CORPORATE REBRANDING: AN INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE (Multiple Case Study into Employee Buy-in in the Higher Education Sector)

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ABSTRACT

Corporate rebranding involves the modification or change of the logo, tagline and the corporate brand name and is a common phenomenon in various industries such as telecom and an emerging strategic trend in the higher education (HE) sector. Corporate rebranding strategy often enables an organisation to become more relevant to its target market and improve its positioning (Melewar et al., 2012; Sonenshein, 2010; Vallaster and Lindgreen, 2011; Miller et.al, 2014). Employees play a vital role in, representing the brand values and fulfilling the brand promise to an organisation's customers (Balmer and Gray, 2003; Balmer 1995; Harris and De Chernatony, 2006). The purpose of this study is to examine how the corporate rebranding strategy is implemented internally and report on how buy-in from employees is achieved.

Corporate rebranding studies in extant literature are sparse in the HE sector. To fill this gap, a multiple case study of four UK universities was conducted to explore the complexity of the phenomenon in the HE sector. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to establish the relevance of major themes uncovered by an extensive literature review. This was followed by thematic analysis of the data. Findings of the study emphasized upon the role of internal brand communication in facilitating employees to accept the new corporate brand and their buy-in. The involvement of employees and the role of leadership in the corporate rebranding process were significant in gaining employee support. Employees who identified with the new corporate brand and who were engaged and committed to their roles expressed a greater degree of buy-in post rebranding. This is an important contribution to the literature on corporate rebranding from an internal perspective. Further research is recommended to measure existing levels of employee engagement and employee identification.

Keywords: Corporate Rebranding, Employee Engagement, Employee Identification, Employee Involvement, Leadership, Internal Brand Communication, Employee Buy-in

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God, and my family. This work is my own, but it would not have been possible without a divine enablement and the un-ending sacrifices and support of my wife and son. This work is also dedicated to anyone who wants to start doing a PhD at a later stage in their career and who has family and financial commitments to manage.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Corporate Rebranding Strategy

This term in this thesis refers to the corporate strategy of an organisation to modify the corporate brand elements such as its logo, name, and colour palette to improve its positioning in the marketplace.

New Corporate Brand

This term refers to the revised corporate brand after the changes to the initial brand has been made as part of the corporate rebranding strategy

Corporate Rebranding Process

This term refers to the activities in the organisation that is led and facilitated by the management to make decisions on the changes to the corporate brand.

Internal Brand Communication

This term in this thesis refers to the internal communication activities undertaken by the management and the marketing and branding team, to inform employees of the new corporate brand.

Employee Response

This term refers to the response of employees to the internal processes in the organisation as part of the corporate rebranding strategy

Employee Buy-in Post Rebranding

This term refers to the buy-in of employees to the new corporate brand after the implementation of the corporate rebranding strategy and the subsequent launch of the new corporate brand

HE Sector

This term refers to the higher education sector that comprises of universities, colleges and other institutions offering accredited university programmes.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS and CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Journal Article

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate rebranding signifies a modification or complete change to the initial representation of the corporate brand with a view to reposition it in its target market (Lambkin and Muzellec, 2008; Merrilees and Miller, 2008). The business press frequently reports on how corporate brands have attempted to become operationally efficient and relevant to their target markets through corporate rebranding (Melewar, Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2012). When Burberry in 2002 implemented a successful rebranding strategy to reposition itself as a luxury brand to a younger audience in addition to its existing customer base, sales increased by forty six percent in a year's time (Moore and Birtwistle, 2004). British Petroleum's merger with Amoco and ARPO caused a name change to BP and a new logo design followed by a branding campaign for internal and external stakeholders (Mitchell, 2002). The exercise was an apparent success because most of its employees favoured the strategy, the new corporate brand, and its new brand values (Mitchell, 2002).

There are notably more corporate rebranding failures than successes. Shell failed in its corporate rebranding strategy when it rebranded 300 of its retail forecourts in the early 90's due to falling revenues. 51% of its franchisees reported losses and therefore the corporate arm of Shell had to close 200 of them and offer compensations (Boyle, 2002; Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). Other widely reported failures include, Royal Mail's rebrand to 'Consignia' to represent the extension of its services other than sending and receiving mail (Verdin, 2002; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006), and British Airways rebranding of its logo to exclude the union jack colours to appear more in-tune with its international image (MarketingWeek, 2000). Royal Mail's rebranding effort was severely opposed by its employees whilst the British Airways rebranding of its traditional union jack logo was resisted by both employees and customers. While there are a few causes for the failures, an important cause is the response from employees (Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007), which is the focus of this study.

Corporate rebranding as noted in the above examples has become a common practice amongst organisations in various industry sectors as they are constantly adapting to the rapid pace of change in the demands of their stakeholders. The common synonyms used and associated with corporate rebranding in news articles and reports are brand 'revitalisation', 'refresh', 'renewal', 'makeover', 'renaming' and 'repositioning' (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). There has been a continuous evolution of an organisation's customer segments with advancements in

technology, globalisation, and changing consumer preferences. Mergers, acquisitions, strategic alliances, consolidation, and divestments are common occurrences that have caused the corporate rebranding phenomenon to emerge.

Aside from the examples of corporate rebranding in the Fashion, Oil and Gas, and the Airline industry mentioned previously, various universities in the higher education sector have also implemented the corporate rebranding strategy. A few examples are: Beaver College near Philadelphia in America changed its name to Arcadia University in 2001; University of Central England in Birmingham, UK, changed its name to Birmingham City University in 2007 (BCU, no date); Napier University renamed to Edinburgh Napier University in 2009 (Newsroom, 2010).

