to draw internal support from employees to the organisation's objective (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2008). One objective is to create awareness of the corporate identity to internal stakeholders then external stakeholders. Also, the study sought to identify corporate communication strategies applied to communicate and create awareness of corporate identity to employees. Interviewee 1 stated,

"the use of an interactive approach when communicating with internal stakeholders. The corporate communication office stated that social media is heavily used as is cost-effective and effective and impactful… an asymmetrical approach through written communication is to be introduced. This will be through the use of a standardised brand manual to enhance corporate identity. A mixture of corporate and personal branding is to be effected through pushing corporate brand. The CEO and selected key staff are to be branded to promote the corporate brand for internal stakeholders. Publicity was used to create awareness of corporate identity to students.

Interviewee 1 stated,

"Publicity through media is used to communicate identity to students through Media Advertising in TV Print, Radio and University Radio Station to brand and communicate what MMU stands for as well as through organisation brand communication: Sports to push the brand. An interactive approach to communicating corporate identity to students was used through a face-to-face approach and cascading it to various student groups."

Interviewee 1 stated,

"… there will be a one-on-one engagement with stakeholders, student associations, and student clubs"

5.3.15 Communication strategies for logo, artifacts and corporate colours

During organisational change, management communication is critically aware of strategic elements as part of reputation management. Such communication may occur through interactive sessions such as meetings. One interviewee stated that communication of logo and changing logo is important to enhance employee participation. Interviewee 1 stated,

"The use of internal communication using CEO 'Kamukunji' with staff and senior management. Kamukunji is the Swahili word for a meeting which by extension means having meetings with the CEO. And this is apart from management meetings with the employees"

Interviewee 1 stated,

"… departmental and Faculty staff meetings with the CEO to communicate strategic elements and coming up with brand propositions through brand and communication audits to internal and external stakeholders. Get to know what people feel that the brand represents"

Communication of corporate logo and change may involve individual messaging and walking around. For example, interviewee 1 stated,

" that corporate office ought to get CEO to (go round to) laundry and Kitchen"

Awareness and understanding of corporate logo, one of the strategic elements may create a supportive behaviour which may impact on image and reputation management (van Riel & Fombrun, 2008). Thus, one interviewee stated that the enhancement of internal communication will, in turn, enhance external communication and corporate brand. Interviewee 1 stated,

"… people do not know about the brand and it does not represent university more of a clearing company. They do not know MMU as a public university"

Apart from creating awareness on change of corporate logo, it is important for key stakeholders to participate in logo formation to enhance participation and employee ownership in corporate objectives (van Riel & Fombrun, 2008). Interviewee 1 stated,

"The process on colour change and brand using requires a down-up approach through research to identify distinct features that stakeholders prefer; most logos are done top-down in which CEO dictates but public participation is important…consensus through public participation as provided by the constitution to enhance ownership… How will management take it, internal participation is important to enable people to own brand. This approach is to have challenges but public participation is critical to own the logo and becomes part of the brand. Employees will own the logo..."

5.3.16 Communication strategies used for slogan, vision and mission

One interviewee stated that the change process of the strategic elements of slogan vision, the mission was generally inclusive in regard to the change of mission. For example,

Interviewee 1 stated,

"It was, to some extent participative to the level of Deans who were involved in the mission change"

Interviewee 1 stated,
" ... However, it has yet to be communicated to staff which is critical as currently staff using the old logo and slogan. Employees are writing memo using old letterhead and mission statement, slogan and vision. They are in the process of consulting with DVC to communicate with staff though there seems to be a lack of funds."

5.3.17 Communication strategies used for mission vision and philosophy

One interviewee stated that the communication of the vision and mission would be through the strategic plan.

Interviewee 12 stated,
"… during the point of transition in 2013, the vision most probably has been changed, but the core values are not believed to have changed. Because the strategic plan we have used until now which is where the core values have been documented is the same one that is being used until the new one will hopefully be launched this year. So they are still using the same core values that were there when it was a college..."

5.3.18 Communication to create a positive corporate impression to MMU employees

One key function of corporate communication is to manage the internal communication of the organisation through employee communication management and relationship building. This question sought to find out how the corporate office manages internal communications in order to manage image and reputation during organisation transformation. In order to create a positive impression, corporate communication must incorporate various cadres of employees as part of image and reputation management.

One interviewee stated that there are challenges in creating a positive impression due to procedures laid down in orientation programme and employee mistrust. Interviewee 1 stated,

" there is a challenge when dealing with new staff as the laid down procedure is on induction more than orientation to impart culture... old employees do not know their role ... most do not know what is going on. There is mistrust from staff as it is them versus us. Thus, it is an opportunity to interact by having a meeting with the staff and the departments to talk about corporate culture."

Another interviewee stated that there are challenges in creating a positive impression due to challenges in stakeholder management as the focus was on marketing but the focus is gradually changing to incorporate employees. Interviewee 12 stated,

"… stakeholder relations are not something the university has made a priority in the past. In the first two or so years with the university, the Corporate Affairs Department was not in existence; it was used primarily for marketing, therefore stakeholder relations was not a priority. So when it comes to positive impressions on new and old employees it was not seen to be of particular value until the office of corporate affairs was created and we started practicing PR (Public Relations) as well but given the budget we could not concentrate on a lot of activities, a huge chunk of the money

went to marketing. This year we also held Valentine's Day campaign where all staff members who passed through the main gate from 8 am to 8.30 am received red roses. This was done to cultivate a positive impression of the institution by making our people happy…"

5.3.19 Communication to create a positive corporate impression to MMU Students

The question sought to find out the interaction between corporate communication function and stakeholder management to create a positive corporate impression. One interviewee stated that there is a gap in stakeholder management as far as students are concerned. Interviewee 1 stated,

"They hope to have a role with new students to inform them of how to build a brand. They hope to begin with student leaders to inculcate culture."

One interviewee stated the importance of managing impression by managing new students

Interviewee 1 stated

" ... tell them about the importance of managing brand and reputation. Instruct them on how to build a brand of organisation and the importance of managing brand which is to be done during the VC Induction meeting"

5.3.20 Communication to Create a Positive Corporate Impression to Professional Bodies

Three interviewees stated that MMU through corporate communication office will create a positive impression through stronger interaction with profession bodies. Interviewee 1 stated,

… Involved PRSK in curriculum development and other stakeholder issues. The liaison is weak, we hope to move to the Marketing Society of Kenya ... to enhance corporation."

Another interviewee stated that the corporate communication office will build a positive impression through enhancing partnerships with industry.

Interviewee 12 stated,
"With the industry, they tend to do a bit more in terms of partnerships for student exchange training, whereby the companies take in our students for internship, after which we receive feedback from them which helps us improve the quality of students we give them, for example maybe they are lacking in an area and it is up to them to see if it was only one student or a whole lot of them. Through such interactions, they have been able to improve the relations between the institute and the industry."

5.3.21 Communication to create a positive corporate impression to Local Community:

All the three interviewees recognised the importance of creating positive corporate impression with the local community through partnerships programmes and activities with residential associations when there is availability of resources. For example,

Interviewee 1 stated,

"We are not moving as fast as we should due to funding. However, we seek to reach out to 'Bangla Slum' through environmental cleaning and mentorship programmes. We hope to meet neighbourhood association of Karen and Ongata-Rongai neighbours to carry out activities. We are looking for strategies to meet and partner with them to build relationships."

One interviewee stated that the creation of a positive impression with the local community may be through training, sensitisation and invitation to university events and use of facilities.

Interviewee 12 stated,

"We trained local entrepreneurs in the Ongata-Rongai area on government procurement procedures on how to register, how to get details from IFMIS (a software for processing payment used by the government)... Our dispensary and library are open to the public for use for a small fee of about KSHS100 ... we always invite the public to our events such as graduation ceremonies and institutional launches."

One interviewee stated that the creation of a positive impression was important to extend the impression to the central business district rather than just in the neighbouring residential areas.

Interviewee 13 stated,

"We (CBD campus) have had CSR activities to reach out which was positive but not consistent to bring impact. There is a need to evaluate where it began, how it is going on, where we move next."

5.3.22 Communication of institutional Changes to Employees

5.3.22.1 How does management communicate to employees about major changes taking place at MMU?

One interviewee stated that management communicates to employee major changes written communication but an interactive session was recommended. Interviewee 1 stated,

"There seems to have been too much-written communication which at times is not done in consultation with the staff especially when making changes for staff. I wish to see CEO walk around to meet and talk to staff... there is a need for meetings with management to build rapport and have tea with management...Bi-annual prayer day which is interactive... The impersonal approach is a common behaviour whereby security guards push staff away staff when the CEO is coming further isolating staff from management."

5.3.22.2 How does management communicate changes in top management which have been frequent in the last ten years?

One interviewee stated that communication of changes in management was through written communication both memo and through online communication

Interviewee 1 stated,

"We do receive memo when changes are effected. The changes are then announced and later put in staff magazine which is, however, periodical. In addition, we put employee's face on the website and more information/profile and on the internal staff website...

5.3.22.3 How does management communicate change of institutional policies?

One interviewee stated that communication of changes is done through the staff intranet

Interviewee 1 stated that ... on the internal staff website ... statutes and polices are to be shared with staff to be empowered and have information.

5.3.23 Challenges and Opportunities in Reputation Management

One interviewee stated that MMU should enhance its branding more than its reputation through physical appearance, learning, research, and innovation

Interviewee 13 stated that the university is known for multimedia and the traditional telecommunication. Therefore, as part of branding the subjects of multimedia should be emphasised so that from the first quarter to the university, if it is online, someone should see that aspect of an interactive Multimedia. If it is physical contact at the gate, any guest or stakeholder visiting the university should also see that now they are in an environment that is powered or engineered by MMU. And that should now translate to the learning equipment, teaching environment and the day to day activities of the university as a research center… You know a university has three arms; learning, research and innovation/publication. As such the Multimedia aspect should be seen either when someone is doing research where they should apply the multimedia experience or when they are publishing their work or when they are teaching.

5.4 University Document Analysis

This section analyses how MMU management, over the last ten years, communicated its corporate culture and corporate identity to its employees, in order to manage the corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation.

The researcher collected data from the following documents to interrogate how MMU management communicated to employees in order to manage corporate reputation during organisational transformation. The documents communicate policies which are textual interventions into practice and inform readers which intentions and goals are prioritized (Sutphen *et al*., 2018). This study will evaluate selected documents during the ten years organisational transformation period.

5.4.1 MMU Strategic Plans for Periods 2011 – 2016 and 2017 – 2022

A strategic plan serves to signal direction for a defined period of time to communicate to and inspire employees, first, before other stakeholders (Sutphen *et al.,* 2018). Darbi (2012) argues that an organisation's mission and vision has an impact on employee behaviour and management must put measures to communicate them to employees. The following is an analysis of MMU's strategic plan 2011-2016 when MMU was a constituent college and preparing for the university charter of March 2016. This section answers the objective of how MMU management, over the last ten years, communicated its corporate culture and corporate identity to its employees, in order to manage the corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation.

Table 30: MMU strategic plans

Item	MMU strategic plan 2011 – 2016	Terms used:	Researcher Interpretation
Mission	To provide quality training in engineering, media, information science and technology and business to meet the aspirations of a dynamic society, while inculcating strong research, outreach, extension and innovation culture within an efficient team of academic, technical and administrative staff.	Quality

Training

Society

Research and innovation

Staff | Perceived quality builds a brand for competitive advantage, a crucial factor when student choosing an institution

Training focuses on the key aspect

Society focus on interest in the community, focusing on image and reputation

Research builds on the image as underpins important role knowledge generation and development of human capital

The staff builds on identity, image and reputation |
| **Vision** | A world-class center of excellence in training, research and innovation in cutting edge technologies | World

Excellence in Training

Research and Innovation

Technologies | The term world shows university desires to play a role in the world through globalisation and technology

Excellence in training focuses on education and product and services to impact on image

The statement expresses the desire to be emphasis research and innovation to generate knowledge, emphasis on image

Emphasis on service and delivery and processes through use of technology which impacts on identity and image |

Item	MMU Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021	Terms Used	Interpretation
Mission	To provide quality training, nurture a culture of research, innovation and extension to meet the aspirations of a dynamic society	Training Research Innovation Society	Training focuses on the key aspect Research builds on the image as underpins important role knowledge generation and development of human capital Society focus on interest in the community, focusing on image and reputation
Vision	To be the university of choice in training, research, innovation and extension	Training Research Innovation	Excellence in training focuses on education and product and services to impact on image The statement expresses the desire to be emphasis research and innovation to generate knowledge, emphasis on image

The above tables provide the mission and vision of MMU over the ten year period of organisational transformation. Table 30 on strategic plan 2011-2016 shows that the mission was composed of 29 words composed of six key items. The keywords are on 'quality training', 'society', 'research and innovation' and 'employees'. The vision has nine keywords, namely, 'world' 'excellence training' and 'research and innovation' and 'technologies'. In the same vein, in the strategic plan 2017-2021, the mission is composed of twelve words with four key items, namely, 'training', 'research', 'innovation' and 'society'. The key items in the two mission statements were retained though the second statement was shorter. The vision statement, also, retained the key items of 'training', 'research' and 'innovation' which may be easy for employees to memorise and internalise for

impact on employee behaviour. In addition, Mwandikwa (2003) and van Riel and Fombrun (2007) advocate for aligning people (employees) and mission as a strategy for corporate identity.

5.4.2 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the quantitative and qualitative findings as well as undertaken a review of mission and vision statements in order to answer the study objectives. One of the key findings was that the respondents indicated the importance of examining communication channel choices for effective communication between management and employees during organisational changes. Another finding was that a majority of interviewees stated that awareness of transformation was created through instructional sessions in workshops and meetings. Furthermore, a majority of respondents stated that they cannot influence the image-building process. These findings emphasise a top-down approach to communication in a hierarchical organisation. The next chapter will discuss the findings as per the research objectives.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to establish how a transforming organisation such as Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU) communicated with its employees on its corporate identity, image and reputation, and where it fell short of this strategic institutional objective during a period of rapid transformation. Thus, the study sought to address the following objectives. First, the study sought to identify the internal and external communication strategies that MMU used to manage its corporate identity, image, and reputation. Secondly, the study sought to analyse how MMU management, over the last ten years, communicated its corporate culture and corporate identity to its employees, in order to manage the corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation. Thirdly, the study sought to evaluate how employees as internal stakeholders at MMU interpreted the organisation's messages, symbols, channels and artefacts and how this impacted on the corporate image. Fourthly, the study sought to analyse how MMU managed its internal communication challenges and opportunities and how this impacted on its corporate reputation. The findings would enable the study to develop a communication model focusing on future communication of the corporate reputation of a transforming organisation.

