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MANAGING CORPORATE IDENTITY DURING ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN A PUBLIC INSTITUTION IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Universities, like other institutions, are under pressure to manage their corporate identity and corporate reputation, in the global competitive climate. Few studies in Africa focus on the impact of internal communication on corporate identity and reputation management during organizational transformation. This study interrogates how a transforming and complex public institution in Kenya managed its corporate identity, image and corporate reputation during transformation for competitive advantage. The study sought to establish whether Multimedia University of Kenya (MMU) management communicated excellently with its employees to nurture the corporate identity, image and reputation during a ten-year period of rapid transformation.

Methodology: Data was collected using in-depth interviews from eighteen senior and mid-level management and employee representatives who were purposively selected. In addition, data was gathered through 153 self-administered questionnaires using the stratified random sampling method from MMU faculty and administrative staff.

Findings: The study established that MMU management created awareness of institutional changes and identity using formal meetings as well as interactive and mediated channels such as telephone conversations and intranet which facilitated record-keeping. It was noted that top-down and bottom-up communication approaches build employee engagement and trust yet respondents lacked trust in the accuracy of the information from subordinates which implied an element of information exclusion. Thus, the employees advocated for digital, interactive and interpersonal channels such as social media, telephone exchanges, personal visits by MMU management, and university events for bonding, engagement and identification in the changing institution. The study established that publicity and marketing activities to prospective students and sponsors be through paid media using private television and vernacular radio stations, owned media using MMU radio and website, and earned media using traditional print media to manage MMU brand and image. The respondents recognized the MMU brand as a leader in telecommunication, technology, mechanical, manufacturing, and media training with state-of-the-art equipment and robust faculty. These findings challenge university administration to engage with the corporate communication function and focus on the continual enhancement of corporate identity and reputation management practices for competitive advantage.

Recommendations: The study recommends a communication policy and management practice for effective employee interpretation of institutional messages to enhance engagement, positioning, brand ambassadors, and employee coaching to nurture the new ethos, identity and brand during institutional changes. A progressive policy in which institutional management addresses inclusion to build trust, provides for interactive digital channels for engagement, and articulates identity through written and verbal channels to effectively communicate corporate messages and enrich the corporate reputation of a transforming public institution.

Keywords: *Corporate communication, corporate identity, corporate image, corporate reputation, employee engagement, organizational transformation*

INTRODUCTION

The importance of corporate communication in the success of an organisation is widely acknowledged in academic literature. In a competitive and changing environment, corporate communication scholars have to prescribe a framework that will establish and maintain a favorable identity and reputation for organisations (Cornelissen, 2004; Ptaszyski, 1989). This is because reputation gauges an organisation's relative standing both internally with employees and externally with its stakeholders (Mazzei, 2013). In the face of increasing global competition universities, like other organisations, are under pressure to either adopt an 'entrepreneurial' or 'traditional' approach and thus align their corporate identity (Steiner, Sundstrom, & Sammalisto, 2013) and manage corporate reputation accordingly (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). Few studies focus on internal communication's influence on corporate identity and reputation management during organisational transformations (Tourish, 1997), especially in emerging economies. This paper seeks to identify the internal and external communication strategies that a selected transforming public university used to manage its corporate identity, image, and reputation. In addition, the study will analyze how management communicated to its employees, its corporate culture, and corporate identity in order to manage its corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation.

The practice of managing corporate identity and image leads to effective organizational transformation. Managing the corporate identity involves self-presentation which is internally articulated through behavior, symbolism, and communication to project the corporate personality. Symbolism incorporates the visual presentation of an organization through logos and house styles while communication includes advertisements, publicity, products which have an impact on employee behaviour (Cornelissen, 2004). Thus, the institution's management, during transformation, is an opportunity to purposefully, strategically, and visually communicate consistently to internal publics which will over time impact corporate image and reputation. The resultant internal self-representation will be projected outward, thereby impacting the corporate image. Therefore, corporate image is the organization's representation to its external public through corporate messages, services and products at a point in time (Cornelissen, 2011; Bakker, 2012). When the corporate image appears cumulatively, recipients of these messages interact with the organization, and their interest and involvement are cultivated. Since cumulative mental pictures about an entity may be distorted during periods of organizational transition, it is important that management strives to create cumulative and consistent mental pictures for the key publics to build this image. Academic institutions, like other transforming institutions, are equally compelled to maintain a distinct image for competitive advantage in the increasingly competitive environment of tertiary education. The dominant coalition of a transforming university is expected to attain the desired corporate image by working on factors that affect image such as organization size, organizational structure, message diversity, organisational communication, memory decay and element of time. Thus, over time, effective management of these cumulative corporate associations and interpretations translate into favourable corporate reputation of a transforming institution.

In a complex and dynamic context, vibrant institution's purpose is to align corporate strategy to structure and culture and identity. The expansion of higher education in Kenya to align with Kenya's *Vision 2030's* social strategy on education and training aimed to transform education

and build institutional capacity (World Bank, 2000; Kithinji, 2009). For example, the benefits of strategic alliances among three universities included the transfer of technology, specialization, shared expenses and shared risks despite the lack of trust and honesty among partner universities (Mtonga & Banja, 2020). In the current study, the institutional status further changed after the award of a Charter by Commission for University Education (CUE). The University charter was awarded after CUE was satisfied that MMU attained the set conditions on physical resources, standards on academic programmes and university library (Education, 2014). The charter led to the public university refocusing its strategy to attain world class centre of excellence (MMU, October 2015). MMU is one of the 70 universities operating in Kenya (CUE, 2018). MMU's transformations are not only external, which impacts on its reputation, but also internal, which influences the institutional identity, image and reputation. Thus, this paper sought to evaluate how a transforming technological university in an emerging economy, like Kenya, managed its corporate identity and reputation in a changing digital environment.