There have also been changes to the visual identity of the universities brand mentioned previously that were made to improve its reputation. A study by Baker and Balmer (1997) showed that creating a unified brand identity with the help of a single symbol and logo was necessary to overcome inherent weaknesses in the corporate brand management and communications policies of Strathclyde University. In this study, the existing visual identity of Strathclyde University did not represent the whole university's corporate mission and core identity. The rebranded and unified symbol was a better reminder to internal stakeholders of their loyalty to the whole university in addition to their immediate departments or faculties and external stakeholders (Baker and Balmer, 1997).

Corporate rebranding as a phenomenon has thus gradually gained importance in various industries and sectors. It is worth noting that rebranding exercises are generally expensive (e.g. Royal Mail £2m, British Airways £60m) and require extensive resources for its implementation, with no guarantee of successful outcomes as seen in the examples quoted previously. Managers and practitioner's interest in understanding corporate rebranding were fuelled by the growing trend of large corporates pursuing corporate rebranding strategies in the last two decades. Corporate rebranding strategy has also been gaining interest among scholars and a few empirical studies have started to emerge in the last decade or so (eg: Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson, 2008; Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010).

This chapter will first introduce corporate rebranding strategies from an internal perspective by presenting a background to the topic. This is followed by presenting the research problem, the research question, and research objectives, and significance of the study and research gap. Finally, the research methodology adopted for this study and the contribution to knowledge

will be outlined followed by an outline of this thesis.

1.1 Research Background

Corporate rebranding can be a risky strategy as it can affect the equity of the corporate brand built up over the years through marketing (Dunham, 2002; Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). It also disturbs the alignment between the brand's vision, internal culture, and brand image, which according to corporate brand management theory are the necessary elements for its success (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). Various rebranding failures such as that of British Airways corporate visual identity change programme and Royal Mail's name change to Consignia highlights the challenges in aligning the changes to the corporate brand and the perception employees have of the corporate brand (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). These challenges take on different shapes in other sectors such as the higher education sector, where the emphasis is not on maximising profits. Corporate rebranding in the higher education sector can thus reveal additional challenges internally as it signifies a change and a new approach from its management.

Unlike the rebranding of products brands that focuses on consumers, corporate brands pose a unique challenge. When product brands are rebranded consumer attitudes and brand associations are important however, rebranding corporate brands involves multiple stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). Managers therefore need to consider attitudes and be aware of the brand associations of a variety of stakeholders such as employees, suppliers, customers, communities, and others (Jaju, Joiner and Reddy, 2006). Corporate rebranding emphasises total corporate communication that includes external and internal stakeholders especially employees as they are instrumental in communicating the corporate brand promise to customers (Balmer, 2001).

When an organisation with a corporate brand undergoes a major strategic change such as merger or acquisition, the need to restructure the organisation, its culture and consequently its brand name may arise (Lambkin and Muzellec, 2008; Bolhuis, de Jong and van den Bosch, 2018). Changes to the corporate brand attributes such as its name and/or aesthetics like its logo and colour due to rebranding can significantly impact on the organisation's stakeholders (Merrilees and Miller, 2008; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006). From a marketing perspective, it un-does the brand associations connected with the name in the minds of stakeholders that was built through years of corporate marketing efforts (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006).

Corporate brand names are also fundamental and unique with enduring attributes and

associations to an organisations character and identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Balmer and Gray, 2003; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). It is in fact contrary to marketing practice to change names as this can also result in the loss of valuable marketing outcomes such as brand equity, brand trust and brand loyalty of customers resulting in lower brand performance (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006).

Nevertheless, organisations still pursue these expensive corporate strategies as is evident in trade and academic literature (Mitchell, 2002; Melewar and Akel, 2005; Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson, 2008; Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010; Kalaignanam and Bahadir, 2013; Miller and Merrilees, 2013; Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). Various drivers have contributed to this phenomenon in recent years but, some of the key drivers are the loss of a positive corporate image, changing nature of consumer habits, saturation of existing markets, severe competition, mergers and acquisitions, regulatory and technological factors (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006; Merrilees and Miller, 2008; Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014).

1.2 Research Problem

According to extant literature, corporate rebranding is undertaken to enable an organisation to become more relevant to its target market and improve operational efficiency (Sonenshein, 2010; Vallaster and Lindgreen, 2011; Melewar, Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2012). This necessitates a change to the existing corporate brand. Organisations make minor changes to their corporate brands by refreshing and re-positioning the brand thereby, modifying its attributes such as, the logo, colour, or slogan in the target market as an incremental response to the changes in the external environment (Holt, 2004; Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007; Keller, 2013). But significant strategic changes in the organisation because of mergers, acquisitions, diversification, and strategic alliances can require radical changes of the corporate brand with a new name, a new or revised corporate vision and brand values (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004; Hatch and Schultz, 2003). The corporate brand can also be similarly changed when the organisation structure, strategy, and vision changes (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006).

In newspaper articles and other business publications where, corporate rebranding is often reported, the impact on employees is not usually highlighted. For example, Burberry's success in implementing a corporate rebranding strategy in 2002 was measured by an increase in sales (Moore and Birtwistle, 2004). But changes to the corporate brand can also impact an employee's internal self, their work, relationship with the organisation, and corporate brand

(Balmer, 2001; Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson, 2008; Foster, Punjaisri and Cheng, 2010). For example, when implementing a corporate rebranding strategy, it is important for organisations to achieve buy-in from their employees (Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007). Previous studies have not examined employee buy-in any further than acknowledging its importance and benefits (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). This study will therefore focus on examining employee buy-in as an internal outcome of the corporate rebranding strategy.