To achieve the study objectives, a mixed research method of combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques was adopted. The case study design was applied to interrogate the transformation of an entity to accommodate its unique characteristics that another similar organisation may consider to use during transformation. The population of the study was the internal public of MMU comprising of 8 MMU management, 93 faculty or teaching staff, and 229 administrative or non-teaching staff as of June 30, 2017. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were administered in the study. In addition, the researcher conducted a document review of university documents either used or available during the transformation. A thematic approach was used to sample documents which included MMU strategic plans of 2011 - 2016 and 2017 – 2021, human resource policy and MMU website. Data obtained using questionnaires was analysed using descriptive statistics, in-depth interviews, and content analysis techniques to deduce the themes from the data gathered. Lastly, multiple regression analysis was used to define a model that may be used in managing communication during organisation transformation.

6.1 Discussion and Summary of the Key Findings

6.1.1 Identify the internal and external communication strategies that MMU used to manage its corporate identity, image, and reputation

The study used self-administered questionnaires and in-depth interviews to assess the internal and external communication strategies applied by MMU to manage corporate identity, image and reputation. The study begins by discussing the internal strategies that MMU used to manage its corporate identity, image, and reputation.

6.1.1.1 Internal and external communication strategies on corporate identity, image, and reputation management

The following were the findings and discussion on MMU's internal communication strategies in corporate identity, image and reputation management:

6.1.1.1.1 Corporate Level Internal Communication of Corporate Identity

In the study, the quantitative findings on internal communication strategies indicated that employees perceived MMU management to have preferred a participative approach to internal communication to manage corporate identity, image and reputation. The participative strategy involved employee relationship management during institutional transformation. These findings agree with those of Darwish, Abael and Huber (2003) and Adegboyo (2013) on the use of long term stakeholder relationships, mutual understanding and consultative participation as strategies for effective communication. Holtzhausen and Voto (2002) advocate for internal communication strategies that enhance participation and relationship-building to enhance employee engagement. In the same vein, Friedl and Vercic (2011) argue that participative strategies facilitate meaning sharing between management and employees.

One internal communication strategy that MMU management used in corporate identity management was to enhance employee relations through building trust within the organisation. One way of building trust to enhance employee relations was through information accuracy and information flow. The findings on information flow, bottom-up and top-down communication, within the organisation were indicated, largely, to be accurate. The respondents perceived information from superiors to be accurate at a mean of 2.43. In the same vein, information from

subordinates was stated to be usually accurate, at a mean of 2.63. The findings indicate that trust levels, as demonstrated in the communication flow from top-down and bottom-up responses, were largely good. The findings agree with Mbeke (2009) and Kiambi (2010) that public organisations in Kenya are hierarchical and information dissemination occurs through the organisational structure. The study argues that hierarchical structures may serve as an opportunity to encourage information flow from management to employees, and occasionally. These findings align with Schiminke (2003) and Jong, Dirks and Gillespie (2016) who advocate for a participative approach to increase trust levels within the organisation. In addition, trust was encouraged at horizontal levels as the quantitative findings indicated that, largely, the university management encouraged interaction among employees on the same job level, shown by a mean of 2.92.

Findings, furthermore, showed that, to a great extent, the university leadership engaged in employee communication shown by a mean of 2.9. Finally, findings indicated that the university management constantly communicated major changes taking place as shown by a mean of 2.84. Thus, these findings indicate the management effectively engaged employees through both top-down and bottom-up communication to build employee trust. This study concludes that, although trust was built, such trust may have been based on the exchange relationship in which both management and employee expected a reward in return. Notably, Hon and Grunig (1993) caution that the exchange relationship merely increases open communication but it does not promote employee involvement and commitment. Hence, this corroborates with the findings in which the respondents opted for the neutral status in response to the statement that, 'university leadership motivated and inspired employees' suggested by a mean of 3.32. Adeoti (2003) argued that management may use a relational approach that is communal, so as to build employee-management relations. This study notes that trust in new management and a new organisation structure may enhance employee involvement and commitment during the transition, but suspicion is created through information manipulation. The findings indicate that about 35% were neutral and 14% disagreed with the level of accuracy on the subordinate to superior, thus a demonstration of exclusion and negative power relations perceptions. May and Mumby (2004) state that exclusion and power relations are postmodern perspectives that do not promote inclusion and participation, thereby diminishing oneness and corporate identity. This presents a challenge that is to be discussed in the communication challenges section (section 6.2.4). The study proposes that

building trust may enhance employee relations in the organisation and an interactive channel is another aspect that may enhance effective communication.

A second internal communication strategy indicated in the quantitative findings was that MMU management used interactive channels to communicate. The findings indicate that the channels that management used to communicate were written memos (81%), intranet (65%), meetings (44%), face-to-face (32%), and telephone conversations (30%). Conversely, the employees stated that they communicated internally for a minimum of one hour through intranet (57%), telephone (50%), group-wise (42%), written memo (37%), meetings (35%), and face-to-face conversation (26%). These findings do not align with Delport, Hay-Swemmer, and Wilkinson's (2014) findings on face-to-face communication as a preferred channel which was undertaken in multi-campus universities. Cornelissen (2008) states that channels are critical methods through which messages such as organisational objectives, policies, and processes are conveyed between the sender and receiver. Also, Ordeix (2009) advocated for change from traditional channels to participatory channels in public organisations to contain bureaucratic and hierarchical processes in a digital age.

These channels belong to the first (foundational) tier which links the communication process to desired behaviour (Watson Wyatt Worldwide Survey, 2009). In addition, these findings align with Cornelissen's (2014) argument that persuasive strategies use campaigns, meetings, and discussions to build relations. Furthermore, these communication channels were utilised for at least two hours out of eight working hours in the present MMU study. The high adoption of face-to-face engagements and meetings is attributable to their efficiency in applying the respective channels including seeking clarifications and non-verbal communication. Hall and Hall (1987) and Al-Ghamdi (2007) argue that during organisation transformation, employees from collective cultures preferred traditional face-to-face communication and group meetings because those communication channels are interactive. Furthermore, Vegiayan, Baghestan and Afaranjan (2013) state that media richness is based on the ability to carry non-verbal cues, provide instant feedback, and convey personal traits. Employees' communication channel usage of intranet, telephone and 'GroupWise' demonstrates a preference for channels with high qualities of media richness while management placed a high emphasis on written memos, a traditional channel that facilitates record-keeping. The participative approach is a poststructuralist perspective to internal communication that emphasises human relations and information sharing during organisational

change for effective communication and reputation management. This study recognises Toth's (2007) caution regarding the participative approach that constant employee connection may challenge boundaries, structures, and hierarchies in an organisation. Consequently, the study advocates for the corporate communication practitioner to scan the environment and coordinate participative strategies that enhance media richness, informal alliances, as well as structured relations that however do not destabilise the institution or its employees. Waldt (2018) advocates for sound integration and coordination of corporate communication function during change. In addition, Kang and Sung (2017) state that corporate communication coordination entails practicing symmetrical communication and encouraging employee-centred communication that may manage the organisational hierarchies. Ordeix (2009) states that excellent organisations strengthen employee participation in decision-making and encourage interdependency among colleagues. Murphy (1988) favours positive management and employee relations through symmetrical communication to enhance corporate strategy and competitiveness.

6.1.1.1.2 Business and Functional Level Communication of Corporate Identity and Image

The in-depth interview findings show varying responses to awareness creation. The varying responses by MMU management to corporate image management during transformation are outlined. A majority of the mid-level management interviewees (73%) indicated a lack of corporate image and reputation management training during transformation. However, it was stated that MMU management and the university council had a staff meeting at MMU Conference Centre in 2013 to communicate the change from a constituent college to a fully-fledged university, as part of the transformation. Thus, there was a planned management-employee meeting to communicate one of the organisational transformations. The interviewees indicated that the newly appointed chairman and council members were introduced to employees. Furthermore, it was stated that the university council members had been trained in corporate reputation management. Puth (2000) states that corporate strategy begins at corporate and enterprise-level to provide direction, meaning, and personality to the organisation, thus it was important for the council and senior management to be trained, as part of awareness creation. Heath (2000) promotes inclusivity and dialogue to enhance corporate identity, thus, it is critical that awareness must evolve from the corporate level to business units for effective image management. Argenti (2007) and Cornelissen (2014) advance a holistic approach to corporate communication practice which focuses on relationship building through awareness creation. Cornelissen (2011) states that meetings and

discussions are a persuasive strategy for conveying organisational decisions and policies which create favourable corporate identity and image.

However, six interviewees indicated that there was a communication of the new corporate image and reputation, but no training occurred at the department levels. Hence, this is an indication that management did not put in place arrangements, planned communication, for corporate image management as well as employee expectation management. Steyn, Mateboho, and Grobler (2001) argue for the coordination of all levels of management within the organisation during organisational change for effective image management. Macnamara (2009) and Laskin (2012) argue for a communication approach that is participative and symmetrical for effective communication coordination. The findings from management respondent interviews show that the six interviewees indicated that awareness of the new corporate identity to key internal stakeholders through the use of technology or mediated communication which included the use of email,'GroupWise', intranet, social media, and the MMU website. The use of technology suggests a positive approach to effective strategic communication as it addressed the technological concerns of diverse staff segments. Welch and Jackson (2007) recognised audience segmentation in a university by demographics, occupations, and ancillary criteria, such as administrators, academicians or researchers with different communication expectations of the organisation climate. Sung, Xu and Dou (2012) agree that the virtual landscape provides for public conversations and may generate positive outcomes which will enhance corporate identity. However, the present study identifies with Melkote and Steeves (2001) who caution that interactivity only becomes effective if employees have problem-solving skills and are non-partisan.

The six interviewees elaborated that senior management created awareness of corporate identity through symbol association and recognition. The communication of new university symbols (visual communication) was through internal memo (written communication), which incorporated the use of a logo, maze and university colours to key stakeholders. The interview findings, from the business and functional units, indicated a non-participative approach to employee evaluation of the strategic symbols. These findings align with Abdulai and Shafiwu (2014) who encourage internal information sharing through different hierarchical levels to improve employee commitment and creates trust. The present study, in this case, proposes that senior management

ought to provide the strategic symbols and then persuade employees to embrace them, contrary to the observations by Deetz (1995) and Holtzhausen and Voto (2002). Adegboye (2013) proposes a communal approach to the discussion of corporate elements while Grunig *et al.* (2002) propose that the corporate communication practitioner should provide the management function between employees and senior management to protect corporate reputation during change. Cotton *et al.* (1988) advocate for representative participation in management meetings to create and communicate corporate symbols. Regardless of the method applied, Hayase (2009) concludes that strategic communication by its very definition functions to connect employees to business objectives for effective corporate image management.

6.1.1.1.3 Mid-Level and Corporate Image Management to External Stakeholders

Interview findings show that awareness creation by corporate image management towards external stakeholders involves a participative approach which is inclusive of industry. A small number of interviewees stated that MMU utilised both marketing and participative approaches. A participative approach, for instance, is created through forum involvement between faculty, university students and professional bodies for the respective academic programmes. In addition, the university encourages the involvement of students through internship and through industry interaction at stakeholder forums. Furthermore, it was stated that faculty members interact with professional bodies during curriculum reviews and development. During these stakeholder and research forums, faculty members articulate the university mission and vision to external stakeholders as part of corporate image management.

The industry collaboration with local and international institutions promotes relevance and enhances competitive advantage over similar institutions locally and internationally. Moreover, MMU Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021 projects that the industry-institutional interactions are set to promote an entrepreneurial aspect, as part of the organisational transformation (2017, 30). The new strategic plan theme is, 'entrenching the culture of performance for results' (2017, 42). The 2017 – 2021 MMU Strategic Plan is targeted to stabilise the current institution and give it competitive qualities as indicated in the Key result areas (KRA) (2017, 47 – 48). The three KRAs are in academic, research and institutional capacity. The academic excellence area addresses improvement in the quality and relevance of academic programmes. A second area focuses on positioning the university as a reputable research and innovation extension centre. A third area

focuses on the enhancement of institutional capacity through good governance, resource management, and improved infrastructure. The said strategic plan identifies external stakeholders as national, and county governments, industry, financial institutions, trade unions, sponsors and parents as well as research institutions. Thus, these findings indicate that senior management envisages industry-institutional collaborations as important in image management, the development of competitive qualities and as part of a shift towards being an entrepreneurial institution.

6.1.1.1.4 Branding and Corporate Image Management

Another strategy evident from the interview findings on image management during transformation was the branding undertaken and the communication channels used to promote the changing corporate brand. The interviewees stated that social media, university website and university radio were heavily used as these were understood to be cost-effective, impactful and interactive, and thus, important in both internal and external stakeholders management. In addition, one interviewee noted that the importance of introducing a standardised brand manual. The findings indicate that an asymmetrical communication approach through written, visual and verbal communication was also being introduced using a standardised manual to boost corporate identity and, by extension, the institutional image. An observation on the institutional website and staff portal demonstrated that the logo and letterhead are yet to be made available to the employees. The logo and corporate identification documents are only available to the faculty heads and management officers. It is worth noting that the MMU gift shop is yet to be established to facilitate corporate identity and image management.

In addition, one interviewee stated that a mixture of corporate and personal branding was being effected through branding the CEO and selected key faculty members to promote the corporate brand to both internal and external stakeholders. Faculty branding has involved promoting the new generation trendy concept in which the youthful faculty members selected from each faculty participate in university branding activities and events. Nessmann (2008) recognises people branding as important to corporate reputation management and advocates for communication practitioners to train in personal communication management. Furthermore, the MMU Strategic Plan (2011-2016) identified with the concept of 'brand ambassadors' to articulate corporate brand

and personal brand to internal and external stakeholders. For example, the Miss Kenya Runners-up in 2016 was selected as a brand ambassador. The model was a student in Faculty of Media and Communication. This is part of promoting the new generation trendy concept. It is envisaged that these branding approaches will promote the changing corporate image of the emerging university. Wittingham and Yakis (2012) link branding to organisational behaviour and meaning sharing. Hence, the management perceives corporate and personal branding as effective approaches to image and reputation management.