Problem Statement

Literature demonstrates that corporate reputation management research has been undertaken from different perspectives, disciplines and contexts (van Riel & Fombrun, 2008). Research on corporate identity and reputation management in universities has, mainly, focused on stakeholders such as prospective and current students, faculty and research staff, community (Sabando, Zorilla, & Forcada, 2018) but there has been little focus on employee communication and university reputation management during university transformation in emerging economies. Hence, this study will focus on how a transforming institution has managed its identity and reputation by evaluating its first frontier, employees' perceptions. In previous reputation and image studies, critical theory scholars focus on how institutional management manipulates corporate culture for their own interest to influence identity while studies in the African context focus on ideological and traditional factors which may influence desired corporate image. The studies focus on the critical theory, leadership and ethnic perspectives as well as a preference for a quantitative approach. Thus, the current paper takes a poststructuralist approach which advocates for the internal public's participation in identity, image and reputation management during institutional transformation using mixed methods. The study notes that survival and progressive forces, arising from the curriculum, policy, technological and generational transformations, compel academic institutions of higher to appraise their corporate identity and reputation. 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. Therefore, this paper analyses how, from an internal public's perspective, a transforming technological university in an emerging economy managed its corporate identity, image and reputation for competitive advantage.

Theoretical Framework

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 theory was a paradigm shift in public relations theory and practice as it links corporate communication practice to strategic management by providing guidelines for communication coordination and behaviour between the organisation, its stakeholders, and its messages (Browning, 2010; Combs,

2006; Argenti, 2007). Among the theory's eight tenets, three of these advocate that the dominant coalition practice inclusion, symmetrical and dialogue for effective stakeholder engagement and communication. The study posits that during institutional transformation, these three attributes become critical in image and reputation management for competitive advantage. The theory further highlights the integrative role of the communication practitioner in promoting an ethical communication process.

While the excellence theory tenets promote image and reputation management through stakeholder engagement, Birkigt and Stadler's (1986) model proposes that effective corporate identity management is about the consistent articulation of symbols, forms of communication, and employee behavior. The model proposes that if the dominant coalition undertakes to articulate to the internal public the importance of the institution's logos, planned forms of corporate advertising and employee behavior, then the corporate identity will be effectively presented to the external public. Thus, it is pertinent that the dominant coalition and corporate communicator, during institutional transformation, analyse the changing status of the institution and provide a communication strategy that best enhances corporate identity, image and reputation for corporate advantage. It is important to note that Schiele, (2017), from an Afrocentric orientation, proposes that a transforming university incorporate an organisational culture whose emphasis is shared values, collective identity, shared community responsibility and 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 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 due to the complexities brought about by subgroups within the institution due to ethnic, religious, gender, generational, professional, disciplinary, and demographic prejudices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reputation definitions vary based on context and perspective but all stress on reputation as an evaluative process. Gotsi and Wilson (2001) defined corporate reputation, from a stakeholder's and European perspective, as the stakeholder's overall evaluation of an organisation over time. Corporate reputation is the overall assessment of the organisation as scrutinized by stakeholders (Fombrun, 1996). Marken (2002) defined reputation as an asset that included quality of products and services, ability to innovate, value as long-term investment, financial stability, ability to attract, develop and retain talent, use of corporate asset and quality of management. Thus, it can be concluded that corporate reputation represents a value judgment about an organisation's qualities built over a period of time and has a historical dimension represented through consistency (Le Roux, 2003). Aula and Mantere (2013) describe reputation as an ongoing process whereby beliefs and expectations are formed and altered through ongoing dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders.

Corporate Identity and Employee Engagement

Scholars posit that corporate reputation is influenced by corporate identity and corporate image. Corporate identity originates within the organisation and presents itself through strategic and visual elements such as mission, vision, strategic plan, logo and uniform (Fombrun, 1996). Corporate image is how the organisation presents itself through direct communication such as advertisements or media reports (Brown *et al.*, 2006; Fombrun, 1996; Shamma, 2012). It can be argued that identity is how the organisation wishes to communicate within the organisation while image is how the institution projects itself to the stakeholder. Therefore, Van Riel (2007) has outlined six principles of communication associated with high corporate reputation ranking visibility, distinctiveness, and authenticity which are elements of corporate identity; elements of image include transparency through access to accurate information, consistency in word and deed through employee coaching and responsiveness through dialogue and feedback. The six principles influence corporate reputation but may not be achieved without employee's role. Thus, it is pertinent that a transforming university examines how these principles are communicated to employees for effective reputation management.

Gardberg (2001) introduced the importance of managing corporate reputation at various cadres within the organisation and advocated that reputation management be addressed at different employee groups using different communication strategies. On the other hand, Helen (2011) in *Employees' awareness of their impact on corporate reputation* stressed that employees' reputation awareness is influenced by pride, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and perceived corporate reputation. Helen (2011) linked reputation management to internal motivation factors such as job satisfaction and affective commitment. Currently, scholars posit that reputation management during university transformation may be influenced by organisation's communication of corporate identity and how the organisation projects itself through physical and digital interactions (Rokka, Karlsson, & Tienari, 2015).