For most organisations, internal branding activities are the primary means of communicating the brand values of the corporate brand to their employees (Thomson and Hecker, 2001). The organisation and its leadership or management usually reach out to their employees through various internal communication channels and branding activities. Previous studies such as Punjaisri and Wilson (2007) and Punjaisri et.al. (2009), have increased our understanding of the impact internal branding activities have on brand building behaviour and performance of employees. Internal branding activities that include communication and training is also considered an enabler in the corporate rebranding process and is critical to the corporate brand (Schultz and de Chernatony, 2002; Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014).

Research shows that activities such as training and communication can help employees develop an understanding of the brand values and their responsibilities towards the corporate brand's success (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). This in turn affects their behaviour, support, and commitment to the corporate brand and thereby these same effects can be expected through internal brand communication during the corporate rebranding process (Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Merrilees and Miller, 2008). Although the positive effects on employees through internal branding activities were clear lessons learnt from exploratory case studies of corporate rebranding (Bergstrom, Blumenthal and Crothers, 2002; Muzellec, 2006; Merrilees and Miller, 2008), its effect on employee buy-in of the new corporate brand needs to be examined further.

An important distinguishing characteristic of an employee and their relationship with the organisation is their belief and attitude towards the corporate brand which, plays a role in displaying the right image of the brand to external stakeholders such as customers (Morsing and Kristensen, 2002). To influence the employee's attitude, behaviour, and perception towards the new corporate brand especially of existing employees, it is important to consider their identification with the new corporate brand (Stuart, 2012) and their sense of belonging. In employee identification, an employee relates their self-identity to their perception of the central, distinctive and enduring attributes that define the organisation (Dutton, Dukerich and

Harquail, 1994) and by extension the corporate brand. Thus, if this identification is strong then it helps them act out the brand promise but on the other hand it also introduces resistance during a time of change (Ashforth, Harrison and Corley, 2008).

As an employee's identification involves the intellectual and emotional part of that person, individuals with this level of attachment to the previous corporate brand can resist the change (Ashforth, Harrison and Corley, 2008). Hence it is important to address employee identification in the internal corporate rebranding process.

Another aspect of an employee's relationship with the organisation is engagement with their role and tasks in the organisation. Engaged employees are more productive and have a positive attitude towards their work and the organisation (Slåtten and Mehmetoglu, 2011). This affects how customers experience the corporate brand. The number of employees engaged with their work and the organisation's goals are generally a small percentage of the workforce. In a poll of 142 countries by Gallup, only 13% of the global workforce were engaged in 2011-12 and, that went up by only a marginal 2% in 2014-2016 from a poll of 155 countries (Crabtree, 2013, 2019). This percentage is on average lower in the Western European countries such as the UK at just 10% with a staggering 19% unhappy with their work and showing no attachment at all to their workplace (Crabtree, 2019). When an organisation decides to rebrand its corporate brand, employees tend to resist these changes (Chad, 2015), which could also affect their engagement levels. Considering that the percentage of engaged employees is less relative to the size of the workforce, it becomes imperative for managers to examine the engagement levels in the event of a change strategy such as in corporate rebranding.

Managers involved in the corporate rebranding process should also be aware that, an important determinant of the success of the change strategy is the attitude and behaviour of employees towards the new corporate brand (Stuart, 2012). Customers perception of the corporate brand image is influenced by the behaviour of employees they encounter when they require the organisation's services (de Chernatony, 1999; Ind, 2003). Ideally, employee behaviour needs to conform to the new corporate brand promise and values (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006; Stuart, 2012). This conformity in behaviour to brand values allows employees to begin to live the corporate brand (Ind, 2003; Boyd and Sutherland, 2006) which in turn affects customers. This implies that managing employees on-brand behaviour and aligning it to the new corporate brand is important as it would influence customer perception.

When an organisation has had its corporate brand for a while, employees will find it difficult

to let go of their brand associations during a change, especially, if they feel a sense of psychological ownership to it (Odilov and Musser, 2020). In non-profit organisations, it was shown that an emotional attachment to the corporate brand can cause employees and volunteers to be dissatisfied with the decision to rebrand as they must modify or change their perceptions of the identity that existed (Lee, 2013). A similar finding was evidenced in an empirical case study of a large telecommunications organisation by Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson (2008), where they found the employee culture of the organisation after a corporate rebranding exercise did not align with the new brand values.

Employees need to therefore buy-in to any change introduced in the organisation and this is one of the challenges faced by the leadership team when developing and implementing a corporate rebranding strategy (Miller and Merrilees, 2013). Much of the extant literature on corporate rebranding has stressed the need for employee buy-in to the new vision and values of the corporate brand (Daly and Moloney, 2004; Mitchell, 2002; Schultz and Hatch, 2003; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006). In fact, according to Merrilees and Miller (2008) achieving employee buy-in is considered as a principle for success in rebranding. Hence employee buy-in is essential but the evaluation of it post rebranding is vaguely covered in literature.