6.1.1.1.5 Publicity and Corporate Image Management

Van Riel and Fombrun (2008), from a stakeholder perspective, advocate for marketing communication to support product sales, promote the corporate brand, and for economic gain. The interview findings indicated that the corporate communication officer's responsibility was to undertake marketing and publicity roles, as part of stakeholder management. The corporate communication office, thus, used varied forms of publicity in awareness creation towards key stakeholders as part of the new corporate image management. To begin with, the findings indicated that the creation of awareness to students, prospective students and parents was through media. The publicity activities involved advertising on private television stations, print media, urban and vernacular radio stations in Nairobi, Rift Valley and Western parts of Kenya, and MMU Radio. The adverts aimed to sell the brand and communicate MMU's corporate values, mission, and vision of 'excellence'. This findings align with those of Slabbert and Barker's (2014) study on communication professionals in South Africa. The study identified the role of the corporate communication professional as stakeholder relations management but also advocate for the renaming of this function to move away from, merely, being a 'messenger' for publicity and media relations. Bowen (2004) cautions against the communication practice being pigeonholed or subsumed by marketing, asserting that it must retain its autonomy.

Fauconnier (1982) states that American and European academic institutions commonly used announcements and ceremonies as a form of publicity. In the same vein, MMU used various forms of publicity and communication channels during the period studied. Interview findings indicated that apart from the traditional media, the university website designated a section for announcements on Faculty course content, events, activities, and news. The MMU Website has a

facility to download the university prospectus and registration forms (MMU Website, 2019). In addition, publicity was indicated as one approach to corporate reputation management in the quantitative findings, in the open-ended question section. Furthermore, MMU Human Resources Staff Training and Development/Staff Recognition Policy (2015) provided for a committee whose role was to liaise with corporate communication office to "… ensure publicity of policy activities…" Findings indicate that MMU Publicity used social media, print media through policy documents, and committee meetings to convey messages aimed to attain competitive advantage as an emerging university. However, MMU is yet to adopt non-verbal forms of publicity. For example, Yakis (2012) asserts that reputation management for transforming organisation ought to incorporate performances such as speech, dress, body language, and symbolic language; form and content of the communication. The findings imply that some corporate communication function seems to be incorporated in other functions such as human resources and ICT departments. For example, the corporate communication officer provides content, messages, and pictures while the ICT department uploads and arranges this content on MMU Website and on GroupWise. The human resources department communicates through memo and GroupWise most information.

Chun (2005) states that corporate image is about communication and impression management to internal and external stakeholders. Therefore, Cornelissen (2011) proposes that the role of corporate communication is the development of programmes and persuasive campaigns such as meetings and discussions to create a favourable corporate image. The interview findings indicated that the corporate office, from an interactive approach, communicated the corporate image to students using a face-to-face meeting approach. The findings show that the interactive approach was used to communicate corporate change, promote the new corporate image among university students at various levels. The interactivity, furthermore, involved cascading branding information to various student groups mainly through student associations and student clubs. Bronn (2015) states that a collaborative approach to communication management enhances trustworthiness and genuine stakeholder relations. Mumby (2014) states that although the excellence theory advocates for corporate communication positioning and empowering for effective internal communication, the practitioner must not be compromised by the dominant coalition in effective stakeholder relations management. Thus, Bowen (2004) advocates for integrity and ethics in communication practice to manage stakeholder impressions. The findings seem to suggest that the corporate communication role, during transformation, was not clearly defined. The lack of role clarity,

during MMU transformation, is attributed to role confusion between human resources, ICT and research and innovation departments.

Bakhuya (2015) proposes corporate coordination at all levels of communication for effective organisational transformation for effective corporate image management. Effective organisational transformation involves communication at all levels of the organisation for the active projection of corporate mission and values to stakeholders. Thus, university management (corporate level) communicates with the Heads of section (functional level) who then pass the message to employees (operational level) to understand institutional changes and the new strategic elements. The interview findings show that the CEO communicated strategic elements at heads of department and faculty meetings, but not at the employee level. Therefore, communication of corporate image and reputation management may have been clear at this level.

However, the communication of image and reputation management seems unclear at the operational level as the quantitative findings (42%) had indicated that leadership was neither visible nor accessible, which denotes adherence to hierarchical communication. Yet, quantitative findings indicate the high employee awareness (90%) level of their role in image building and management. The findings indicate that interpersonal and interactive sessions between senior management and employees were effective in promoting employee projection of corporate values. This findings negate the findings on employee perception (61%) that they have no influence on the process of image building.

The interview findings indicate that during the said mid-management meetings, the CEO requested input on brand propositions. Mid-level managers were consulted, but the same did not cascade to the academic and other operational employees. The interview findings align with the quantitative findings in which respondents indicated that employees were not consulted on branding propositions and activities undertaken during the changes in MMU strategic elements. The difference in communication at various corporate levels aligns with the Watson Wyatt Worldwide Survey (2009) on communication which proposed a three-tier approach to internal communication in a hierarchical organisation. The survey focused on connecting employees to business objectives at the strategic tier and places emphasis on change behaviour at the behavioural tier. The

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foundational tier deals with the formal channels to be used, which include policy, technology, and compensation.

The interviewees, generally, observed the importance of employee interaction and communication during changes in strategic elements to enhance employee relations. The interviewees' observation on employee engagement demonstrates middle-level managers' understanding of symmetrical and interactive communication, which aligns with Nzeribe's (1986) findings on the importance of symmetrical communication in an organisation. These findings are in line with Van *et al.* (2008), who argue that a key measure of the effectiveness of corporate communication is its ability to draw internal support for the organisation's objective from employees. The findings demonstrate a gap in symmetrical communication, especially in view of strategic elements.

In summary, the findings indicated that the internal stakeholders identified the importance of communicating changes in organisational strategy, strategic elements and publicity engagement. The findings indicated that management used an interactive approach for employee and student meetings, publicity activities, and branding sessions, and technology to manage the corporate image and reputation. Mugaga (2011) posits that a wholesome approach to corporate communication should link communication to corporate vision, structures, and systems within the organisation. Thus, the study advocates for corporate communication practice to be empowered for effective communication and stakeholder relations management as critical for effective organisational change. Similarly, Van Riel and Fombrun (2008) outline three tasks that link stakeholders to organisational objectives: management communication to share corporate vision, trust, strengthening of employee identification and manage change; marketing communication to support sales and brand for publicity and economic gain and organisational communication for public affairs, investor relations, corporate advertising and internal communication. These were evidently practised at MMU in the period under observation.

6.1.2 How did MMU management, over the last ten years, communicate its corporate culture and corporate identity to its employees, in order to manage the corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation?

The section outlines the channels MMU management communicated corporate culture, a component of the corporate identity, to employees to manage the corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation. Wasserman, Gallegos and Ferdman (2008) describe the university as a complex organisation, adheres to traditional models of bureaucracies, and has complex structures in the face of economic and technological challenges. Despite these challenges, MMU had to communicate its culture as follows:

6.1.2.1 Corporate Level Communication of Corporate Culture

Corporate culture is what employees understand about the institution and is attained through consistent messaging, shared experience, values and behaviour (Needle, 2004; Ashenafi, 2017). Thus, Cacioppe and Edwards (2006) and Puth (2002) advocate that management, through an integrative approach, clearly articulate corporate culture to employees. Consequently, Steyn and Puth (2000) prescribe that management share university messages through oral and visual presentations to inculcate shared meanings and values. Yet, the quantitative findings indicated that MMU management frequently used written memos to communicate changes at the rate of 81% and intranet rated at 64.7%. The study noted that Group-wise and email were specified as other channels used by management to communicate changes, rated at 11.8%. The findings implied that MMU management communicated changes during transformation through a formal channel which had the ability to accurately communicate information and thus prevent speculation. Supporting the use of formal communication channels, Kalla (2005) argued that an interactive approach in corporate communication activities begins within the organisation, internal communication, through the formal and informal communication channels at all levels and domains. By contrast, the present study notes that while MMU management preferred formal communication through a written memo, employees' preference (67%) was communication through telephone. The difference in communication channel preferences between management and employees had an impact on effective communication of the corporate culture and impacted on corporate communication management during organisational transformation. The instructional approach thus promotes asymmetrical communication rather than symmetrical communication in an organisation.

6.1.2.2 Mid-Level Communication and Corporate Identity

Moghalu (2014) outlines corporate culture policy which promotes meritocracy that responds to a flexible workforce, clear schedules, and roles. The majority of the interviewees indicated that both communication and the awareness creation for corporate culture during transformation were effected through instructional sessions in workshops or seminars. The interview findings show that one of the ways to create awareness of corporate culture was through a management officer who would talk about vision and mission to employees at instructional sessions in workshops. Scholars argue that the instructional approach is an old notion which dominant coalition uses to prescribe employee behaviour through events and rituals; where information interpretation is shaped through public statements, and employee training through the use of dominant individuals to promote a dominant culture (Schein, 1985; Brown and Starkey, 1994). Sorensen (2002) argues that while the promotion of dominant culture promotes consistency and consensus, this approach may work against creativity and innovation because it endorses routine.

Management's choice of the communication channel at MMU was found to be contrary to the majority of the employees' preferences; only 29% preferred the use of seminars, an instructional approach, as a communication channel for corporate culture. This difference suggests that the chosen channel had a limiting impact on effective internal communication of the corporate culture. Isaac and Pitt (2001) posit that organisational members belong to different occupational and professional communities which bring pre-existing shared values and practices into the workplace. Thus, this present study argues that the instructional approach may facilitate awareness creation of corporate culture, but management must take into account the complexity of a university and allow for differences in pre-existing shared values of employees so as to effectively communicate during transformation. This promotes the notion of inclusivity and symmetrical communication between management and employees as advanced in the excellence theory (Chang, 2014).   Wilkinson, Gollan, Kalfa and Ying (2018) in their study promote a non-programmed interaction between management and employees to pass information. Thus, this study aligns with Wilkinson's *et al.* and advocates for both formal and informal approaches to corporate culture communication by management, to encourage dialogue and inclusivity of all teams in the complex organisation.

Wilson (1999) identified that universities may have one culture with minor variations due to departmental and professional differences. These variations and differences may challenge corporate culture communication, especially during organisational transitions. Interview findings

indicated that awareness creation of MMU's corporate culture was undertaken at quarterly faculty meetings, as indicated by two respondents, while one interviewee stated that the creation of awareness was done at the monthly meeting and at quality (ISO) management meetings. The findings indicate that various meetings were held to communicate culture. This demonstrated the complexity brought about by departmental and professional differences. The structure of departmental meetings also varied, which may imply the adoption of corporate flexibility to provide for innovativeness and creativity in a university setting. Newstrom (2010) advocates for flexibility to manage management and employees' expectations, during transformation, to promote talent rather than resistance. The findings in meeting differences are further highlighted where some management officers held a departmental meeting for all sections, while others held the meetings with individual sections, where the vision and mission were communicated in compliance with an ISO manual.

The study agrees with Martin and Terblanche (2003) that culture is multi-layered and each layer requires different communication strategy formulation. One interviewee stated that, during the transition in 2008, since the previous Kenya College of Communications Technology had a different corporate culture and colours, employees were trained on the culture of the Multimedia University College of Kenya, a constituent college under Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. Therefore, the new management had instructional sessions with employees to articulate the new university culture. From MMUC to MMU, the training of corporate culture was concentrated at the management level rather than at the operational level. The interview findings indicate that cultural transformation seems, still, to be evolving from KCCT to MMUC to MMU. In the strategic period 2017- 2021, the corporate colour changed to a different shade of blue. Van Wyk (2009) notes that forming a culture in a transforming university is challenging because diverse groups attach different meanings and perceptions to organisational communication, thus, making it difficult to explore shared interaction. The findings indicate that for the transition from KCCT to MMUC, instructional sessions were held to communicate culture, new symbols, and artefacts. Thus, the study recognises that a new culture does not develop over a short period. In addition, the quantitative findings indicate that employees (52%) perceived MMU to have formal organisational structures, procedures and that it is product-oriented compared to the previous institutions.

To at least some extent, the communication of corporate culture at MMU, over the ten year period sampled, used an instructive approach rather than interactive sessions between the departmental heads and employees. The communication of the new institutional culture was, apparently, not well articulated to various groups during the organisational status changes from Kenya Communication College of Technology to Multimedia University College to Multimedia University of Kenya, respectively. This partly aligns with views by Wasserman, Gallegos and Ferdman (2008) who outline corporate culture management at individual, group, historical and personal levels. The scholars state that managers must create relational eloquence, encourage and facilitate dialogue, direct teams in decision-making, demonstrate flexibility, and create an inclusive narrative in which each group member, and be mindful of this during the conversation in the entire organisation.

The findings show that management used an asymmetrical approach to incorporate diversity through a printed manual to communicate corporate culture. An interviewee stated that management provided a quality (ISO) manual to inform employees of changing university culture. It was noted that the institution observed differences in the approach used to conduct the employee orientation programme. It was observed that every section followed its own approach resulting in a lack of uniformity. The differences in orientation programmes is attributed to university complexity due to professional and demographic differences. Furthermore, in a hierarchical organisation like a university, employee alignment is in accordance with the type of responsibility and authority of the section, which results in different core assumptions about work and workplace (Isaac & Pitt, 2001). Consequently, this diversity and complexity of the institution in creating corporate culture were also highlighted by interviewees. For example, one interviewee stated that the employee orientation programme involved educating employees about risk through a one-on-one communication approach. Another interviewee stated that the orientation programme was undertaken during a departmental meeting. Moreover, one interviewee observed that interactive sessions and cross-functional approaches, through the meeting, were held during projects and preparation of university events. It was noted that these interactions built positive relationships among employees in various sections. This is contrary to Wilkinson, Gollan, Kalfa, and Ying (2018) and Denson (1986) who recommend that employee participation and involvement be designed at policy and regulatory level, but who caution that deep historical and cultural roots influence employee participation at the organisational department and individual levels. Therefore,

the scholars advocate for non-programmed interactions between managers and employees for passing information and consultation, rather than through the traditional models of agenda-setting and the use of an organisational chart to involve employees.

6.1.2.3 Mid-Level Management Perceptions and Benchmarking Activities

According to Mok (2005), characteristics considered for a university to be a world-class institution of higher learning are comprehensive education reviews, an international focus, university mergers, deep collaborations, and role differentiation. Thus, as part of internal benchmarking, three interviewees stated that management enhanced positive relations through employee training, inculcate professionalism in employees, and enhance staff welfare. Furthermore, the interviewee stated that the university undertook internal activities that involved sensitisation forums to employees to project MMU identity and culture to external stakeholders. The interview findings with academic deans indicated that benchmarking involved institutional collaboration during workshops in which MMU Faculty would articulate corporate values and mission. Interview findings indicate that benchmarking involved deep collaboration with local and international universities. Other findings indicate that curriculum reviews were undertaken and students were encouraged to pursue both local and international professional courses, as an added advantage, to enhance employability.