Corporate Identity, Communication and University Transformation

In the changing digital era, corporate identity now refers to the communication of core values, philosophy and strategy of the organisation through the delivery of its products and services (Bick, Jacobson, & Abratt, 2012). Hence, the current study concludes that corporate identity in the digital era is articulated through corporate history, philosophy, technology, and organisational nomenclature. On the contrary, Hatch and Schultz (1997) relate corporate identity to organisational behavior. Organisational behavior which incorporates employees and employee behavior in identity management. Kennedy (1997) emphasized the role of employee engagement in identity management (Kennedy, 1997). Scholars aligning with Kennedy (1997) concluded that employee engagement will be attained if management communicates benevolence, conformity, tradition and security. However, employee engagement through technology promotes constant articulation and exposure to messages from management to employees to create familiarity, shared meaning, and shared values to strengthen corporate identity.

Some scholars posit that effective communication involves educating employees about the organisational culture and values, connecting employees to the business, aligning employee actions with customer needs, providing financial information and objectives, promoting new policies, integrating new employees, sharing information and demonstrating leadership during change (Yates, 2006). Furthermore, effective communication involves a collective understanding

of language, culture and norms among employee groups or units to govern actions, decisions and behaviors (Akyazi, 2017). These scholars' perspectives are that information sharing and interaction between management and employees may use a top-down approach. However, other scholars posit that effective communication during change must incorporate face-to-face and digital interactions which enhance employee-to-employee interaction. Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2014) argue that computer-mediated exchange and shared electronic resources have an enormous potential to encourage employee interaction and participation.

Scholars opine that employee interaction and engagement during change involves providing relevant information, articulating organisational goals and shared values, message management, and the use of preferred channels (Hayase, 2009). Thus, Schiele (2017) argues that a transforming university may incorporate an organizational culture of shared values, collective identity, and shared community to form new relationships and interactions for mutual respect and prevent oppression. These views suggest that interactions, during transformation, may bring challenges as well as opportunities in employee communication and participation. Thus, during university transformation it is recommended that management communication encourage face-to-face interaction through horizontal and vertical communication; orientation programs; to communicate corporate symbols, corporate policies, messages, mission statements and history; protocol on marketing products (Baugh & Finzel, 2009, p. 14; Keyton, 2011, pp. 40 – 41).

Since this study examined how effectively management communicated with employees to nurture corporate identity, image and reputation during organisational change at a selected university of technology in Kenya, it is important to examine the MMU's transformation. The university evolved from a tertiary telecommunications college into being a constituent college of a science and technology university, and finally into a chartered university in a period of ten years. The university transformation was part of government of Kenya strategy to build on world-class universities. Governments attempt to build world-class and competitive universities by: upgrading small existing colleges, establishing new universities through heavy investments or merging existing institutions (Salmi, 2009). This university was ungraded from a constituent college into a university with emphasis on technical and technological training. Therefore, there was an urge to develop a niche on identity, image and reputation unique from the parent university. Creating a niche for competitive advantage may involve effective communication using preferred employee channels and corporate identity management program. Olins (1989) outlined four stages of corporate identity management which include corporate culture and competitiveness, employee behaviour and visual style, communication through mass and other media, and centralisation and harmonization of management style. Therefore, it may be concluded that the challenge of a transforming university from an internal communication perspective is managing communication coherence, cultural consistency, channel choice, and employee connections which will positively or negatively impact corporate identity and influence corporate image.

Corporate Image and Digital Communication

Corporate image is articulated through employee perception of organisational activities composed of what the organisation is, what it does and how it does it (Olins, 1978). Current studies posit that image may be conveyed through mission and employee professionalism, competence and continuous process of information exchange (Zelga, 2017). However, during

organisational transformation, changes in university management, membership, messages and media choices may disrupt communication flow. This may challenge effective communication. Yet, information exchange may be the wheel that moves the transformation process. The challenge in communication flow during institutional transformation necessitates the study to interrogate communication channels that enhance employees' interaction to manage institutional image. It is noted that interaction, in a digital environment, incorporates interactive traditional and technological channels that align with management and employees' demographic aspirations (Kazaka, 2013).

Interactive channels such as face-to-face and use of telephone is considered critical during organisational transformation to manage employee perceptions. For example, an interactive telephone that incorporates internet has revolutionized employee interaction by effectively and promptly dispensing corporate information through email facilities (Welch, 2012) and facilitating symmetrical communication (Kenny, 2016). Telephone advancements have registered rapid growth in the African context, including Kenya (Otieno, 2009). Telephone advancements that incorporate internet and social media services have, further, enhanced and facilitated employee communication and interaction, attitude to innovation and goal alignment, especially during organisation transformation (De Bussy, Ewing, & Pitt, 2003).

Employee interaction through downward communication boosts information sharing of mission, shared values and culture while upward communication heightens ideas discussions as well as feedback to institutional management resulting in enhanced corporate image and competitive advantage (Cornelissen, 2011; Oginni & Moitui, 2016). Apart from enhanced employee interaction, social media also provides for the silent voices and a consultative approach (van den Heuvel, 2008) to employee communication because of boundary broadening. However, while technology provides for an enabling, effective and efficient employee communication, this study notes that employees may not read the information or messages promptly which makes technology an opportunity as well as a challenge to successful communication management during organisational change. Thus, technological advancement is a double-edged sword to corporate image as it embraces two-way communication but may embarrass the organisation, harming corporate reputation.