Figure 1. 1: Context and Focus of this Study
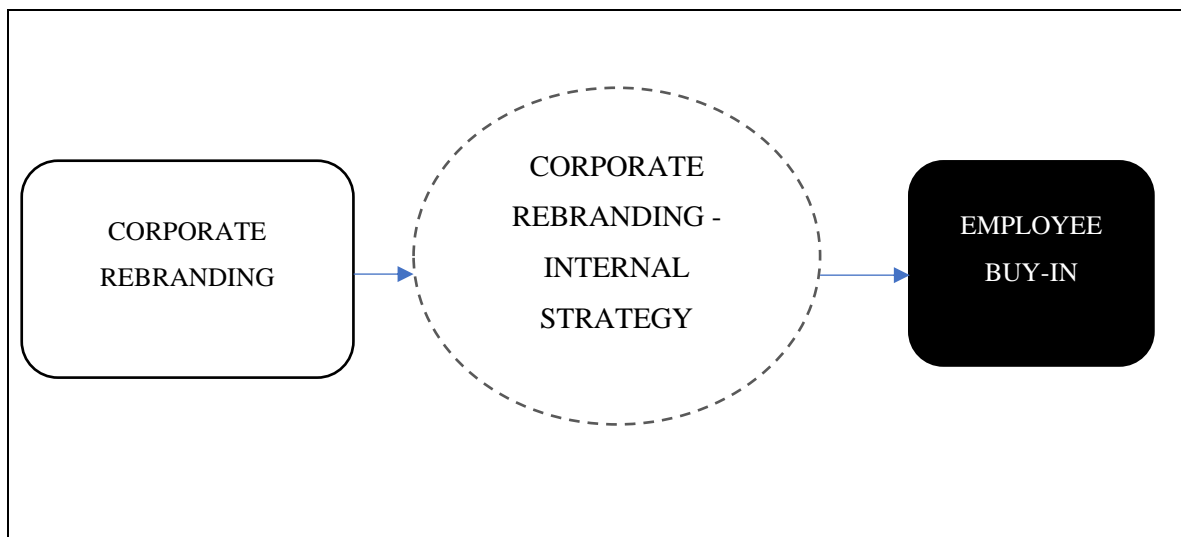
Source: Developed by the author for this study

Hence it is important to examine the corporate rebranding – internal strategy and how employees buy-in when an organisation implements the corporate rebranding strategy (figure 1.1). This gap in the literature displayed in figure 1.1, to examine an employee's response to the internal branding and communication activities and their buy-in post rebranding will be addressed through this study. The impact on employees, their response, and buy-in when the

internal strategy is implemented in the form of the corporate rebranding process is addressed with the help of the following research questions and objectives.

1.3 Research Questions, Aim and Objectives

1.3.1 Research Questions

1. How does the corporate rebranding process influence an employee's buy-in to the new corporate brand?
2. What determines the strength of an employee's buy-in in corporate rebranding?
   2.1. How does employee identification with the new corporate brand influence employee buy-in?
   2.2. How does employee engagement influence employee buy-in?

1.3.2 Research Aim

The focus of this research is the corporate rebranding strategy implemented in UK higher education institutions and an employee's response to the internal strategy and the corporate rebranding process. Corporate rebranding is relatively new, but a growing trend in the HE sector.

The main aim of this research is to develop an understanding of what enables employees to buy-in to the new corporate brand that is developed as part of the corporate rebranding strategy. To understand this, the internal process of implementing the corporate rebranding strategy that includes the development of the new corporate brand is explored. Emphasis is placed on understanding the role of internal branding and communication activities, an employee's identification with the new corporate brand, and their engagement in their roles.

1.3.3 Research Objectives

1. To explore the internal strategy and corporate rebranding process within a higher education institution when a corporate rebranding strategy is implemented
2. To examine the influence of internal branding and communication activities on employees in the corporate rebranding process
3. To examine the influence of an employee's identification with the new corporate brand on employee buy-in post rebranding
4. To examine the influence of an employee's engagement on employee buy-in post rebranding

Meeting the above research objectives helped in filling the research gap identified in corporate rebranding. Relative to extant literature, this study has been able to shed light on the internal processes carried out within universities as part of the corporate rebranding strategy. In this process novel insights were found on the role of involvement of employees and the leadership in corporate rebranding. Theoretical associations between internal brand communication activities and an employee's buy-in to the new corporate brand were established. The significance of the role of an employee's identification with the new corporate brand how it relates with an employee's buy-in was shown through the data collected. A similar association was established between employee engagement and buy-in. There were also important contributions made to the research gap in identifying what strengthens the buy-in of employees after the corporate rebranding strategy is implemented.

1.4 The Higher Education Sector

Scholarly studies on the corporate rebranding strategy in various for profit industries such as telecommunication, retail, and hospitality is prevalent in literature, but almost negligible in higher education institutions (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). There is a growing interest in branding though, but not sufficient to cover all aspects of corporate branding (Chapleo, 2010, 2015; Frandsen *et al.*, 2018). Universities use their brand to differentiate themselves amidst increasing competition nationally and internationally, varying student fees and the challenge to obtain students, faculty, and resources (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007; Curtis, Abratt and Minor, 2009). Having a brand will help universities represent the value that it brings to its stakeholders (Judson et.al, 2008). This also helps prospective students make decisions about the university to attend and course they want to study in the absence of enough information (Judson, Gorchels and Aurand, 2006; Whisman, 2009).

Studies have found that universities with strong brands can impact their student recruitment (Jevons, 2006; Judson, Gorchels and Aurand, 2006; Bock, Poole and Joseph, 2014) and influence students to provide positive reviews (Alessandri, Yang and Kinsey, 2006). Business schools within traditional universities are striving to build strong corporate brands that can make them stand out in the competition for national and international students, faculty and resources (Syed Alwi and Kitchen, 2014). This is in an environment where ranking and league tables determine admissions, placement and funding prospects (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Argenti, 2000). The effects of having strong brands are not only external but also internal. It

helps in the recruitment of talented faculty (Watkins and Gonzenbach, 2013) and initiating internal changes (Stensaker, 2007) such as when sending signals of a new strategy (Melewar and Akel, 2005). In the higher education sector, mergers, and a university's need to attract overseas students and businesses have played an important role in driving corporate rebranding (Naqvi and Stacey, 2007; Evans, 2013; Hughes, 2015; Pearce, 2015).