Interview findings indicate that management, faculty and the corporate communication division held stakeholder management sessions to articulate the corporate mission and values and build a relationship with the brand. In addition, stakeholder forum sessions were held to disseminate research and publications on the research findings as well as articulate the mission. The qualitative findings imply that stakeholder management used an asymmetrical approach in which information seems one-directional even though there were levels of interaction within the research forums. It is interesting that management perceives MMU-stakeholder management role positive. The quantitative findings indicate that respondents negatively perceived MMU's role as a socially responsible corporate. The quantitative findings further indicate that MMU did not generate positive feelings in its stakeholders.

6.1.2.4 Mid-Level Management Perceptions and Institutional Change Communication

According to Voelpel *et al.* (2006), employee dialogue during institutional change is critical in corporate identity and culture management. The interview findings indicate a lack of structured and systematic internal communication towards building relations across the changing institutional status so as to impact on corporate culture. Since there appeared to be no structural institutional approach to build relations during the changing status in the eyes of the staff. One interviewee stated that personal initiative was one approach to build relations. The findings are in line with the reviewed literature on internal communication and corporate culture management, Dutta (2014) proposes that excellent communication must incorporate dialogue to reduce employee alienation. Van Riel (2007) outlines that dialogue was one of the six principles associated with high ranking reputation management. In addition, excellence theory promotes dialogue and involvement despite any tribal, gender and professional differences. Balakrishnan and Masthan (2013) in a study on Delhi International Airport concluded that there is a positive relationship between internal communication and effective employee engagement in five areas of organisational communication flow. In a complex and transforming organisation, Friedl and Vercic (2011) argue that appropriate internal communication channels may facilitate meaning sharing, message negotiation and interpretation between the dominant coalition and employees which, in turn, influence and direct corporate identity which will impact on corporate culture.

6.1.3   Evaluation of Employees, as Internal Stakeholders, Interpreted Organisational Messages, Symbols, Channels and Artefacts and their Impact on the Corporate Image

According to Kalla (2005), internal communication sharing and understanding of organisational information are fundamental in maintaining a competitive advantage in the professional context. Thus, this section discusses quantitative and interview findings that address the study objective on employee interpretation of corporate messages, symbols, and channels, and their impact on the corporate image.

6.1.3.1 Employee Interpretation of Corporate Messages

Hatch and Schultz (2001) state that image management must align with the strategic management process. That is, vision must align to culture, the image must align to culture, and image must align to vision. In addition, Heerden (1999) outlines artefacts as visual and behavioural cues as critical in image management. These scholars denote that employee interpretation has an impact on their

project of behaviour to stakeholders. Respondents' interpretation of mission and vision has an impact on employee commitment to organisational objectives. The findings on the statement that MMU's vision and the mission was important to the staff', with a mean of 2.05, indicates to a great extent that employees were aligned towards strategic objectives. In addition, the respondents indicated that management encouraged employees to focus on goals, objectives and corporate values which impact corporate identity as demonstrated by a mean of 2.6. This denotes, also, that employees aligned to the new image and to the strategic process. The respondents largely agreed that management encouraged productivity, creativity and development initiatives as shown by, a mean of 2.91. These findings indicated that employees interpreted corporate messages on productivity and creativity which impact on the corporate culture and image. These findings indicate a positive evaluation of employee interpretation of corporate messages which may directly impact on employee behaviour and, by extension, on MMU's customer service. These findings agree with Simoes *et al.* (2005), in that expression and endorsement of consistent behaviour of corporate mission, values and goals have an impact on corporate image.

6.1.3.2 Employee Interpretation of Organisational Climate and its Impact on Image

Bernstein (1984) and Topalian (1984) argue, from a reflective perspective, that corporate image revolves around stakeholder perception of organisational representation either deliberately or accidentally. The quantitative findings indicated that MMU management created a positive image of the institution through the lenses of internal stakeholders. The respondents perceived MMU as result-oriented (54%), innovative (54%), entrepreneurial and motivated (52%) organisation. On the contrary, respondents did not perceive MMU as having work-orientation (21%) or focusing on internal affairs at 22%. These findings resonate with Capriotti (2013) in that the desired image and the lived image create dissonance in image construction during organisational change. It agrees with Chun's (2005) findings that corporate image relates to impressions that internal publics have of the organisation.

6.1.3.3 Employee Interpretation of Corporate Symbols and their Impact on Image

May and Mumby (2004) argue that inclusivity and power relations management play a role in organisational life, yet organisational life has an impact on corporate image management. This implies that management interaction influences organisational life or climate through symbols,

verbal and visual messaging, influence organisational life or climate. The respondents, to a great extent, agreed that management encouraged employees to be responsible for their own quality of work, as shown by a mean of 2.75 which demonstrates an element of inclusivity. This finding agrees with Cole's (1997) argument that verbal communication or interaction through talk facilitated production. Apart from verbal interaction, visual interpretation impacts on corporate image management. According to Apolo (2017) and Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006), the corporate design provides for uniqueness, recognition, and retention. Respondents perceived that the corporate logo was appropriately placed in university stationery, as shown by a mean of 2.17. Thus, the findings predominantly indicated that there was effective communication and interpretation of this strategic element. The findings agree with Soha (2010) in a study on university mergers in which the scholar argues that management-employee interaction influences ideology and tradition which positively impacts on the organisational climate.

Organisational climate has an impact on image management since employees serve as corporate ambassadors and engage in various forms of behaviour when in contact with stakeholders (Helm, 2011). These findings are an indication that employees interpreted the corporate symbols of MMU. Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) state that symbols are part of corporate visual identity and influence stakeholder perception which impacts on corporate image management. Symbols are part of planned communication which are a representation of the organization but tend to enhance one-way, asymmetrical, communication. Symbols further encourage a top-down approach to communication which enhances the perception of power relations within the organisation. The use of symbols, however, potentially negate a participative and interactive approach to organisational communication and decision-making.

6.1.3.4 Employee Interpretation and Measurement of Image Management

Wittingham and Yakis (2012) link corporate branding and image to employee behaviour. On the statement on the ability of the employees to contribute to the process of building the image of MMU, 61% of the respondents indicated that they cannot influence the process of building the image of MMU and 20% of the respondents noted that they do not want to influence the process. In addition, 10% of the respondents showed that they cannot say anything in relation to the process and 9% of the respondents indicated that they can influence the process. The findings indicate that 39% of employees do not see themselves as able to contribute to corporate image building which

may negatively impact corporate reputation. Employee behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, has an impact on institutional visibility. Thus, the corporate communication office role has a role to build and safeguard corporate image through messages that enable employees to participate in image building and manage the corporate brand (Schultz, Hatch & Adam, 2012).

In addition, 90% of the respondents indicated that all employees are responsible for building and maintaining the image of MMU, while 42% of the respondents believed that it is the responsibility of the top management. Thirty-five percent of the respondents noted that it is the duty of the marketing team. Furthermore, 31% of the respondents indicated that it is the responsibility of all the persons in the front office area, while 29% of the respondents believed it is the responsibility of the corporate department. Fifteen percent of the respondents stated that it was the responsibility of the customer and supplier to build and maintain MMU's image. These findings, further, indicate that employees do not clearly understand the role of corporate communication in the organisation.

6.1.3.5 Employee Interpretation and Competitive Advantage as part of Image Management

On employee contribution to MMU's image building process, the respondents agreed to a great extent that the employees are knowledgeable about MMU's history and traditions, as indicated by a mean of 2.8. This indicates that employees have an interest in corporate stories and traditions which are building blocks to differentiation, loyalty and competitive advantage. Respondents to a great extent indicated neutrality on the statement that the current top management has a strong sense of the institution's history, as shown by a mean of 3.1. This is an indication the senior management team does not communicate, through corporate stories, the essence of the new organisation which negates the competitive advantage. The lack of leadership visibility and accessibility further negates competitive advantage as leadership is perceived not to be positioning themselves to stakeholders. Therefore, respondents to a great extent indicated neutrality to the statement that MMU had leaders who were visible and accessible, as shown by a mean of 3.2. The, also, were neutral to the statement that the university had a comprehensive integrated marketing communication strategy that employed appropriate media, as shown by a mean of 3.3. This is an indication that employees desire more participation in marketing communication, corporate and product branding for competitive advantage. Respondents to a great extent agreed that MMU produces graduates who meet market needs, as shown by a mean of 2.1.

6.1.3.6 Employee Interpretation of Corporate Responsibility and the Impact on Image Management

Jackson (2004) argues that employees project corporate values to stakeholders through service and corporate social responsibility to build the corporate image. The respondents, largely agreed, that MMU related well to parents and sponsors and that MMU was a customer-oriented institution. This served as an indication that the organisation was customer-oriented and thus projected itself favourably to its customers, displaying a positive image. In addition, the respondents stated that the institution treated students courteously, communicated with them, and took care of their safety and health requirements, as shown by a mean of 2.6 respectively. This further indicated that MMU was customer-oriented, adding to a positive image to a key stakeholder. Moreover, respondents largely agreed that MMU was a socially responsible organisation, generating respect, admiration, and confidence among the students. The employees perceived the institution to support good causes, as shown by a mean of 2.7. These findings indicate that employees similarly perceive the organisation to be customer-oriented, which impacts positively on the corporate image but may have some impact on corporate identity. The employees may feel that the organisation prioritises students over employees. Dutta (2014), in discussing excellent communication, cautions against employee feelings of alienation while Baltaru and Soysal (2017) caution against a university focusing on entrepreneurial activities rather than keeping the university as a community of scholars. Thus, services ought to be directed both to the customer as well as the employees to manage feelings of alienation. Yet, it is important that employees recognise the good service extended to students which positively impacts on the institutional image.

Secondly, employees perceived that MMU's service to the regulatory requirement was fairly effective as set out in the strategic plan 2011 - 2016. The respondents agreed that MMU generated positive feelings in its stakeholders. Furthermore, the findings indicated that MMU was an ethical organisation and that MMU had strong values, obeyed the laws, was transparent and respected stakeholders, as shown by a mean of 2.8. Employee perception that the organisation is compliant to ethical, legal and transparency positively impacts on corporate image, and in the long run, this image impacts on the corporate reputation. It is noted, however, that a recognisable segment of 54% (28% neutral and 26% disagreed) were not persuaded that MMU observed the regulatory requirement. This has a negative image impact on the emerging university. MMU Strategic Plan 2011 − 2016 provides for compliance with The Constitution of Kenya of 2010 requirements on

disability and integrity as part of image management. The study concludes that there seems to be a perception disconnect between management and employees on regulatory compliance as employees (54%) were not persuaded that MMU was complying with the requirements.

Argenti (2007) advocates for coordination and communication between management and employees during changes as well as carrying out a communication audit which will have a positive impact on the institutional reputation. The CUE (2017) outlines the importance of a communication strategy that incorporates internal communication of the regulatory framework and employees' rights. MMU management has to address employee perceptions on university regulation compliance. In the same vein, it was noted that employees perceived that MMU contributed actively and voluntarily to the economic and environmental improvement of the society, as shown by a mean of 2.9.

6.1.3.7 Employee Interpretation of MMU Leadership and the Impact on Image Management

Asked whether MMU is an institution with good and innovative leadership, the respondents indicated neutrality, as shown by a mean of 3. As previously stated, employees perceived leaders not to articulate corporate values to external stakeholders, which negatively impacts on corporate image and reputation. Nwabagara (2011) argues that leadership practice during transformation may trigger cohesiveness and Welch (2009), asserts that management has to clearly communicate with employees.

The quantitative responses on the corporate image indicate that respondents to a great extent agreed that the management is fair and just in dealing with students, as shown by a mean of 2.84. This implied that MMU management was customer-focused which corroborates with the findings, in this study, that MMU was customer-oriented. In contrast, 46% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the morale of MMU staff is good/high, as shown by a mean of 3.26. The quantitative findings on staff morale impact, negatively, on organisational performance, competitive advantage and image management. In addition, the respondents stated that the university retained talented staff and faculty, as shown by a mean of 3.28. Half of the respondents (50%) stated that they would, personally, recommend prospective employees to join MMU, 28% of the respondents indicating that they would not recommend this, and 22% of the respondents

were not sure. The findings are interesting as 50% of employees would not recommend prospective employees to join the organisation. The findings imply that employees perceive management to be more customer-focused rather than employee focused.

The findings show 46% disagreed that management was responsive to employee complaints which is a significant group. The findings further indicate that management was not employee-centred and sensitive to employee concerns which may negatively impact corporate identity, image, and reputation. It was interesting to note that the employee felt that students' concerns were addressed but not employee concerns as indicated in the findings. These concerns are further highlighted in employee perception of conflict management. The findings indicated that 62% of respondents disagreed that conflict is controlled by the intervention of higher authorities and fostered to maintain power. The findings indicate that management does not get involved in conflict management.

Wilkinson, Gollan, Kalfa and Ying (2018) argue that employee participation and involvement should be designed at the policy level. Yet findings indicate that 61% of respondents disagreed with the statement that conflict is suppressed by reference to rules, procedures, and definitions of responsibility. Policies are programmed for asymmetrical communication on conflict management. Seventy-one percent of respondents disagreed that conflict is resolved through discussions of the merits of work, and 73% stated that conflict is resolved by an open and deep discussion of personal needs and values.

These findings imply that MMU internal stakeholders positively interpreted the organisation's messages, symbols, channels, and artefacts and noticed that this had positive impacts on the corporate image. Steyn and Puth (2000) and Chong (2009) contend that identity influences employee motivation as they (employees) perceive and interpret experiences within the organisation. The resultant internal self-representation is projected outward, thereby impacting positively on the corporate image.

6.1.4 An analysis of MMU Management of Internal Communication Challenges and Opportunities and its Impact on Corporate Reputation

The study sought to assess the internal communication challenges and opportunities at MMU and thus identify their impact on corporate reputation.

6.1.4.1 Employee Engagement Challenge

The findings indicated that to a large extent, information from the supervisors was usually accurate (mean= 2.43, SD= 0.923). This implied that the respondents had confidence and trust in the accuracy of information emanating from the university management and that the university had successfully used supervisors to manage corporate reputation, and supervisors were perceived to disseminate accurate information to the teams they led. However, mixed results on the neutrality about the accuracy of information from subordinates (mean= 2.63, SD= 0.794) and on the consistency of communication on changes taking place (mean= 2.84, SD= 1.176) implied that information flow was a challenge in the organisation. There was a communication challenge in university leadership communication engagement with employees (mean= 2.9, SD= 1.105) and with the university management encouragement on horizontal employee interaction (mean= 2.92, SD = 1.097). It was noted that employees did not perceive the university leadership to motivate and inspire employees (mean= 3.32, SD = 1.151). This implies a lack of effective employee engagement in communication change which negatively impacts on corporate identity, image, and reputation. However, it is noted that MMU management, in managing its corporate identity, image and reputation, used a top-down approach more than through dialogue and employee interaction to encourage employee engagement.