The excellence theory proposes that corporate communication facilitates organisational effectiveness by promoting stakeholder satisfaction and goal attainment; communicating symmetrically with employees, and providing for diversity and inclusion of race and gender (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). The study posits that effective identity and image communication is through dialogue and digital approaches which enhance employee engagement, and face-to-face and receiver interaction during organisation transformation.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The current 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).

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, university management through in-depth interviews, and the use of document analysis (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).

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 emphasise on spatial, temporal, personal and organisational factors (Thomas, 2011).

Population

A 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 staff	229
Total	330

Sample Size

The sample size for the study was 220 out of a population of 330 university employees composed of faculty and staff. About 160 questionnaires were filled and returned but only 153 were duly filled, seven were rejected due to errors.

Sampling Technique

The sample size of 220 from 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% indicating that 225 was a suitable sample size for this study. A total of 225 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to MMU employees composed of 75 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 to interrogate corporate culture and communication strategies used during MMU transformation (Creswell, 2007; Pinnegar and Daynes, 2006 in Creswell, 2007).

Data Collection

Surveys utilise questionnaires and in-depth interviews for data collection to gather employees' 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. 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). The asking of questions enables the researcher to directly access respondents' perceptions and values (Silverman, 2011). During interview session, it is pertinent to record and document organizational 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 organization 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 the interview session to flow seamlessly, to guide the literature and scope of discourse, and for interviewer to pay attention to responses (Huang, 2011).

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. The registrars are part of the dominant coalition and involved in policy and strategy development and interact with employees regularly. In addition, 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.

Middle-level management and university employees composed of two faculty deans, three communication staff and three union representatives were purposively selected. 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 the two deans were purposively selected to analyse communication challenges and opportunities. Three officers in corporate communication department to articulate corporate communication policies and strategies used to manage corporate identity, image and reputation and how MMU manages internal communication challenges and opportunities and how it impacts reputation.

The executive members of university labour unions were interviewed to articulate employees' and union interpretation of organizational messages and reputation management during transition and opportunities and challenges of internal communication. Another set of corporate ambassadors included 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 and Human Resources Lecturer (who was, also, a former administration employee union official and part of MMU Hotel management) and University Museum manager. A total of eighteen employees were interviewed.

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). In addition, about 225 questionnaires were distributed using simple random sampling method. The questionnaires were distributed to the faculty and non-teaching staff using simple random sampling by trained research assistants. 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. Thus, a total of 153 questionnaires were analysed from both members of non-teaching and teaching staff at the university.

Data Analysis

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 were on a five-scale continuum of Strongly Agree to disagree – Likert Scale. 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 a 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 composed of: questions on bio 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.

Interview data views respondents as repositories of facts, reflections and opinions about structures, policies and actions in organizations 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 to establish patterns and interpretations 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).

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 staff members to check the readability and comprehension levels. There were minor adjustments done to the questionnaire and it was found suitable for the study.

Data Presentation

This section presents the analysis of the research findings which were collected through a mixed methods research approach using self-administered questionnaires to employees and in-depth interviews with management. The sample size comprised of 153 respondents who were stratified and simple randomly selected and 18 respondents purposively selected. The summarised quantitative data was presented in the form of tables, pie-charts and bar graphs. Further, qualitative data was presented descriptively in form of themes.

Findings and Discussion

The findings begin with a discussion on the profile of respondents and its impact on communication on corporate identity during the university transformation. The profile section presents age distribution, composition, and education levels of respondents and their communication preferences which have an impact on corporate identity.

Age Distribution

The age representation of respondents was as follows: 21 – 30 years were at 6% (9), 31 – 40 years were at 40% (61), 41 – 50 years were at 43% (65), and 51 – 60 years were 12 % (18). Therefore, the findings demonstrate that majority (83%) of respondents were in the 31- 40 and 41- 50 age brackets referred to as prime and mature working ages. The representation indicates that demographic differences require different communication messages and channels creating communication challenges and opportunities. The communication challenges ought to cause university management to examine channel preferences thus, this provides an opportunity to use digital channels which may enhance message interaction, interpretation and shared meaning to manage corporate identity during transformation. Research in Sub-Sahara Africa shows that the number of telephone users is growing, mobile phones are catching up to fixed phone lines due to access to internet (Otieno, 2009). The telephone user can text, receive news, corporate information, sports news, audio and video content and is interactive (Ibid). Apart from employee age distribution, employee composition impacts on effective communication.

Composition of Respondents

The response rate of academic staff was at 31% (48) and non-teaching staff was at 69% (105) which demonstrates a teaching to non-teaching staff ratio of approximately 1:2 in an academic institution. The proposed threshold for the ratio according to Commission of University is 70% academic and 30% administrative staff (CUE). The findings correspond with Kiambi's (2010) view that employee composition disproportions present internal communication challenges during organisational transformation. Effective employee communication is about two-way communication, dialogic, and inclusive approach to lessen employee alienation (Dutta, 2014).

However, a transforming organisation is likely to inherit a bloated workforce from previous institution(s) causing the disproportions.

Baltaru and Soysal (2017) state that the increased growth in number of administrators and professionals compared to the number of scholars is due to increased ‘managerialized’ governance and entrepreneurial activities. The change may be attributed to evolving philosophical orientations of university traditions to enhance profitability and funding through research and commercial activities rather than merely knowledge for society development. These changes in employee composition, professionals versus scholars, create communication channel preferences, and employee interactions that must be addressed during organisational transformation. Administrators may prefer interactive and digital for audio and video information delivery while academia may prefer face-to-face interaction for discursive and consultative forums. Both approaches are interactive for information and interpretation of shared values, new policies and programmes, actions to build collective culture to enhance corporate identity (Schiele, 2017).