There are a few examples of higher education institutions implementing the corporate rebranding strategy. Harvard Business School implemented the strategy, where the name of its online learning initiative changed from an acronym to "Harvard Business School Online" saw enrolment to its digital courses increase by 70% in the first quarter (Byrne, 2019). In the UK, Glyndwr University rebranded its business school to North Wales Business School to attract new businesses across six different counties (Hughes, 2015). There is thus a growing interest among universities to focus on their branding to enhance the perception of their value and competitive advantage (Chapleo, 2010, 2015).

But universities are complex, in that each university has a unique student profile, culture, development stage, and availability of resources among different faculties and institutions within them (Asaad et al., 2013). This was evident when students rebelled against Aston university's expensive decision to rebrand by changing its logo to an orange coloured logo with the help of a leading branding consultancy (Naqvi and Stacey, 2007). In spite of consultations with students, employees and alumni, social media campaigns to voice student's disapproval were started and descriptions of the new logo as 'cheap' and 'tacky' were posted on the Facebook page (Naqvi and Stacey, 2007). In a similar bid to attract overseas students, University of Western Sydney's decision to rebrand itself as Western Sydney University accompanied with a new visual identity received widespread disapprovals from stakeholders and even a campaign on change.org (Pearce, 2015).

Thus, although universities and organisations hire external brand consultants to undertake this costly exercise, an important factor for its success are employees and they contribute to the impact corporate rebranding has on the organisation's external stakeholders (Ind and Bell, 2000, Hankinson, Lomax and Hand, 2007). The organisation needs to attend to the employees as they are often affected by changes to the brand name, values, and vision, resulting in the possible loss of their support and failure of the corporate rebranding strategy.

1.5 Significance of the Study and Research Gap

Employees are a key asset to any organisation and the corporate brand signifies a promise to

its external stakeholders that should be kept by the employees. Over the years just like consumers, employees develop an understanding of the values and promise associated with the corporate brand. They then accept and internalise them building a sense of identity, commitment, and even loyalty to the brand and organisation over a period of time. These values and a sense of identity are challenged in corporate rebranding, especially when it involves a change of name and/or values resulting in employee's possibly resisting the changes. They may find it difficult to re-identify with the new name, values, and vision of the new corporate brand.

In organisational change situations, managers involved in the corporate rebranding process can face various issues from employees related to resistance and a lack of understanding of the rationale and need for change (Mitchell, 2002). They can also be less supportive and accepting of the new corporate brand. Undoubtedly, the encounters customers have with these employees' who have been affected negatively by the change will result in the formation of wrong perceptions of the corporate brand and its promise (King and Grace, 2005). It could also affect the sale of the organisation's products and services.

The approach to understanding the corporate rebranding - internal strategy taken for this study is based on what the literature says about an employee's engagement, employee identification, and the use of internal branding and communication activities to influence and affect employee responses to this change initiative. The purpose is to enable employees to transition from the old and buy-in to the new. As in most organisations some of the employees may transition quicker than others but the extent to which employee's buy-in may vary between organisations. It is therefore proposed that the level of engagement employees' already have with their role will affect their degree of buy-in. This is an incentive for managers to concentrate efforts in recognising an employee's engagement and commitment within the organisation when communicating the changes. An employee's engagement can also be linked with their involvement in internal brand engagement initiatives that allows them to place the changes to the corporate brand in perspective. Managers must communicate the new corporate brand identity to help with improving engagement and establishing buy-in to the changes.

Internal communication activities positively affects the identification of employees with the corporate brand (Baker *et al.*, 2014). Previous studies on internal branding has established the relationship between the identity of an employee relative to the corporate brand identity and their behaviour that goes beyond just fulfilling a duty, termed as brand citizenship behaviour (Hughes and Ahearne, 2010; Burmann and Zeplin, 2005). Its therefore also proposed in this

study that the extent of alignment or congruence of an employee's self-identity with the corporate brand identity can influence their buy-in of the new corporate brand. This study is expected to make an important contribution to extending the corporate rebranding theory from an employee's perspective.

As noted previously, the implementation of corporate rebranding strategies are becoming increasingly important for universities to attract overseas students and businesses they can work with, and to generate income in a competitive sector (Hughes, 2015; Pearce, 2015). The gap in corporate rebranding research and the growing interest among universities to rebrand has spurred the researcher in conducting this study on the higher education sector.

1.5 Research Methodology

The research strategy used for this study is case study, with a view to contributing to extending the theory on corporate rebranding and providing managers and practitioners valuable insights. This commenced with an extensive and systematic review of literature culminating in the formation of theoretical propositions and a conceptual framework (Figure 1.2) (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2014). The research design consisted of multiple case studies of four higher education institutions selected based on theoretical sampling (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) recommends selecting sample cases as one would consider conducting multiple experiments as the logic here is theoretical and not representativeness. The choice of the number of cases for this study was guided by what Eisenhardt (1989, p. 545) said: "*while there is no ideal number of cases a number between four and ten cases often works well. With fewer than four cases it is often difficult to generate theory with much complexity, and its empirical grounding is likely to be unconvincing*". Scholars also have recommended between two and four as the minimum number of cases (Perry, 1998).

A case study protocol was used to develop the data collection process which also established the reliability of the data collected (Eisenhardt, 1989; Riege, 2003; Yin, 2014). The case study protocol divided the design into various phases. It consisted of framing the research question and the development of theoretical propositions from an extensive and systematic review of literature. This was followed by the crafting the research instrument and entering the field for data collection purposes. Multiple sources of data such as documents, observations and interviews were used to obtain data. This helped in data triangulation and improving the credibility of the data collected (Yin, 2014).