The findings indicate that employees would prefer MMU leadership to motivate and inspire them during organisational transformation. Nwabagara (2011) proposes, from an African leadership perspective on transformation, that leadership practice triggers group cohesiveness and decision-making in universities. Thus, MMU management had to find communication strategies that enhanced employee interaction and dialogue with leadership during decision-making, where dialogue is understood as bottom-up communication flow. Murphy (1989) concluded that increased communication among line and staff also increased employee involvement in decision-making. Thus, scholars advocate that corporate communication managers should prepare internal communication strategies to address interaction (Mahoney, 2011; Verhoeven *et al*, 2011).

6.1.4.2 Differences in Leadership and Employee Communication Channel Preferences Challenge

A lack of leadership motivation and inspiration may be attributed to the differences in channel preferences, which may render communication ineffective in the interpretation of messages. The findings on preferred channels for internal communication at MMU showed that contact through telephone was the most preferred at 67%. However, employees preferred face-to-face interaction through personal visits (42%) and seminars (29%). In addition, employees preferred the use of university events (34%) to communicate the corporate image. Finally, for publicity and marketing, the channel preferences were social media (32%), media advertisements (26%), brochures (24%) and exhibitions (20%) to project MMU image. Moreover, employees perceived other channels to effectively complement and communicate with internal and external stakeholders including email, meeting, GroupWise (intranet) which are interactive. However, management preferred asymmetrical channels which are one way, top-down, such as written memo (81%) and group-wise (64%). The notice board (8%) had the least which implied that the channel encouraged asymmetrical communication. These findings align with Friedl and Vercic (2011) state that channels vary in strength, meaning sharing and levels of effectiveness. Hall and Hall (1987) argue that employees from collective culture prefer interpersonal (face-to-face) and informal communication channels.

Management was perceived to enhance employee engagement and unity through meetings and seminars. The study noted that interviewees agreed on the need for employee unity but differed on the approaches to use. Interviewees recognised the importance of bonding sessions and teambuilding during university transformation. Interviewees indicated that bonding sessions could be during meetings and seminars where old and new employees share information while another interviewee stated interdepartmental activities such as sports and during meal times would facilitate employees sharing of ideas. The former encouraged asymmetrical and traditional approach while the latter an informal and interactive session. A further interviewee stated that teamwork, an interactive approach, would minimise antagonism and prejudice. Thus, the study concluded that mid-level managers realised the importance of managing prejudice which negatively impacts on image and reputation. Some mid-level managers preferred the use of

structure and hierarchy to manage employee engagement. As part of communication flows, interviewees indicated that communication could be done through the organisation chart where the communication flows horizontally from the senate and deans meeting to the other sections of the institution. This does not align with Friedl and Vercic (2011) who advocate for internal communication channels that facilitate meaningful sharing, negotiation, and interpretation.

6.1.4.3 Challenge in Management and Employee Communication of Corporate Reputation and Competitive Advantage

Oginni and Moitui (2016) state that upward communication boosts information sharing of the mission, shared values and culture which enhances corporate image and competitive advantage. Interviewees stated that building positive relations and impressions relied on management informing employees of the organisational direction. The study noted that the information on competition was in the MMU Human Resource Policy 2015 which encouraged employees to add value, creativity, and innovation for positive performance. The use of the policy was intended to communicate excellence and competitive advantage through it was top-down rather than bottom-up. The findings agree with Ochara (2017) that policies and strategic plans are part of communication channels that communicate core values.

The findings indicate that MMU infrastructure and facilities usage may promote competitive advantage. Two interviewees stated that Marketing through MMU facilities would enhance competitiveness. One interviewee noted that competitive advantage would be attained through the use of technology in admission processing and enrolment. Another interviewee indicated the importance of technology to enhance efficiency in student enrolment for competitive advantage. The strategic plan 2017 – 2021 confirms the use of modern and emerging technologies as important in-service quality management.

Mid-level management noted the challenge of competitive edge attainment may be through uncoordinated marketing and publicity activities. Before using publicity and collective marketing activities, it was noted that internal communication and employee support are some of the best marketing tools to enable MMU to achieve a competitive advantage. Roberts (2009) encourages corporate communication practitioners to use employee branding as it may facilitate competitive

advantage and corporate reputation management. Word-of-mouth, as a marketing activity is yet to be exploited in reputation management and attainment of competitive advantage. Three interviewees highlighted the aspect of word-of-mouth to market programmes by internal stakeholders and the articulation of the equal opportunity policy was indicated as an important way to enhance competitive advantage. The study concludes that word-of-mouth is yet to be exploited as employees still grapple with equity and equality issues within. Nzulwa and Atikiya (2013) state that desirable policies and employee branding differentiate an organisation, thus, give it a competitive advantage. Thus, MMU has to address employee use of word-of-mouth through policy and actualise the stated policy to enhance equity. In addition to word of mouth, student experience was indicated as one way to increase student enrolment.

The findings show clear coordination of publicity activities for competitive advantage. Two interviewees stated that corporate social responsibility was one way to publicise MMU to external stakeholders for competitive advantage and student enrolment. One interviewee indicated the importance of a marketing plan to enhance competitive advantage over other institutions. In addition to this, advertising through television, radio and print was rated as critical. Apart from consistent marketing, it was indicated that there was a need for aggressive marketing as well. Van Riel and Fombrun (2014) argue for a monolithic identity and coherence to strengthen the brand to create favourable perceptions.

An inclusive curriculum was recommended as one aspect of competitive advantage management. Four interviewees stated that the MMU curriculum could be used to enhance competitive advantage. The findings indicate that inclusivity and interactivity through staff retraining, cultural sensitivity, and use of technology enhance corporate reputation and competitive edge. One of the excellence theory tenets promotes relationship building through inclusivity. One interviewee stated that the relevance of curriculum and staff retraining enhances competitive advantage. In addition, one interviewee stated that curriculum relevance involves the incorporation of cultural sensitivity through gender and ethnicity studies. Another interviewee indicated that the curriculum incorporates instruction using technology to enhance competitive advantage. Also, an interviewee noted that market-driven courses emphasising technology components would enhance competitive advantage. It is noted that the 2011-2016 strategic plan advocated for the development of a unique curriculum as part of the preparation for a competitive edge. Dutta (2014) proposes that corporate

communication practitioner acts as a bridge between the dominant coalition and employees to enhance inclusivity. This study agrees with Huczynski and Buchanan's (2010) argument that in a changing context, organisations must embrace competition, technology, and dependence on skilled people.

Competitive advantage and reputation management may be attained through strong adherence to the university mission. Interviewees noted that MMU could participate in problem-solving ventures for industry through research. This was an indication that mid-level management were aware of MMU mission '… to inculcate strong research outreach, extension, and innovation…' (MMU, 2011-2016). The attainment of mission through offering courses that produce entrepreneurial graduates through course offerings. One interviewee stated that film and animation courses, being a rare gem, could collaborate with the tourism and conservation industry. This course would lead to the production of market-driven graduates. The interviewee indicated that the film and animation department was undertaking a marketing venture with a financial institution.

Interviewees indicated that academic staff and staff welfare could enhance competitive advantage. The interviewee stated that faculty retraining and research facilitation could motivate teaching staff. Another interviewee stated that staff should be treated equally by following the staff policy as stated. One interviewee stated that teaching staff have manageable class sizes to enhance students learning quality. Apart from class sizes, one interviewee noted the importance of a legal and policy framework on remuneration. On the contrary, one interviewee stated that MMU is a leader in manufacturing engineering and generates income for the university because three local universities use the facilities.

One interviewee stated that the MMU hotel could be a facility to enhance competitive advantage and financial performance. One interviewee stated that financial performance could be enhanced if facilities were utilised fully to bring about competitive advantage. Interviewee 3 stated that Globalization and competitive advantage may be through the "use of the website to put appealing course content for a local and international audience, and have a repository where published papers by staff can be put making us known". Appealing content and a website repository would increase visibility and impact positively on financial performance. For example, involvement during the

strategic planning process to help establish a road map for the institution and where it should aim to be in the next five years. Employees must be integrally involved in the development, which would thus impact on the financial performance of MMU. These findings are in line with Cravens and Oliver (2006) who argue that employees and corporate reputation management must be considered as unique resources to generate positive financial performance.

Since MMU is a hierarchical system, the findings indicate that interactive sessions in departmental and interdepartmental meetings were used to communicate changes in the organisation, as well as build image so as to impact on reputation. Interviewee 6 stated the "need to reason together to forge the organisation ahead" and for "a platform to communicate during work". This means that the interviewees felt that image building should be consultative and interactive among employees and management. This corroborates with the quantitative findings which indicated that 90% of employees stated that employees were responsible for image building. Furthermore, seven interviewees stated that the process of image building should involve communication on changes in visual and strategic elements which include colour, logo, slogan, vision, and mission. Thus, this findings indicate interviewees' recognition of the importance of communicating or creating awareness to other employees changes in strategic elements, that is cascading communication downwards. This finding aligns with Proctor and Doukakis (2003) who argue that consultative policies impact on the institutional reputation for competitive advantage. Another three interviewees stated that interactive sessions through departmental and faculty meetings enhance image building, while one stated that internal communication should be enhanced to further the image building process. Internal communication may be enhanced by strengthening the role of the corporate communication office. Strengthening the role of corporate communication in the organisation was highlighted. For example, interviewee 6 stated that "We have to repackage content as there were two ladies in corporate communication who created an impact in the industry". Kimutai (2011) confirms that image management should be a key role for in-house public relations practitioners in universities, thus, corporate communicators in universities are proactive in image management.

The findings indicate that MMU could enhance its corporate reputation as follows: 39% of respondents indicated that MMU could enhance its corporate reputation by motivating, involving and training employees, having qualified employees and addressing employee complaints and

paying part-time allowances. This aligns with Chong (2009) who states that identity and by extension, reputation, influences employee motivation as they subjectively perceive and interpret experiences, particularly direct experience, within the organisation. In addition, twenty (16%) respondents indicated that reputation enhancement is through publicity activities as well as an active corporate communication office which focuses on aggressive advertising and marketing activities. Bromley (2000) refers to this type of publicity as impression management, through cognitive associations, at the tertiary level. The scholar suggests that the impact of tertiary-level teaching and research outcomes on reputation is less, compared to the impact of stakeholder's actual experience with the organisation. Twenty-six (21%) respondents indicated that corporate reputation may be enhanced through stakeholder involvement in decision making, corporate social responsibility, and relationship building. These findings to some extent echo with Mbigi and Maree (2005), who advocate for networking with external and internal stakeholders for reputation enhancement and management. Eight (7%) respondents indicated that reputation may be enhanced through employee communication to demonstrate transparency. This aligns with Abdullah (2009) who proposes that reputation projection involves a series of programmes which include management practicing transparency in decision-making and message consistency. The findings show that organisational systems and structures play a considerable role in reputation enhancement. Thirteen (10%) respondents stated that reputation may be enhanced through a change in organisation systems by stopping discrimination, improving appointment processes and establishing cohesion. Melkote and Steeves (2001) state that a hierarchical and bureaucratic system, in an institution, compromise inclusivity, especially in Africa (Adeoti, 2013), in turn, curtailing reputation enhancement. De Veiga and Martins (2017) caution that employees who belong to various sub-cultures, in the organisation, may feel discriminated against. This may be because they may not fit in mainstream corporate culture which may impede on their reputation enhancement. Waldt (2004) proposes addressing norms and values which such sub-groups need to assist them to embrace the defined corporate objectives.

Only nine (7%) respondents stated that corporate reputation may be enhanced through research development, branding, relevant curricular, and quality graduates. Sevier (2009) posits that research is critical in university reputation enhancement, yet the findings show that the response to research and curriculum was low. Similarly, Lee (2016) argues that new corporate management practices in universities has changed corporate culture from collegiality to a bureaucracy which

pertains to rules and regulations on fiscal control, staff appointment and promotion, research management and curricula development. The findings reflect Lee's (2016) argument on low levels of employee appreciation of research development and reputation enhancement in university.

Interviewees indicated doubts on how MMU could build on its competitive advantage due to existing financial challenges. The respondents noted that building brand image and reputation required finances while the institution had inadequate financial resources, being a public institution. Thus, extra financing through grants and loans could be important. Interviewee, also, stated that it would be a challenge to develop the competitive advantage, due to internal stakeholder dissatisfaction, alongside the financial position of MMU.

The findings indicate a significant lack of stakeholder participation and communication, which is contrary to the argument by Stroh (2007) who advocates for corporate communication activities that foster effective stakeholder management through strengthening participation and self-regulation, which then culminates in organisational strengthen. Further, Cornelissen (2014) and van Riel and Fombrun (2008) argue that effective reputation management, from a management perspective, is about linking the corporate communication function to internal stakeholders in the organisation. Stroh (2004) argue that reforms at times threaten centres of power, but conversely promote relationship building and employee participation, both key ingredients to strong identity and image management. Austin and Pinkleton's (2015) perspective on the challenge of a coherent communication strategy is upset by cultural, ethnic and political orientations for transforming universities in Kenya.

6.1.5 Communication Model for Corporate Reputation Management of Transforming Organisation

To develop a communication model with communication flows diagram with the respondent suggestions lead to the improved communication of the corporate model, the study first assessed whether the transformation at MMU had a significant change in specific performance measures.

One sample ANAVO test was performed on quantitative data. The P-value<0.05 implied that there was a significant change before and after the transformation. With the transformation, MMU changed to having a more interpersonal approach to relationship management among employees,

the organisation became more dynamic, developed structures and become result-oriented. These are important attributes to achieving organisation competitive advantage. From the correlation matrix it was noted that all variables are positive and statistically significant. The perceived communication challenges and opportunities positively affect the corporate reputation and employee interpretation (r=.588, p<0.05). Corporate identity and employee interpretation of identity messages also positively affects the corporate reputation and employee interpretation (r=.658, p<0.05). Furthermore, the corporate image interpretation and measurement also positively affect the corporate reputation and employee interpretation (r=.650, p<0.05). This implies that corporate reputation as interpreted by the employees is a function of the perception of communication challenges and opportunities, corporate identity and how it is interpreted by the employee and the corporate image.