Education of Respondents

The study examined education levels of respondents as education level play a critical role in effective communication. The education level of respondents composed of secondary school level at a minimum of 1% (2) which may compose of subordinate and support administration staff. Secondly, the respondents with tertiary level of education were cumulatively at 25% (38) which the study presupposes is composed mainly of technicians which are a critical component of a media, science, technology and engineering training institution. The bachelor’s degree holders were at 17% (26) which may compose of technical and administrative staff; and master’s level were highest at 47% (72) which may compose of management and faculty. The doctoral level of education was least at 10% (15) which may compose of senior faculty and senior management staff. Yates (2006) advocates that sharing of information to all cadres of staff, educating employees, and aligning employee actions and policies. Effective communication of policy information to different cadres to manage identity during transformation may prove to be a challenge.

Summary on the Profile of Respondents

In summary, the section on findings began by analyzing and interpreting profile of respondents. The profile section included findings on demographic composition, gender composition and academic level and their implication on effective communication and identity management during organisational transformation. The profile of respondents shows that 84% were between 31 and 50 years (prime age), 63% of respondents were women, the ratio of academic to non-academic was 1:2, 50% had worked for between 6 – 10 years, and 57% had post graduate level of education. The next section will identification of the internal and communication strategies used to manage corporate identity.

Internal Communication Flow and Strategy

Communication Flow

The study sought to interrogate the effectiveness of management communication and interaction during university transformation. The study posits that one way to determine effectiveness is

through examining communication flow within the organisation. Modaff and De Wine (2002) state that the superior – subordinate (top-down) information flow is influenced by employee demographics, status, hierarchical level, power and access to resources, experience, technical expertise, ethnicity, values and ethical perspectives (173).

Information Accuracy from Superiors

Management communication is about information flow between the managers and employees in the organization. In this study, the level of information accuracy may serve as an indicator of effectiveness of internal communication and superior – subordinate relationship in an organization. Eleven percent (11%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that the information from superiors was usually accurate and, the majority, 52% agreed with the statement that information from superiors was accurate. This indicates that about 63% of respondents acknowledged that information from superiors is accurate. This may be an indication that employees found the information from superiors to be trustworthy. Superior – subordinate communication shows that 63% received information on mission, policies and is usually distributed by corporate communication office by various channels (Verghese, 2017).

The study found that 24% of respondents were neutral on the information accuracy from superiors which seems to indicate indifference and is interpreted in the study as an internal communication challenge needing an internal communication strategy. In addition, about 10% disagreed with the statement on information accuracy from the superiors and 3% strongly disagreed with the statement. It seems, a total of 24% were neutral, an internal communication opportunity; and 13% disagreed, a challenge on oneness and trust in corporate identity management.

Communication is the lifeblood, medium (Van Riel, 2007) and a means through which an organization synchronizes and coordinates its interdependent functions (Modaff and DeWine, 2002). It is the lifeblood because communication for employees facilitates the sharing of meaning and values which facilitate the creation of oneness and interdependency (Van Riel, 1997; Hatch and Schultz, 1997). The standard deviation of about 0.9 demonstrates that the higher the number of people, the more people disagreed with the statement. The mean for information accuracy from superior to subordinate was at 2.43.

About 63% of respondents find information from superiors accurate while approximately 37% are the silent voices. Deshpande and Zaltman (1993 in Costa, Fulmer, & Anderson, 2017) argue that highly formal structures and centralisation of power have formal rules and regulations that predominate decision making are less conducive to trust development at interpersonal and team levels.

The findings demonstrate a challenge in effective communication and employee engagement for the 63% of respondents. To attain effective communication, Heyden, Sebastian, Bastiaan and Werkman (2017) propose that management stimulate activities, dynamism and facilitate communication flow during organisational change. Therein lies an opportunity for effective communication through employee engagement to determine the message, messenger and medium during university transformation.

Subordinate to Superior Information Accuracy

The findings for information accuracy from subordinate to superiors (bottom-up) indicate that 2% strongly agreed and 49% agreed with the accuracy of information from the subordinates. In addition, 35% were neutral on the level of information accuracy from their junior staff which may demonstrate that a significant number are indifferent to information from this cadre. A total of 14% of respondents disagreed with the information accuracy from subordinate employees. This is an indicator that the organisation, to some extent, encourages sharing of ideas and innovation, a critical aspect of effective communication of shared values to build corporate culture during transformation. However, a notable 35% were silent voices that creates a challenge in upward communication which may need one to further evaluate the message and media strategies.

The findings indicate that approximately 35% of respondents were indifferent while 14% were uncomfortable with bottom-up communication. About 51% agreed and 49% were indifferent with bottom-up information accuracy and level of trust. These findings align with Mbeke (2009) and Kiambi (2010) arguments that academic institutions, which are public, tend to have a top-down and hierarchical communication approach in which senior management control and send information. The mean and standard deviation on subordinate information accuracy was 2.63 and 0.79 respectively. This indicates a challenge to bottom-up flow and information accuracy which will impact of the communication of identity, image and reputation during university transformation.