The data was then analysed and a within case analysis of each case was reported. This helped in the familiarisation of the data and the generation of new knowledge. Qualitative data was collected using semi-structured interviews with twenty-one participants who were employees from the four case studies. The participants were selected from different hierarchical levels (Perry, 1998) and departments within each case study institution.

Figure 1. 2: Contribution to Knowledge
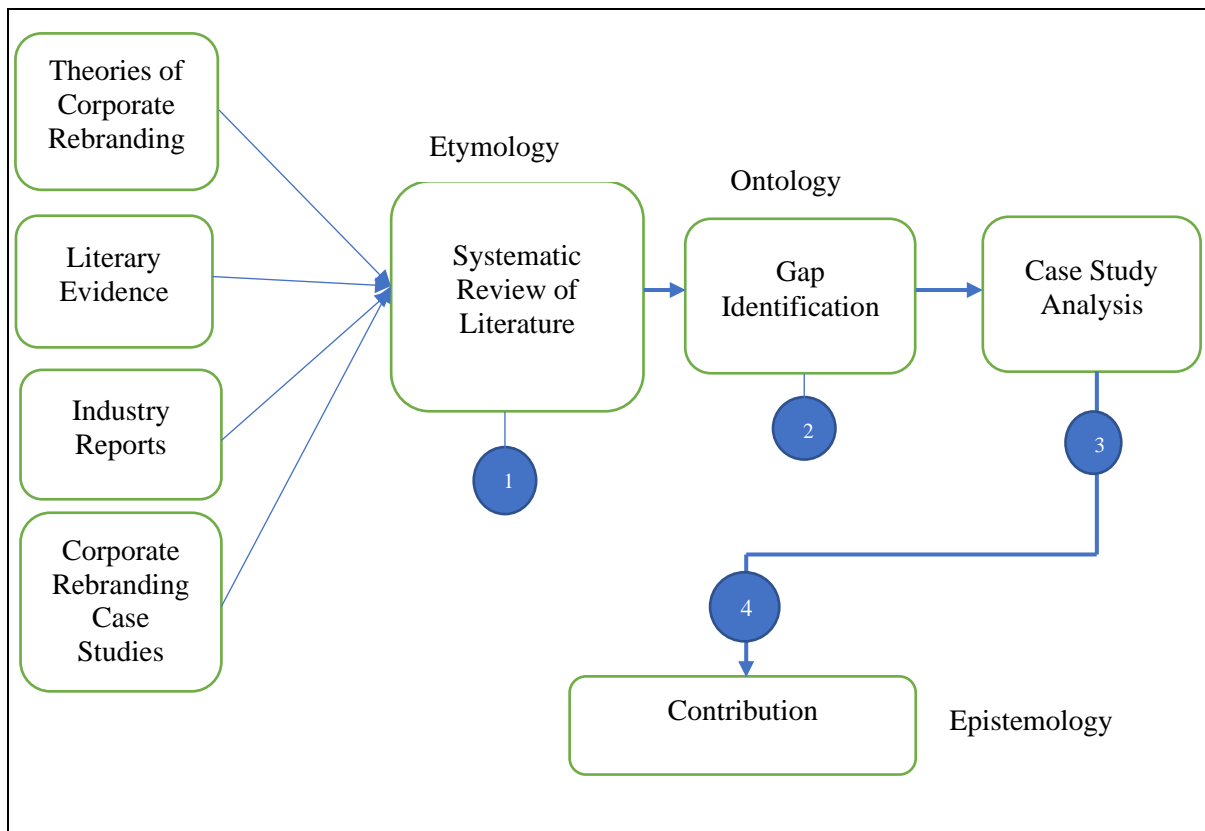
Source: Developed by the author for this Study

Before entering the field, an interview guide was developed based on previous research into corporate rebranding and the research gap identified. The interview guide was trialled with a participant from case study A, and it was also reviewed by experts in the marketing and branding discipline (Yin, 2014). The participants for the interviews were selected and sampled based on purposive and snowball sampling methods. Participants were contacted via email and appointments were fixed both for video calls using Skype and face to face visits. Participants were informed of the interview process and their consent was sought before the interview. The interview questions were made available to the participants in most of the cases prior to the interview and all of them were informed that the data would remain anonymous in any outputs from the study.

Interviews were conducted over a period of six months and each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes with the longest being about 60 minutes. The transcribed data was then coded using a CAQDAS software NVivo 12. The first cycle codes were formed initially through line by line parsing of text and used a deductive approach (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The coded data was then analysed using thematic analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Then a second cycle of codes were generated which resulted in the formation of major themes and categories (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014). A cross-case analysis of the four cases was then conducted and presented to identify overarching themes, pattern matching and for the researcher to look beyond the initial understanding of corporate rebranding (Eisenhardt, 1989).

This step helped in further establishing validity of the findings (Riege, 2003). The theoretical propositions were then revised because of emerging findings. The final propositions were scrutinised for evidence from the cases for support and a summary is presented in table 6.4.

1.6 Findings and Contribution of the Study

Findings from this study on corporate rebranding has both theoretical and managerial implications. The novelty in the findings from this study and its contribution to corporate rebranding theory is depicted in the theoretical framework presented in chapter 6 (Fig 6.2). The contributions were arrived at through a systematic process depicted in figure 1.2 followed by the researcher. The researcher has been able to identify what affects the employee buy-in of the new corporate brand and enables it to continue after the decision to undertake the corporate rebranding strategy has been implemented internally.

1.6.1 Theoretical Contribution

The findings from this research study have made important theoretical contributions to corporate rebranding strategy from an internal perspective. The internal brand communication activities influenced the employees brand understanding of the new corporate brand. The leadership of the institution and the involvement of employees in the corporate rebranding strategy played an important role in influencing an employee's positive response to the strategy. Employees that were involved were more likely to buy-in to the new corporate brand. The active role of the institutions leadership in facilitating the corporate rebranding strategy had a positive effect on the response of employees towards the new corporate brand.