The coefficient of determination of 0.556 implied that perceived communication challenges and opportunities, corporate identity and the corporate image combined are responsible for 55.6% of MMU corporate reputation. Positive R (coefficient of correlation) implied that improving perceived communication challenges and opportunities, corporate identity, and the corporate image improved corporate reputation. These coefficients could be used to develop a statistical model for managing corporate reputation at MMU by assessing the levels of perceived communication challenges and opportunities, corporate identity and employee interpretation of identity messages, and the corporate image interpretation and measurement using a scale of 1-5. The model developed was $Ys = 0.507 + 0.187X1 + 0.386X2 + 0.256X3 + e$. Where Ys is corporate reputation (the prediction variable), Xn is predictor variables which include perceived communication challenges and opportunities, corporate identity and employee interpretation of identity messages and the corporate image interpretation and measurement respectively, e is the error term. Thus, an improved communication model for a transforming organisation will include processes for identifying the corporate image management, exploring the prevalent communication challenges and opportunities and defining corporate identity as well as employee interpretation of new identity messages.

In defining a communication model focusing on the corporate reputation of a transforming organisation, Van Riel and Fombrun (2008) advocate for a model that links vision, structure, and systems to stakeholders to facilitate fulfillment of organisational objectives

Table 31: Communication Model that MMU used in Corporate Reputation Management
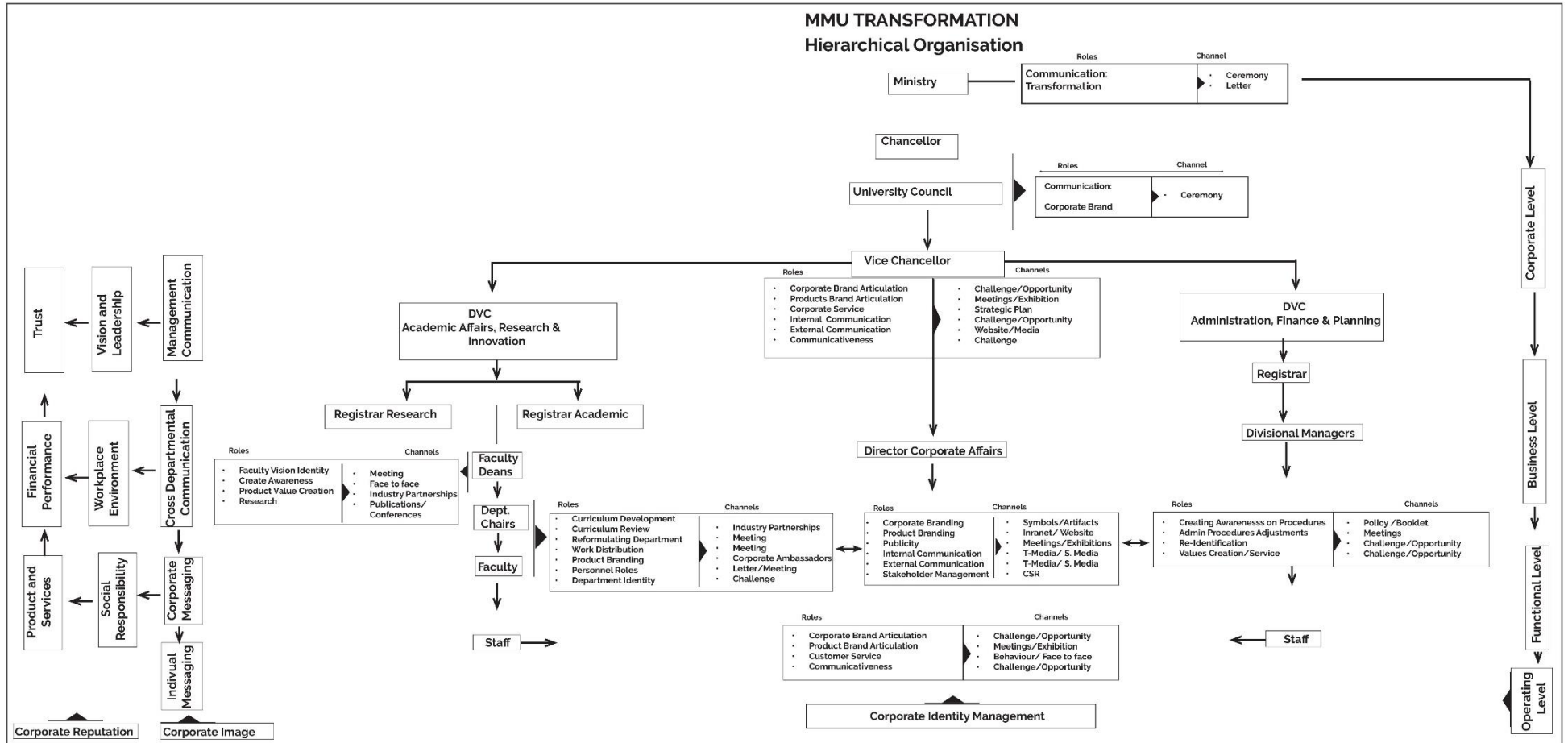
Source: Researcher, 2019

6.1.5 The MMU Transformation Model Explanation

The model above demonstrates the communication flow in a transforming organisation which involves:

Corporate Level Communication: The government through the Ministry of Higher Education initiated the transformation process in line with Vision 2030 to change institutional status.

The ministry then communicated to JKUAT and MMUC management, thereafter appointed a university board to lead the transformation process. The communication was through a letter from the ministry.

Corporate Level: The new university council chairman communicated the new changes through a formal letter to the senior management.

MMU management, through the corporate communication director communicated via GroupWise (intranet) to employees of the change from MMUC to MMU. Management held an event to launch the new institution. The ceremony was held at MMU Conference Hall where a new vision and direction was articulated by chair of university council and the interim university management. The ceremony was attended by heads of departments, union representatives and student representatives.

In the Ceremony: The new corporate brand was unveiled and strategic symbols displayed. The ceremony was attended by mid-level management in which the chairman of MMU council communicated the corporate brand, strategic elements and MMU niche in telecommunication, technology, engineering and media innovation. The changes were in line with the Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016 which had been prepared by MMC management.

Business-Level/Mid-Level Management: The business-level management created awareness of the new corporate brand to the section heads during a face-to-face departmental meeting.

The academic deans communicated the faculty identity that aligns with the university identity through meetings. The deans and chairs of department consulted over product value creation and held industry-partnership meetings to manage visibility and course or subject relevance.

Policy and procedures: In the same vein, the directors and Heads of division created awareness and aligned procedures with the new institution. The mid-level management interpreted the strategic elements to the division heads using face-to-face communication, through meetings and seminars. The managers deployed the technology approach through the use of the intranet and GroupWise.

Functional Level/Heads of Department: the Heads of academic sections communicated with the deans of faculty (upwards) and the faculty members (downwards) on section identity, curriculum changes, work distribution, and product branding. This was communicated through staff training, benchmarking, meetings, internal memos, and intranet.

Operational Level/Staff: The staff received communication through departmental or sectional meetings. The staff communicated among themselves at the departmental and sectional levels. The staff then projected the information through positive and planned behaviour to stakeholders. This interaction is important as it reduces internal conflict and confrontation (Bendix, 2001).

Reputation and Image Management:
Employee projection of positive behaviour may be communicated using their personal messaging via the various digital, visual and print communication channels. The positive behaviour projection will be through the corporate messages to internal and external stakeholders. Employee projection to the community through the choice of CSR projects and the implementation (planned visual and verbal presentation) which promotes corporate image. Consistent projection of positive behaviour, visual and verbal communication promoted corporate reputation.

Positive employee behaviour has an (positive) impact of the workplace environment. Positive behaviour creates need for creativity and innovation in the workplace. Innovation and interaction across sections and departments to accomplish projects and task promotes financial performance.

Inter-departmental and cross-departmental communication promotes employee trust horizontally and vertically during project and task implementation. This promotes the accomplishment of vision and mission. This results in management communication with employees. This results in effective communication which leads to positive communication management.

Table 32: Proposed Communication Model for a Transforming Public University
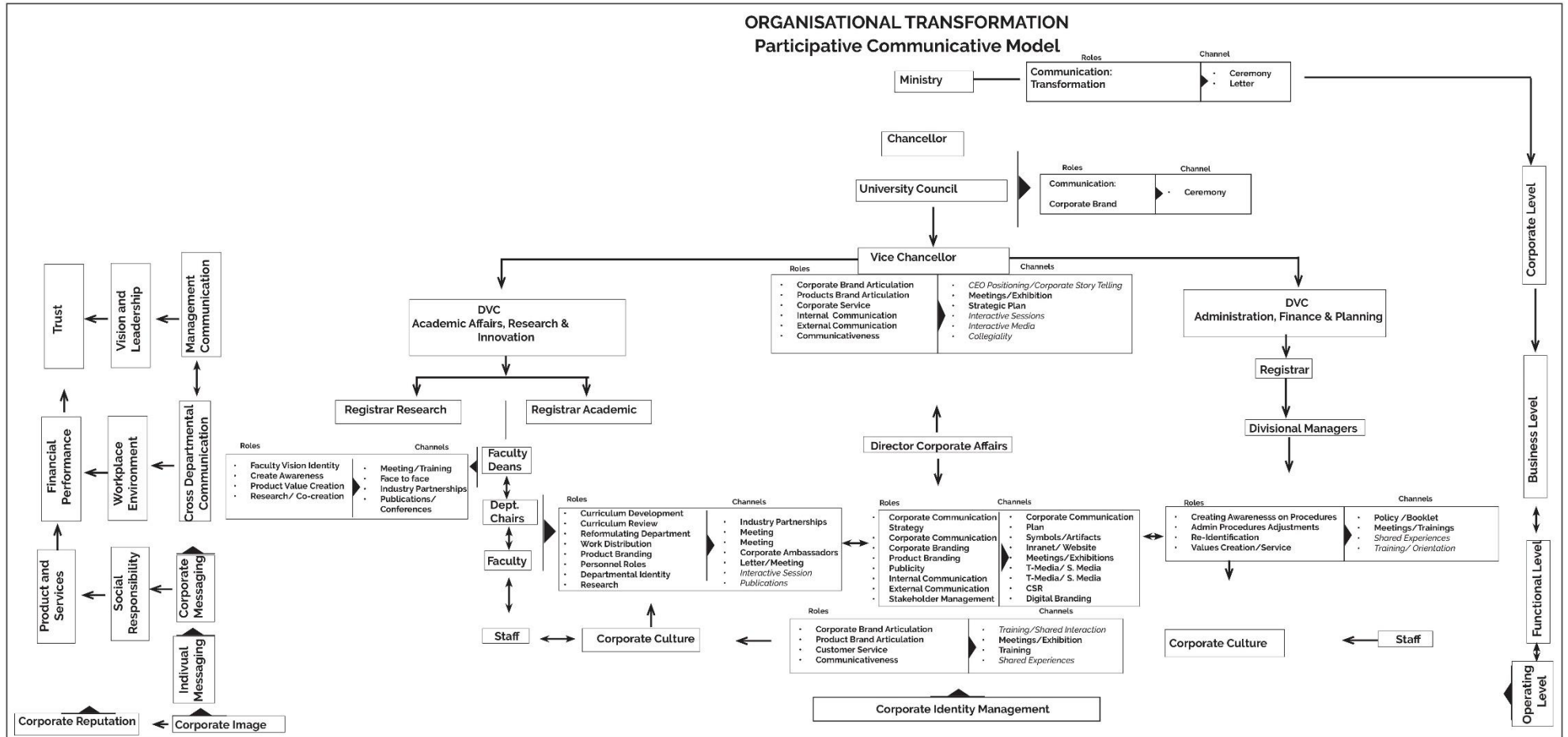
Source: Researcher, 2019

6.1.6 Proposed Communication Model For Transforming Organisation

University Council Communication: Puth (2000) asserts that corporate level provides direction, meaning and personality. Thus, the corporate level decisions were communicated to the senior management through a written memo, intranet, ceremony and face-to-face meeting. This is top-down communication at both the corporate and management levels. The communication should involve a corporate communicator to manage media relations and create awareness of institutional status change.

University Management Communication: The university management then communicates to employees the organisation's structural, strategic, academic directions and initiates the transformation process internally.

Puth (2000) states that management shares university messages through oral presentation. In the same vein, management communicates the transformation process to deans and divisional heads in a meeting. Management announces the formulation and proposal of the strategic elements through intranet and social media. Management initiates employee participation in the creation of new symbols and messages and the new organisational identity.

Deans and Divisions: Deans and Heads of division (Business level) communicate with heads of sections and together create faculty and division identity which is communicated upwards and downwards through social media and GroupWise. This structure aligns with Modaff and Dewine (2002) who advocate for genuine participation and free-flowing communication in all directions.

This is an interactive and cross-departmental session to determine sectional identity in line with corporate values and new strategic elements. The agreed sectional identity is communicated upwards to university management.

The Faculty deans and Divisional heads convene a meeting and communicate the institutional changes at departmental and divisional levels. The deans and heads communicate the strategic elements as part of the change process.

The departmental staff and faculty interact in a face-to-face meeting and at departmental media platforms to propose departmental changes and recommendations to the dean and division heads as part of departmental identity formulation and formation. Consensus is built regarding departmental identity and image. Hall (1987) argues that members from collective cultures prefer face-to-face interpersonal communication channels.

The Chair of Department and departmental faculty review and formulate curriculum to align with the transforming organisation, strategic plan, and industry and professional input

Each section staff interacts with the departmental identity through social media and recommendations forwarded to Deans and division heads. The negotiated identity is communicated vertically and horizontally for members to own and project it during stakeholder management meetings.

Coordination of corporate Identity: The new identities are discussed at a meeting with the corporate communication manager, deans and divisional heads to reach a negotiated identity for the transforming organisation.

Corporate identity is discussed at a meeting with the university management to arrive at a consensus. The heads then communicate with the employees in the respective sections.

Corporate culture: Departmental heads and deans each convene a meeting to agree on the corporate culture that is a mix between collegiality and entrepreneurial university. A research culture to align with the corporate value of innovation and excellence in learning.

Product Branding: Each department appoints a brand ambassador to product brand management and publicity. The corporate communication department coordinates the process to align with the corporate communication strategy for competitive advantage. The branding provides for visibility of the various products and services. This brand ambassadors communicate trendy leadership and scholarship.

Corporate Branding: (Operation and functional levels) In addition, the corporate communicator is to coordinate training of corporate identity and corporate culture to enhance corporate branding and image. The communicator also spearhead's corporate branding and stakeholder management alongside faculty and dean.