Horizontal Employee Interaction

The study sought to establish if management encouraged horizontal employee interaction for effective and accurate information flow. Horizontal employee information flow and interaction is an important component of internal communication. It allows for interdepartmental and intradepartmental flow of messages for attainment of organisational mission (Muhamedi & Ariffin, 2017). The findings show that, cumulatively, about 43% of respondents stated that university management encouraged interaction among employees at the same level, horizontal communication.

Twenty-seven percent (27%) of respondents were neutral, indifferent, towards employee interaction at same level. In the same vein, 31% of respondents disagreed that management encouraged same level of interaction among employees. About 27% were indifferent and 31% did not perceive management encouragement of employee interaction at the same level. Thus, about 58 % did not perceive horizontal communication interaction as favorable and this presents a communication challenge and a challenge in the attainment of university mission. Vuuren (2002) advocates functional interaction within organisation to enhance employee engagement, innovation and shared values to build identity during transformation. The mean and standard deviation on university management encouragement on horizontal employee interaction was 2.9 and 1.097 respectively.

Level of Trust, Communication Flow and Organisation Transformation

The communication audit sought to analyze the relationship between levels of trust, communication flow and organisation transformation. Evaluating relationship levels of trust and communication flow assists in determining whether there was conveyance of accurate information, explaining of decisions, and demonstration of openness (Modaff and DeWine,

2002, 184) to employees during transformation. Thus, Whitener proposes that the managerial function may influence subordinate's trustworthiness through behavioral consistency, behavioral integrity, sharing and delegating of control, communication channels and demonstration of concern (Ibid).

Summary of Information Flow and Power

The section demonstrates the need for effective communication through employee engagement to build trust and to communicate university mission during transformation. Modaff and De Wine (2002) state that the superior – subordinate (top-down) information flow is influenced by employee demographics, status, hierarchical level, power and access to resources, experience, technical expertise, ethnicity, values and ethical perspectives (173). Scholes (1997) stated that an effective communication strategy which outlines employee segmentation and has provision for information accuracy and flow.

Communication Channels and Strategy

An evaluation of communication channels and frequency is critical during change as poor transmission of information has an impact on employee engagement which in turn will influence corporate identity and image. Channel frequency is an indicator of employee communication preferences. The evaluation ensures that management uses the most effective channel to enhance shared meaning and attain organisational goals.

Findings show that 60% of respondents spent less than one hour using written memo to communicate, 50% of respondents used telephone and 57% used group-wise (intranet) to communicate. The findings show that majority of the respondents in the workplace during working hours preferred communication via written memo (60%) and digital communication which composed of telephone and computer-mediated intranet for effective communication. Thus, communication through print and digital channels was effectively used during transformation.

Management Communication and Corporate Culture

The second objective of the study was to analyze how management communicated to its employees its corporate culture and corporate identity in order to manage its corporate image in the face of the institution's complexity and transformation. The section will discuss findings in change communication and corporate culture.

Management Preferred Communication Channels to Communicate Change

Change is effective when management has insight on employee preferred channels for message delivery to reduce confusion and uncertainty which may negatively impact on corporate culture and influence identity and reputation. The findings show that management preferred the following communication channels: written memo (81%), intranet (65%) and Meetings (44%). Findings show that university management preferred written communication for conveying new ideas, procedures and policies in order to provide direction. In addition, written communication can be referred to from time to time, easily distributed, useful in documenting progress. However, the preparation is time consuming, curtails feedback, documents take too long, maybe technical and complex, and may ignore the needs of users. The findings show that written communication is a good tool for effective communication for top-down communication during

transformation as it provides for communication of technical documents such as policies, corporate values and strategic elements.

Employee Preferred Communication Channels

Respondents stated that they preferred communication on organisational change using the following channels: phone (67%), social media (32%) and personal visits (42%) respectively which is a mixture of digital and face-to-face channels of communication. Thus, management may use digital channels for interaction to communicate change within the organisation. It is important to engage digital-savvy employees through phone and social media. Management and employees all identified social media as the second preferred communication channel.

In the interview with the corporate office on preferred communication channels, the corporate affairs manager stated that “they plan to use the social media heavily as it is the new forum that has come and it is cost effective and has impact”. Thus, this may be an effective and efficient channel for communicating to internal staff, especially during transformation. Use of social media is in line with the catch phrase, ‘leaders in technology’ and 2012 – 2017 strategic plan and riding on technology in 2018- 2022 plan aimed at improving customer care (external stakeholder) through continuous update of social media.

Thus, management can encourage participation to build shared values, innovation through sharing ideas, and enforce a social media policy. The use of traditional and digital communication channels may enhance employee engagement. The traditional communication channels such as face-to-face increase interaction as demonstrated by preference for personal visits. The findings resonate with the African context which demands a collective approach of information sharing and interaction which is relational, dialogic and consultative (Oginni & Moitui, 2016). This approach to employee communication solidifies corporate culture and positively builds corporate identity during transformation.

Summary of Communication Channels, Channel Preferences and Change Communication

To interrogate whether there was effective communication and employee engagement to nurture corporate identity, image and reputation, it was pertinent to compare management’s preferred communication channels and employee communication channel preference. A channel or media richness is based on its ability to carry non-verbal cues, provide instant feedback, convey personal traits and support use of natural language while communicating (Vegiayan, Bbaghestan, & Asfaranjan, 2013).