Employee buy-in as an internal outcome of the corporate rebranding strategy was found to be highly influenced by the employee's identification with the new corporate brand. This outcome

was also influenced by the engagement of employees especially front-end. The post rebranding employee buy-in was identified as being influenced by the degree of employee identification with the new corporate brand and the employees' level of engagement within their role.

1.6.2 Managerial Implications

The findings from this study also has implications for corporate brand consultants who act as advisors to organisations and managers involved in developing and implementing the internal strategy. One of the important insights derived from the study is that the senior management must adopt a bottom-up and collaborative approach in developing the new corporate brand. Managers must act as facilitators of the corporate rebranding strategy rather than implementors of decisions from above. Information targeted at employees must be packaged appropriately so that employees respond positively and support the strategy.

Managers must be aware that an employee's identification with the new corporate brand and their engagement levels contribute to strengthening the degree of an employee's buy-in to the new corporate brand. Therefore, an employee's identification with the new corporate brand and their engagement levels must be in view when communicating with employees through various channels. An effort must also be made to focus on increasing the employees understanding of the new corporate brand and strengthening their buy-in post rebranding through consistent internal brand communication.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the background to the topic, identified the research problem and presented the scope of the study. The significance of this study on corporate rebranding from an internal perspective both from an academic and practitioners' points of view are emphasised. The research questions and objectives framed for this study are also identified.

The thesis consists of seven chapters in its structure. Chapter two will provide an extensive review of the corporate rebranding literature that covers theory and the limited gamut of studies that are employee focused. Chapter three identifies the theoretical propositions obtained from the review of literature. Chapter four discusses the research methodology and design adopted to carry out this study. Chapter five details the findings from the within case analysis of each of the four case studies. Chapter six discusses the findings from the cross-case analysis and presents the updated and emerging propositions. The final chapter seven presents the conclusions from the study and its limitations followed with the implications for managers and contribution to the extending the knowledge of corporate rebranding.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Over the last few years studies on corporate rebranding has mostly focused on the effects of the strategy on brand equity (Jaju, Joiner and Reddy, 2006; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006; Lambkin and Muzellec, 2010; Roy and Sarkar, 2015) or stock market returns (Branca and Borges, 2011; Kalaignanam and Bahadir, 2013; Zhao, Calantone and Voorhees, 2018) and very few have focused on the employees'(Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson, 2008; Stuart, 2012; Bolhuis, de Jong and van den Bosch, 2018). Corporate rebranding unlike product rebranding impacts multiple stakeholders and employees play a significant role especially in the service sector to communicate or represent the corporate brand values (Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007; Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson, 2008; Collange, 2015).

Studies that have focused on employees has examined their collaborative role in the corporate rebranding process to achieve their buy-in to the change (Miller and Merrilees, 2013) and, pointed out identity tensions that can emerge among employees including managers because of a corporate brand name change (Stuart, 2012; Lee, 2013; Gilstrap and Smith, 2016; Lee and Bourne, 2017). But most of these studies focused on non-profit organisations. Managing an employee's response to the corporate rebranding process using internal branding activities or the nature of identity tensions encountered by employees in these studies are useful, but they don't investigate the effects on employee outcomes (Merrilees and Miller, 2013). Employees play an important part in determining the perception that customers have about the corporate brand (Ind, 2003). Customers are likely to accept and understand the new corporate brand in an encounter with employees and this, contributes to the success of a corporate rebranding strategy (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006).

Although employees are significant in forming the right customer perceptions, extant literature only has a few studies related to employees (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). From a methodological stand point, majority of the corporate rebranding studies are analysis of case studies (Melewar and Akel, 2005; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006; Lambkin and Muzellec, 2010) or exploratory research (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004; Lomax and Mador, 2006). No study however as far as the researcher is aware, has empirically examined if, employees have bought-in to the new corporate brand as an outcome of the corporate rebranding strategy and what their responses have been towards the strategy. Therefore, it was deemed essential to examine the

corporate rebranding process internally as part of the corporate rebranding strategy and the employee's response especially in the form of their buy-in of the new corporate brand.

2.1 Systematic Review of Literature

This chapter comprehensively and systematically details a literature review and scholarly research on corporate rebranding by identifying, summarising, and discussing the concept in its various dimensions and scope but with a greater significance to internal stakeholders or employees. The literature review process includes a generic literature review to identify all the possible articles related to corporate rebranding using various search strings. The articles were filtered to only include those with a theoretical or conceptual underpinning and with empirical data.

This review identified that the corporate rebranding articles had a lot more emphasis on external stakeholders i.e., customers, than employees. The outcome of the corporate rebranding process was usually established constructs such as brand equity, new perceptions of the brand image, stock market fluctuations and other similar measures. Figure 2.1 represents the systematic review of literature undertaken by the researcher and is denoted as '1' or the first step. The gap identification is also discussed later in the chapter and is depicted in figure 2.10 and denoted as '2' or the second step.

There were a few articles that mentioned the significance of the buy-in of employees (e.g. Stuart and Muzellec, 2004; Stuart, 2012; Miller and Merrilees, 2013) and there were references to employee buy-in in these article on corporate rebranding. However, scholarly research into this area has been limited (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). The researcher then systematically reviewed the articles. The systematic review was based on the researchers focus on employees and their buy-in as an outcome of corporate rebranding strategy internally. A research question and a few employee related constructs identified in the literature guided the researcher in the systematic review process that is depicted in Figure 2.1.