The training sessions and sensitisation meetings are coordinated by the corporate communication office. The interaction among employees promotes employee engagement. The employee engagement promotes employee identity projection which positively impacts corporate image. A prolonged projection of the positive image has a positive impact on corporate reputation.

Reputation Management

Employee projection of positive behaviour will be communicated through their personal messaging via the various digital, visual and print communication channels. The positive behaviour projection will be through the corporate messages to internal and external stakeholders. Employee projection to the community through the choice of CSR projects and the implementation (planned visual and verbal presentation) which promotes corporate image. Consistent projection of positive behaviour, visual and verbal communication promoted corporate reputation.

Positive employee behaviour has an (positive) impact on the workplace environment. Positive behaviour creates need for creativity and innovation in the workplace. Innovation and interaction across sections and departments to accomplish projects and task promotes financial performance.

Inter-departmental and cross-departmental communication promotes employee trust horizontally and vertically during project and task implementation. This promotes the accomplishment of vision and mission. This results in management communication with employees. This results in effective communication which leads to positive communication management.

6.2 Implications of the Study

This section reviews the implications of the study to communication theory, communication practice and organisation practice mainly in public institutions and public universities in Kenya and Africa at large.

6.2.1 Implications for Communication Theory

The corporate communication roles theory (Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 2012) proposes that practitioners perform different roles to achieve effective and efficient communication within the organisation, especially a transforming university. Efficient and effective communication is attained if the communication roles of corporate communication functions are clearly defined. This study has affirmed that the employee, in an organisation, is a crucial contribution to enhancing corporate identity, image, and reputation for the competitive advantage of the institution. Grunig *et al*. (2002) state that the articulation of roles during organisational transformation may facilitate information exchange and knowledge between management and employees for competitive advantage.

Thus, this study places emphasis on an assertion that employee participation in organisational transformation is through information sharing, communication of strategic elements, and the strategic role of corporate communicator which involves planning and implementation. This study affirms that effective communication planning and implementation with cascaded communication and feedback processes will positively influence employees and impact positively on the corporate image and reputation, especially during transformation.

This study confirms the findings on excellence theory by Okoth (2007) which shows how strategic communication can be applied to create a positive reputation and thus competitive advantage for the institution. The study confirms excellence theory by showing how public universities and where the practice has not been optimised effectively or excellently communicate, especially during organisational transformation. Excellence theory advocates for employee empowerment and the corporate communication practitioner placement in the dominant coalition to enhance the participatory approach to corporate strategy formulation. This study affirms that corporate communication plays a crucial role in public universities although the division is faced by

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numerous challenges such as financing. The corporate communication practitioner plays a critical role in contributing, through publicity and stakeholder management, towards competitive advantage in the institution.

6.2.2 Implications to Communication Practice

This study adds to the body of knowledge in Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa where studies have hardly interrogated how public universities manage corporate identity and reputation for competitive advantage. In a country such as Kenya, university competition due to the expansion of higher education has challenged institutional sustainability. This implies that communication professionals can use a participatory and top-down approach to contribute to effective adjustments in the organisational practice. There has also been a lack of clarity on the role of strategic communication during organisation transformation, mainly in public institutions such as universities. Competitive advantage has not been an area of concern for public universities in Kenya since the institutions are funded by the government. However, with reduced government funding and considerably more universities depending on state funds, institutions must attract students and expand sources of revenues. In the scope of the study, communication professionals are implied to have an external role in image management and competitive advantage management. To achieve positive organisation results through communication, internal stakeholder involvement is vital. It is, thus, important for similar institutional processes to closely examine the role of internal stakeholders in corporate reputation management of a transforming higher learning organisation, especially in a developing economy. Furthermore, the active management of reputation and internal stakeholder communication management is crucial to a transforming organisation, and must similarly address corporate identity management.

6.2.3 Implications to Organisation Practice

The objective of any management is to ensure that organisational objectives and, thus, performance are achieved. Most of the public universities in Kenya have been struggling due to inadequate funding and a resultant loss of public confidence and thus lower student intakes. There has also been strong growth in public and private universities but conversely reduced numbers of students qualify at school to join a university. This study implies that public universities and private

universities can use strategic communication to achieve a competitive advantage in the recruitment of further students. Management of universities may use corporate identity and reputation management and thus maximise on university identity and reputation management in order to enhance their competitive advantage in the recruitment of students. Corporate communication practitioners, marketing professionals, and university management staff who are concerned with the formulation and identification of corporate identity and reputation management strategies during organisational transformation must incorporate a participatory and top-down approach to internal communication.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Further study is recommended on managing the corporate reputation of a transforming organisation in other public universities in Kenya, private universities in Kenya or elsewhere in Africa and private entities in Kenya and may yield comparable findings of this study and possibly suggest wider relevance of the findings. A repeat study could also be done in other public sector entities where competitive advantage is not considered important. This study examined the corporate image interpretation and measurement, communication challenges and opportunities and corporate identity and employee interpretation of identity messages. A further study on corporate reputation during transformation is recommended where more variables will be incorporated in the study. Stakeholder involvement mainly of the employees was found to be significant in corporate reputation. A further study is recommended where various stakeholders' involvement can be studied to assess the varying roles that contribute to a competitive advantage over comparable institutions, the corporate image, and reputation.

6.4 Conclusion of Chapter

This chapter has discussed findings on how MMU as a transforming organisation communicated with its employees about its corporate identity, image, and reputation and identified where it fell short of this strategic objective during a period of rapid transformation. The chapter discussed findings in view of each of the research objectives and proposed a communication model to use during organisational transformation. The chapter recommends further areas of study on managing the corporate reputation of a transforming organisation in other public universities in Kenya,

private universities in Kenya or Africa and private entities in Kenya. Such studies will be important since they will contextualise the findings of this study and may suggest parallels to other institutions.

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APPENDIX 1: EMPLOYEE QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

Dear Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU) Employee,

Thank you for making a valuable contribution to the organisation. I value your opinion and would greatly appreciate it if you take some time to share with us by completing this questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed to learn more about *managing the corporate reputation of a transforming organisation: A case study of Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU).* This questionnaire is part of Mrs. Margaret Mtange's research for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Media Studies at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa.

The information that you provide will be used for academic purposes only. It will be treated with uttermost confidentiality and no one in the organisation will know how (or even whether) you responded. To ensure that this happens, kindly refrain from writing your name or any information that may be used to identify you anywhere in the questionnaire. Responses from completed questionnaires will be collated for analysis and stored in a filing cabinet. Once the researcher has successfully completed the degree programme, the completed questionnaires will be destroyed.

Kindly answer all questions. It may take up to 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Thank you!

SECTION A: BIO DATA

To answer each question in this section, please tick (√) the category that applies to you

What is your age?		
	Between 21 - 30 years	
	Between 31 - 40 years	
	Between 41 - 50 years	
	Between 51 - 60 years	
	Over 61 years	
What is your gender?	*(Please tick one)*	
	Female	
	Male	
What is your marital status?	*(Please tick one)*	
	Single	
	Married	
	Widowed	

4. What is your highest educational qualification? *(Please tick one)*

Primary school certificate		Bachelor's degree	
Secondary school certificate		Master's degree	
College/University certificate		Doctorate	
College/University diploma		Other (please specify)	
College/University/higher diploma level			

5. What is your employee category? *(Please tick one)*

Academic staff	
Administrative staff	

6. For how long have you worked at MMU? *(Please tick one)*

Below 1 year		11 – 15 years	
1 – 5 years		Over 15 years	
6 – 10 years			

SECTION B - COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Listed below are communication challenges often associated with an employee's work.
For each statement, *please circle **one option number*** that best indicates how you feel.

	Statement	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
7.	Information from my superiors is usually accurate	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Information from my subordinates is usually accurate	1	2	3	4	5
9.	The university management encourages interaction among employees on the same job level	1	2	3	4	5
10.	The university leadership emphasizes and engages in communication with employees	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The university leadership motivates and inspires employees	1	2	3	4	5

12.	The university management constantly communicates any major changes taking place	1	2	3	4	5

13. About how much time per working day (of eight hours) do you spend communicating using the following methods? *(Please circle __one number__ for each method)*

Method	1 Less than 1hr	2 1 – 2hrs	3 3 – 4 hrs	4 5 – 6 hrs	5 Over 6 hrs
Written memo	1	2	3	4	5
Face–to-face	1	2	3	4	5
Telephone	1	2	3	4	5
Group wise	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting	1	2	3	4	5
Other	1	2	3	4	5

14. Through which channel does management communicate changes within organisation? *(please tick all that apply)*

Written memo			Meeting	

Face-to-Face			Mass Media	
Telephone			Other (specify)	
Intranet (group wise)				

15. Which, in your opinion, are the **two** most preferred channels of communication by MMU employees to receive information about the institution? *(Please tick **two**)*

Personal visits by MMU management			Brochures	
Contact through phone			Media Advertisements	
Exhibitions			Social Media	
Seminars				
University Events				

16. How would you describe the institution *before it became a university* compared to *after it became a university*? *(Please tick one box for each period)*

	Before becoming MMU	After becoming MMU
An organisation that is a personal place like an extended family		
An organisation that is very dynamic and entrepreneurial where people are willing to stick their neck out and take risks		
An organisation that is formal and has structures in which procedures generally govern what people do		
An organisation that is production oriented where major concern is with getting the job done, people are not personally involved		
I am not sure		

CORPORATE IDENTITY AND CULTURE

How would you describe MMU's way of doing things currently?
*(Please tick **one for each row**)*

17.	Result oriented		*Or*	Work oriented	
18.	One organisation		*Or*	Separate divisions	
19.	Innovative		*Or*	Traditional	
20.	Entrepreneurial		*Or*	Bureaucratic	

21.	Motivated		*Or*	Passive	
22.	Fast		*Or*	Slow	
23.	Focus on customer		*Or*	Focus on internal affairs	

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the option number that **most reflects** your feeling.

	Statement	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
24. .	The vision of MMU is important to me	1	2	3	4	5
25.	The mission of MMU is important to me	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Management encourages employees to focus on goals and objectives to be achieved	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Management encourages productivity, creativity and	1	2	3	4	5

	development initiatives					
28.	Management encourages employees to be involved in decision-making	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Management encourages employees to be responsible for their own quality of work	1	2	3	4	5
30.	The corporate logo is appropriately placed in university stationery	1	2	3	4	5
31.	MMU's corporate values impact on corporate identity	1	2	3	4	5

THE CORPORATE IMAGE

Please answer the following questions appropriately

32. I am aware that my actions (what I do and say) as an employee influences MMU's image *(Please tick one)*

Yes	
No	
Cannot say	

33. How I see my role contributing to the process of building the image of MMU

(Please tick one)

I can influence the process	
I cannot influence the process	
I do not want to influence the process	
I cannot say	

34. Who do you think is responsible for building and maintaining the image of MMU?

*(Tick **all** that apply)*

All employees	
Top management	
The marketing team	
Persons in the front office/reception areas	
Corporate communication department	
Students	

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the option number that most reflects your feeling.

	Statement	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
35.	The current top management have a strong sense of the institution's history	1	2	3	4	5
36.	The employees are knowledgeable about MMU's history and traditions	1	2	3	4	5

		1	2	3	4	5
37.	MMU has leaders who are visible and accessible	1	2	3	4	5
38.	The university has a comprehensive integrated marketing communication strategy that employs appropriate media	1	2	3	4	5

CORPORATE REPUTATION

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the option that most reflects your feeling.

	Statement	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree
39.	MMU is a socially responsible organisation	1	2	3	4	5
40.	MMU contributes actively and voluntarily to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the society	1	2	3	4	5

41.	MMU has high quality graduates who meet market needs	1	2	3	4	5
42.	MMU relates well with parents/sponsors	1	2	3	4	5
43.	MMU is a customer-oriented institution	1	2	3	4	5
44.	This institution treats students courteously, communicates with them and takes care of their safety and health	1	2	3	4	5
45.	MMU generates positive feelings in its stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5
46.	This university generates respect, admiration esteem and confidence from the students	1	2	3	4	5
47.	MMU is an institution with good and innovative leadership	1	2	3	4	5
48.	MMU is an ethical organisation	1	2	3	4	5

49.	MMU has strong values, obeys the laws, is transparent and respects stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5
50.	This institution supports good causes that benefit society	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on employee perception by circling the option that most reflects your feeling.

	Statement	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
51.	The morale of MMU staff is currently good/high	1	2	3	4	5
52.	The university strives to retain talented staff and faculty	1	2	3	4	5
53.	The management is responsive to staff complaints and suggestions	1	2	3	4	5
54.	The management is fair and just in dealing with employees	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on how employee conflict in MMU is managed by circling the option that most reflects your feeling.

Conflict is usually …

	Statement	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Disagree	5 Strongly
55.						

						Disagree
56.	Controlled by management intervention and often fostered by them to maintain their power					
57.	Suppressed by reference to rules, procedures and definitions of responsibility					
58.	Resolved through full discussion of the merits of the work issues involved					
59.	Resolved through open and honest discussion of personal needs and values involved					

60. I would personally gladly recommend other people to come and work at MMU

(Please tick one)

Yes	
No	
Not sure	

Thank you for participating!

APPENDIX 2: MMU MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Topic:	Managing the corporate reputation of a transforming organisation: A case study of Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU)
Researcher:	Margaret Mtange, PhD student, Faculty of Media and Communication (MMU)and PhD student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), South Africa
Statement of age:	I state that I am 18 years of age or older
Purpose of Study:	The purpose of this study is to establish whether management communicated effectively, or excellently, with its employees in order to nurture its corporate identity, image and reputation during a period of transformation.
Procedure:	The procedure involves participating in an interview that will take about 60 minutes. With my consent, this interview may be recorded by a digital voice recorder.
Confidentiality:	All information collected in the study will remain confidential, and my name will not be identified at any time unless I give my consent to reveal these identities. The data I provide will not be linked to my name. The audio files with responses from the in-depth interviews will be password protected and stored. These will be kept by the researcher until successful completion of the PhD studies after which they will be deleted.
Risks:	I understand that there are minimal personal risks associated with my participation and my interview being recorded.

Benefits:	I understand that the research findings may assist MMU to improve how it manages its reputation.
Freedom to withdraw:	I understand that I am free to ask questions and/or to withdraw from participation at and any time without penalty and/or decline to answer certain questions.
Name of participant:	_____
Signature:	_____
Date:	_____

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

The interview procedure will be as follows:

Before the interview

1) The researcher will send requests by electronic mail (e-mail) and follow-up by making phone calls.