Table 1: Summary of communication channels and preferences during change

Employee Channel Frequency per day	Employee Preferred Channels	Management Preferred Channels
Writing Memo (60%)	Telephone channel (67%)	Written Memo (81%)
Intranet (57%)	Personal Visits (42%)	Intranet (65%)
Telephone communication (50%)	Social Media (32%)	Meeting (44%)

Corporate Identity and University Transformation

Corporate identity is about employee interpretations, mental associations and perceptions of oneness through messages transmitted within the organisation (Brown *et al.*, 2006). Oneness is

presumed to be attained through consistent corporate messages, same information, and same understanding of what the organisation stands for (Ashenafi, 2017). In the same vein, corporate culture is what employees understand about the institution which is acquired through shared experiences, values and behavior (Needle, 2004) as well as a way employees think, feel, and judge as a group.

Table 2: The following statements reflect respondents' feelings towards corporate identity

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
The vision of university is important to me	31	42	20	4	3	2.05	1
The mission of university is important to me	27	48	20	5	1	2.05	0.8
University management encourages employees to focus on goals and objectives to be achieved	15	38	30	11	8	2.6	1.1
University management encourages productivity, creativity and development initiatives	12	31	25	20	13	2.91	1.2
University management encourages employees to be involved in decision making	10	18	31	23	18	3.21	1.2
University 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
University's corporate values impact on corporate identity	14	39	27	15	6	2.6	1.1

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

Communication of university strategic and corporate elements

The table above shows that a total of 73% and 75% of respondents stated that they agreed that the university vision and mission were important to them while 20% of respondents respectively were neutral. The findings show that strategic elements have been effectively communicated and employees have been educated on the importance of aligning with corporate strategic goals and objectives. Thus, about 53% of respondents stated that management encouraged goal and objective focus while 43% stated that it encouraged productivity and creativity. A total of 38% stated that management encouraged employee involvement in decision-making and 50% stated that employees were responsible for the quality of work. A total of 68% of respondents stated that the logo was appropriately placed in stationery and about a total of 53% of respondents stated that corporate values impact on corporate identity.

The findings show that respondents understand the importance of corporate vision, mission, quality of work and logo placement as well as their impact during transformation. Thus, about 60% of employees connect with the strategic ideals of the transforming institution. On the contrary, the respondents did not perceive that management encouraged participative decision-making, innovation and productivity. Could it be implied that this may have been due to a lack of effective communication due to the difference in channel preferences? Furthermore, it demonstrates employee need for leadership guidance during transformation. Hence, there is a need for more interaction through telephone and face-to-face with leadership. There is a need for boundary broadening through more use of interactive channels for digital-savvy employees to understand and engage with the university leadership during corporate transformation (Akyazi,

2017; Yates, 2006). The study posits that leadership engagement with employees will influence the corporate culture which will in turn influence identity and positively impact on corporate image.

Corporate Image Management and University Transformation

Table 3: Respondents feeling on corporate image management during university change

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
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 history and traditions	9	34	33	18	7	2.8	1.044
Leaders 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

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

This study posits that leadership is pertinent in image management as it contributes to employee perception of the organisation. The table above shows that only 35% of respondents stated that management had a strong sense of institutional history while about 63% did not think management had institutional history. This is a significant group of employees who feel management lack commitment to organisational history. Thus, management must create a forum to work on employee perception of corporate history through employee orientation and organisational communication on policies programmes (Olins, 1978; Akyazi, 2017). University management broaden boundary to increase interaction and engagement, converse on historical aspects, and collectively develop the future of the organisation. Furthermore, a total of only 30% of respondents stated that leaders were visible and accessible emphasizing the need for interaction and information sharing.

A total of 43% of respondents stated that employees knew about history and traditions. Yates advocates for educating new and current employees through interaction for effective employee understanding of the corporate traditions to bolster corporate image. While 42% stated that the leaders were inaccessible. A total of 27% stated that university had a comprehensive integrated marketing communication strategy that utilises appropriate media, 29% were neutral while 44% disagreed with the statement. The findings show that employees' preferences for new vehicles for marketing that align with digital savvy employees help to positively project image. It is believed that a university as a learning institution should rapidly change in line with the 'digital natives' (Sewe, 2014).

Impact of employee behavior on university image

The study sought to explore employee role in the university image building process. About 83% of respondents agreed that employee actions impact on the corporate image while 17% of respondents did not agree with the said statement. This demonstrates that employees connect their behavior to business and performance of the institution, they are aware of their projection to external publics.

Corporate Reputation and Employee Interpretation

As stated previously corporate reputation evaluates the quality of products and services, ability to innovate, value as long-term investment, financial stability, ability to attract, develop and retain talent, use of corporate asset and quality of management. Reputation represents a value judgment about organisation's qualities built over a period of time and has a historical dimension represented through consistency (Le Roux, 2003). Aula and Mantere (2013) describe reputation as an ongoing process whereby beliefs and expectations are formed and altered through ongoing dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders. The findings below explain respondents perception of corporate reputation management during organisational transformation.

Table 4: Corporate reputation factors and employee interpretation

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Me an	Std Dev
... is a socially responsible organization	10	37	32	14	7	2.7	1.059
... contributes actively and voluntarily to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the society	7	33	34	16	10	2.9	1.079
... has high quality graduates who meet market needs	22	58	13	5	3	2.1	0.878
... relates well with parents/sponsors	12	42	29	6	11	2.6	1.13
... 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
... 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
... is an institution with good and innovative leadership	11	25	30	21	13	3	1.19
... is an ethical organization	10	39	27	11	13	2.8	1.167
... 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

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

Institution and CSR Activities

Assessment of corporate social responsibility is recommended as one of the indicators of corporate accountability to community. The table above shows that 47% of respondents agreed that the university was socially responsible while 32% were the silent voices and 21% disagreed that the institution is responsible. This is an indication for more employee engagement and consultation on institutional CSR activities. The 47% may be interpreting CSR from a relational

(impact on society) and holistic (ethical behavior and interaction with community) perspective of CSR. Employee perception on institutional engagement with CSR activities positively impacts on reputation as the activities enhance organisational credibility, one component of reputation management (Money, 2009).