2) The interviews will be arranged at a time that suits the respondent at their place of work.

Beginning of the interview

1) Interviews will begin with an overview of the aims of the research and a reminder of the confidential nature of the interview session.

2) Respondents will be asked their role, responsibilities and length of service at the institution. This will serve as a warm up to the interview.

3) Interviews will be recorded to make sure that the sessions are not interrupted by note-taking.

During the interview

1) Respondents will be encouraged to speak without restraint on selected topics. The interviewer will make use of probes to ensure that the interview remains on-topic.

2) The interviewer will concentrate on developing a rapport with the interviewee but will take care not to influence the respondent through non-verbal communication.

End of interview

The interviews will be concluded with an opportunity for the interviewee to share more information that may not have been covered by the questions.

After the interview

The research assistants will type up the transcripts as soon as possible.

MMU MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview #: _____

This interview guide will be used to ask participants questions. Probes will only be used when the participant's responses do not lead to the relevant information required.

Introduction

a) Thank the participant for taking part in the study.

b) Introduce the participant to the researcher and the research. Prior to the interview, a copy of the interview questions will have been sent to those participating.

c) Ground rules: Explain the interview process, the informed consent form, and permission for recording.

General Questions

1. What is your position in the organisation?

2. Briefly state your responsibilities?

3. When did you join the organisation?

Main Questions

Management's Communication of Corporate Culture and Identity

4. In what ways have you created awareness of MMU's mission and vision among key stakeholders?

   - **Probe 1**: Employees in your section?

   - **Probe 2**: Students whom you come in contact with?

   - **Probe 3**: Other stakeholders such as professional bodies

5. How do you orient new employees in your section to fit into the way things are done here?

6. How do you build positive relationships among employees in various sections?

    -   **Probe 1**: Mention some of the ways you have previously used to build these relations across the changing institutional status?

    -   **Probe 2**: What can be done now to enhance these relations?

Management of Reputation in a Transforming Institution

7. What have you done/are you doing to increase MMU's competitive advantage in the following areas?

    -   Student enrolment?

    -   Curriculum and methodology?

    -   Academic Staff?

    -   Marketing strategy?

    -   Facilities (of students and staff)?

    -   Staff welfare?

    -   Financial performance?

    -   Globalization?

8. In your opinion, should employees be involved in decision-making process during institutional transformation? Explain Why?

Thank you for participating!

APPENDIX 3 – CORPORATE COMMUNICATION OFFICERS IN - DEPTH INTERVIEW

1. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Topic: Managing the corporate reputation of a transforming organisation:
A case study of Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU)

Researcher: Margaret Mtange, Faculty of Media and Communication, MMU and PhD student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), South Africa

Statement of age: I state that I am 18 years of age or older

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to establish whether management communicated effectively, or excellently, with its employees in order to nurture its corporate identity, image and reputation during a period of transformation.

Procedure: The procedure involves participating in an interview that will take about 60 minutes. With my consent, this interview may be recorded by a digital voice recorder.

Confidentiality: All information collected in the study will remain confidential, and my name will not be identified at any time unless I give my consent to reveal these identities. The data I provide will not be linked to my name. The audio files with responses from the in-depth interviews will be password protected and stored. These will be kept by the researcher until successful completion of the PhD studies after which they will be deleted.

Risks: I understand that there are no personal risks associated with my participation and my interview being recorded.

Benefits: I understand that the research findings may assist MMU to improve how it manages its reputation.

Freedom to withdraw:	I understand that I am free to ask questions and/or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty and/or decline to answer certain questions.

I hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the above-mentioned study.

Name of participant:	_____
Signature:	_____
Date:	_____

2. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

The interview procedure will be as follows:

Before the interview

3) The researcher will send requests by electronic mail (e-mail) and follow-up by making phone calls.
4) The interviews will be arranged at a time that suits the respondent at their place of work.

Beginning of the interview

4) Interviews will begin with an overview of the aims of the research and a reminder of the confidential nature of the interview session.

5) Respondents will be asked their role, responsibilities and length of service at the institution. This will serve as a warm up to the interview.

6) Interviews will be recorded to make sure that the sessions are not interrupted by note-taking.

During the interview

3) Respondents will be encouraged to speak without restraint on selected topics. The interviewer will make use of probes to ensure that the interviewee remains on-topic.

4) The interviewer will concentrate on developing a rapport with the interviewee but will take care not to influence the respondent through non-verbal communication.

End of interview

The interviews will be concluded with an opportunity for the interviewee to share more information that may not have been covered by the questions.

After the interview

The research assistants will type up the transcripts as soon as possible.

3. THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview #: _____

This interview guide will be used to ask participants questions. At times, probes will only be used when the participant's responses do not lead to the relevant information required.

Introduction

d) Thank the participant for taking part in the study.
e) Introduce the participant to the researcher and the research. Prior to the interview, a copy of the interview questions will have been sent to those participating.
f) Ground rules: Explain the interview process, the informed consent form, and permission for recording.

General questions

9. What is your position in the organisation?
10. What are your responsibilities?
11. When did you join the organisation?

Main Questions

Communication Strategies for Internal and External Stakeholders

12. What strategies do you use to communicate MMU's corporate identity to key stakeholders?

   - **Probe 1**: Its symbols such as Logo, artefacts, and corporate colours?
   - **Probe 2**: Its mission statement and slogan?
   - **Probe 3**: Its vision, values and philosophy?
   - **Probe 4**: During period of organisational change?

13. How do you communicate to create a positive corporate impression of MMU among key stakeholders; and how do you know that the impression has been created?

   - **Probe 1**: New and old employees of MMU?

- **Probe 2**: Students?
- **Probe 3**: Industry and Professional bodies?
- **Probe 4**: Local community?
- **Probe 5**: During period of organisational change?

Communication of Organisational Changes to Employees

14. How does management communicate to employees about major changes taking place at MMU?

Probe 1: Institutional changes such as from a constituent university college to a full-fledged university?

Probe 2: Changes in top management which have been frequent in the last ten years?

Probe 3: Change of institutional policies?

Communication Challenges and Opportunities in Reputation Management

15. How, in your opinion, did employees respond to the communication on institutional change?

16. How can corporate communication department use employees to manage reputation during corporate changes?

Thank you for participating!
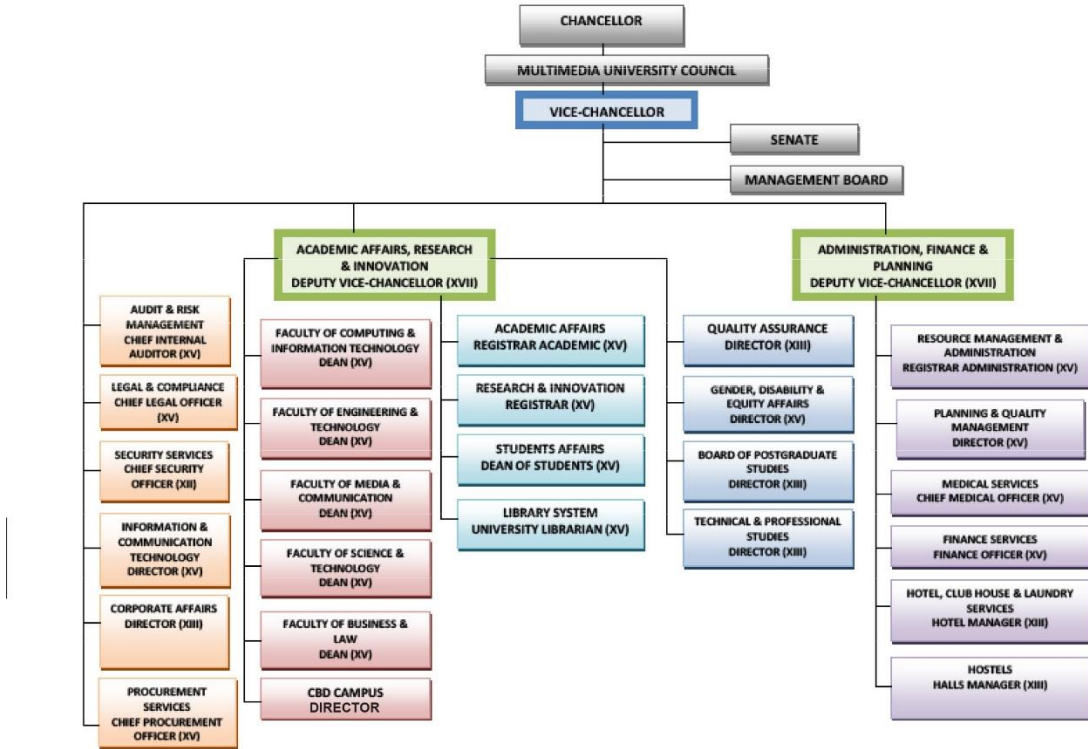
APPENDIX 4: MMU OLD AND NEW LOGOS
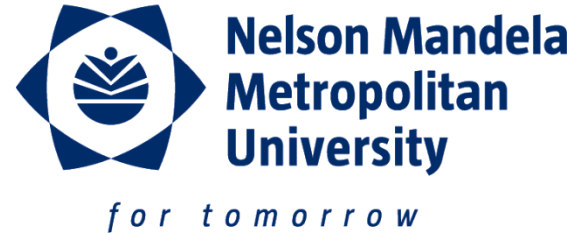

MMU OLD LOGO

MMU NEW LOGO

APPENDIX 5: MMU ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

APPENDIX 6 ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER

• PO Box 77000 • Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

• Port Elizabeth • 6031 • South Africa • www.nmmu.ac.za

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

for tomorrow

SOUTH CAMPUS

FACULTY OF ARTS

Tel . +27 (0)41 5042855   Fax. +27 (0)41 5041661

Noxolo.mngonyama@nmmu.ac.za

Ref: H/16/ART/JMS-004

21 November 2016

Mrs MM Mtange

P O BOX 1539

KENYA

00502

Dear Mrs Mtange

MANAGING THE CORPORATE REPUTATION OF A TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY OF KENYA

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the FPGSC Higher Degrees sub-committee of the Faculty of Arts Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee.

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The Ethics clearance reference number is **H/16/ART/JMS-004**, and is valid for three years, from 15 NOVEMBER 2016 – 15 NOVEMBER 2019. Please inform the FPGSC, via your supervisor, if any changes (particularly in the methodology) occur during this time. An annual affirmation to the effect that the protocols in use are still those for which approval was granted, will be required from you. You will be reminded timeously of this responsibility.

We wish you well with the project.

Yours sincerely

Mrs N Mngonyama

FACULTY ADMINISTRATOR

cc: Promoter/Supervisor

         HoD

         School Representative: Faculty FPGSC

APPENDIX 7 MMU CLEARANCE LETTER

MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY OF KENYA

P .O. BOX 15653 - 00503, NAIROBI, KENYA.

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

(MMU is ISO 9001:2008 Certified)

Ref: MMU/DVC AF&P/2657/(46)   27th September 2016

The Chair
Ethics Committee
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
P.O. Box 77000
Port Elizabeth 6031
SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Sir/Madam
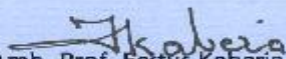
SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY CLEARANCE: MRS. MARGARET MTANGE

The above referred is an employee of Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU) (Lecturer) on permanent and pensionable terms of service since July 2014. She is currently a registered PhD student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Her proposed area of study is:-

"Managing the Corporate Identity, Image and Reputation of a Complex and Transforming Organization: A study of Multimedia University of Kenya"

She plans to undertake her study at Multimedia University of Kenya and the University has no objection to this proposition.

Please accord her the necessary assistance that she may require to achieve her study goals.

Yours faithfully

Amb. Prof. Festus Kaberia, PhD., OGW.
VICE CHANCELLOR

Leader in innovative Technology

Magadi Road, off Bomas of Kenya
P.O. Box 15653-00503, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 207 1391
Cell: 0724-257083
      0735-900008

Email: vc@mmu.ac.ke
website: www.mmu.ac.ke
Fax: +254 20 2071247

APPENDIX 8 MMU CLEARANCE 2

MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY OF KENYA
P .O. BOX 15653 - 00503, NAIROBI, KENYA.
(MMU is ISO 9001:2008 Certified)

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR (AA, R&I)

REF: MMU/DVC AA RI/RESEARCH/VOL.1

29th May, 2017

Mrs. Margaret Mtange
P O Box 15653 – 00503
NAIROBI

Dear Mrs. Mtange

RE: <u>REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH AT MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY OF KENYA</u>

Reference is made to the above subject matter pursuant to your letter dated 24th May, 2017 vide which you sought permission to undertake research work from the University.

We are pleased to inform you that your request has been granted and permission approved for you to undertake your research within Multimedia University of Kenya, Main Campus.

You are required to report to the Registrar Administration before you commence your research. You will be required to observe the University Rules and Regulations.

We hope that our support will contribute to the success of your career development.

Yours faithfully,

PROF. PAUL N. MBATIA PhD.
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (AA, R&I)

c.c.   Vice Chancellor
        Deputy Vice Chancellor – AF&P
        Reg. Administration
        Chief Security Officer

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Tel: +254 20 207 1391   *Leader in Innovative Technology*

Email: vc@mmu.ac.ke
website: www.mmu.ac.ke
Fax: +254 20 2071247

APPENDIX 9 NACOSTI CLEARANCE LETTER

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245,318249
Email:dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
when replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No **NACOSTI/P/17/75075/17199**

Date: **12th May, 2017**

Margaret Mulekani Mtange
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
SOUTH AFRICA.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"Managing the corporate reputation of a transforming organization: a case study of Multimedia University of Kenya,"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **11th May, 2018.**

You are advised to report to **the Vice Chancellor, Multimedia University of Kenya, the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

BONIFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The Vice Chancellor
Multimedia University of Kenya.

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO 9001: 2008 certified

APPENDIX 10 MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY OF KENYA CLEARANCE 2

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MS. MARGARET MULEKANI MTANGE
of NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN
UNIVERSITY, 1539-502 nAIROBI,has
been permitted to conduct research in
Nairobi County

on the topic: *MANAGING THE*
CORPORATE REPUTATION OF A
TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATION: A CASE
STUDY OF MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY OF
KENYA

for the period ending:
11th May,2018

....
Applicant's
Signature

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/75075/17199
Date Of Issue : 12th May,2017
Fee Recieved :Ksh 2000

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officer will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one (1) soft copy of your final report.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NACOSTI

National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation

RESEACH CLEARANCE
PERMIT

Serial No.A 14120

CONDITIONS: see back page