About 40% stated that the institution positively contributes to social, economic and environmental improvement while 34% were the silent voices and 26% disagreed with the statement and have low interest in CSR activities. These findings suggest a need for face-to-face and digital interaction and education through bottom-up and top-down communication approaches which will impact on perception and influence corporate reputation during university transformation.

Institutional Products and Reputation

A total of 80% stated that the university products were quality and met market needs and 13% were the silent voices and 8% disagreed with the quality of the product. The findings show that employees are very proud of their product. The high percentage demonstrates that employees effectively connect with the business and understand their role in reputation management through product quality. They, also align their actions with the customer expectations which demonstrates a customer-oriented culture and aligns with 'ubuntu' philosophy of togetherness.

Stakeholder Management Strategy for Culture and Reputation Management

The findings show that 54% of respondents stated that the institution relates well with parents and sponsors while 29% were the silent voices and 17% disagreed that the institution relates well with sponsors. Secondly, the findings show that 53% of respondents perceived the institution as customer-oriented while 27% were the silent voices and 19% disagreed that the institution was customer-oriented. A total of 39% of respondents stated that the organisation had positive feelings towards its stakeholders while 40% were the silent voices and 22% disagreed with the statement. A sum of 45% of respondents stated that the university generated respect, admiration, esteem and confidence from its students while 34% were the silent voices and 21% disagreed with the statement. These findings show the corporate culture of effective stakeholder management but an opportunity for more employee education, consultation and information sharing to incorporate the silent voices. The silent voices create an opportunity to incorporate appropriate messages and media strategy through enhancement of dialogue, inclusivity and diversity to enhance reputation. The study proposes inclusion of interactive media through face-to-face and interactive telephone to enhance dialogue and inclusion for effective stakeholder management to enhance corporate reputation.

Regulatory Compliance and Reputation Management

The findings show 44% states that the institution takes care of the safety and security of the students while 26% were the silent voices and 21% disagreed. A sum of 49% stated that the institution was an ethical organisation while 27% were the silent voices and 24% disagreed with the statement. A sum of 47% stated that the institution had strong values, obeys laws, is transparent and respects stakeholders while 28% were the silent voices and 26% disagreed with the statement. The findings demonstrate that over 40% perceive institution as a caring one while over 25% are silent and 21% disagree. It is assumed that for effective communication, management provide for interactive sessions through face-to-face and social media to reach the

over 40% employee to change attitude. It is, also proposed that management hold consultative forums to programs and policy as Yates (2006) recommends.

Leadership and Innovation in Reputation Management

A sum of 36% stated that leadership was innovative while 30% were the silent voices and 34% disagreed with the statement. A sum of 50% stated that the institution supports good causes that benefit society while 32% were the silent voices and 18% disagreed with the statement. Yates (2006) recommends demonstration of leadership through interaction and employee engagement to consult on how to enhance leadership, creativity, innovation to boost employee perception, build reputation and successfully manage transformation. Interaction will have to consider boundary broadening in telephone interaction and connectivity as well as accommodate face-to-face for effective communication and reputation management.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the current study postulate that university management considers the demography and profile of employees if they are to communicate effectively during organisational change. Effective change communication and employee engagement strategies require one to undertake corporate evaluation of channel preferences. The respondents felt that management did not encourage employee interaction which may be due to differences in channel preferences between the dominant coalition and the employees. Employee communication preferences included channels that are interactive and have immediacy such as face-to-face, telephone and intranet while management preference was written memo, intranet and meetings. The common and preferred communication channel was intranet which is in digital communication. The telephone and telephony services which are accessible and affordable to all employees provide an opportunity for interactivity and immediacy through internet and intranet services for effective employee communication.

The study recommends that effective change communication uses employee engagement strategy for effective employee interpretation of corporate messages. In addition, the corporate leadership interacts with employees to communicate corporate stories through preferred communication channels such as the university's intranet, internet, telephony and social media. The study proposes the incorporation of a telephone as a communication channel as it incorporates internet, interaction and immediacy to enhance leadership interface, visibility, and accessibility. This will enhance corporate culture and positively impact corporate identity and image. The use of a comprehensive integrated marketing communication strategy would boost visibility and impact the university's image. However, the negative employee interpretation of management actions and messages would impact, negatively, on reputation during organisational change.

There was employee concern regarding media selection for corporate advertising and product marketing. Though employees have high regard for product quality, there were concerns about the advertising media preferences. Therefore, it is essential that management educate, share information, and help connect employees to corporate business and customer expectations. This engagement will boost the corporate image and influence corporate reputation through positive customer-employee engagement. It is noted that a significant percentage of respondents perceive the leadership as lacking a comprehensive marketing strategy which may be an indication of a

lack of effective employee orientation and engagement in communicating the customer-oriented culture (Yates, 2006).

Corporate Reputation management of a transforming organisation will effectively nurture corporate identity and corporate image if there is effective employee engagement to effectively communicate change using preferred communication channels that promote inclusion and interaction.

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