This process initially produced 25 articles that were selected from a list of over 100 articles. Selection was based on if the article mentioned the role of employees. By adding the HE sector, a few additional articles were identified that met the criteria and this brought it up to a total of 28 articles.

Figure 2. 1: Systematic Review of Literature
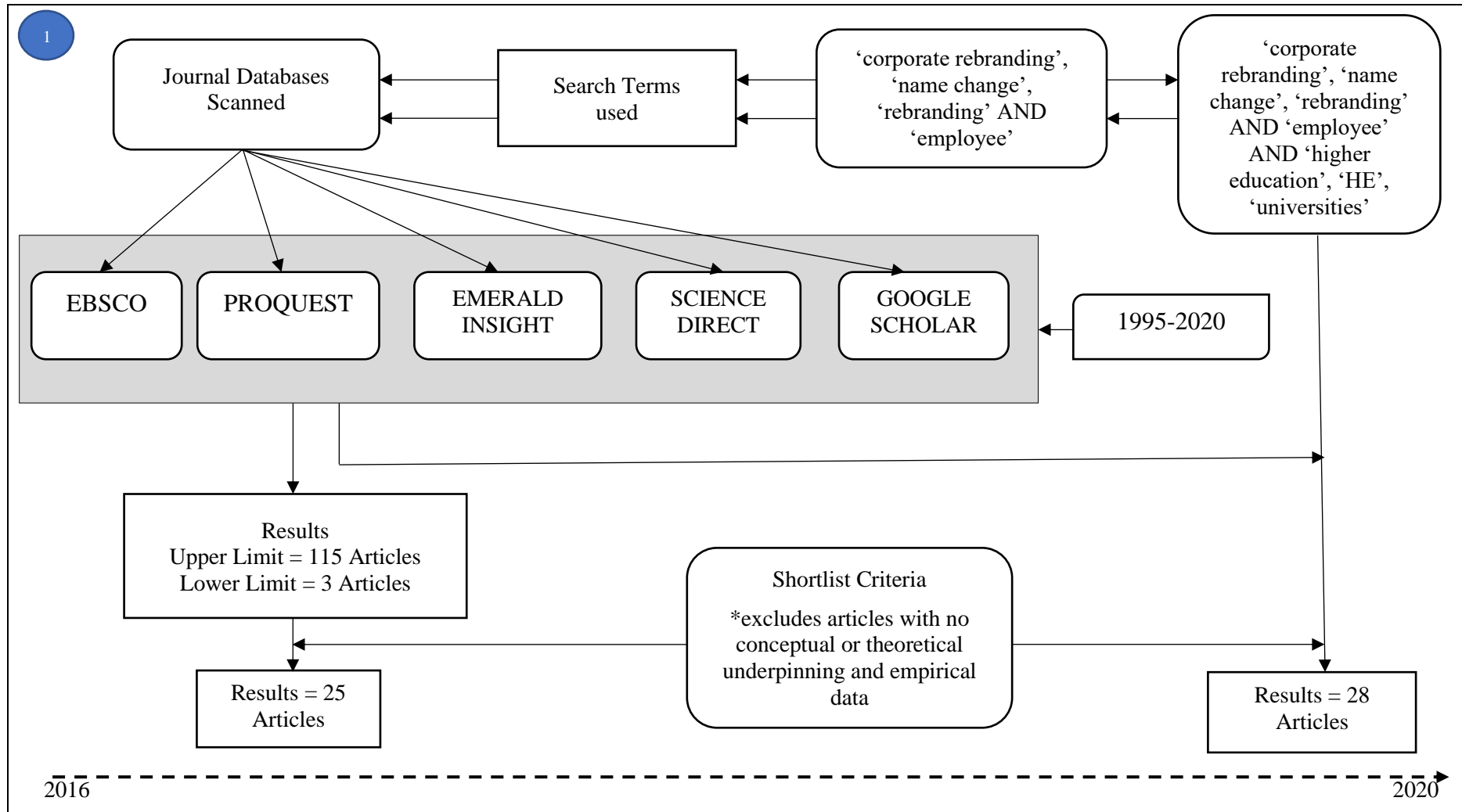
Source: Developed by the author for this study

2.2 Drivers of Corporate Rebranding

One of the earliest exploratory studies on corporate rebranding by Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003), revealed insights into what drove the phenomenon among organisations and the processes followed by organisations to implement the corporate rebranding strategy. The study was conducted with a sample of 166 organisations that had rebranded in a five-year period by changing their corporate brand's name and/or design aesthetics (colour palette, logo etc..). These organisations were examined to locate the industries where the phenomenon was common, isolate the reasons for rebranding, find patterns in the choice of new names and ultimately if they were successful (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin, 2003).

Studies have shown various strategic decisions and events drove the corporate rebranding phenomena among organisations. The main drivers of corporate rebranding were mergers or acquisitions, spin-offs and repositioning of the corporate brand to improve its image (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin, 2003; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006). There are other drivers of corporate rebranding in various industries but all of them including the major ones can be categorised into four as seen in table 2.1.

Table 2. 1: Drivers of Rebranding

Change in Ownership Structure	Change in Corporate Strategy
Mergers and Acquisitions Spin-offs Private to Public Ownership	Diversification and Divestment Internationalisation and Localisation
Change in Competitive Position	**Change in the External Environment**
Outdated Image Erosion of Market Position Reputation Problems	Legal Regulation Crises/Catastrophes

Source: Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003); Muzellec and Lambkin (2006)

2.3 Theoretical Underpinning of Corporate Rebranding Strategy

A constant change in the external environment has caused organisations to focus on corporate rebranding as part of the corporate brand management process to improve brand relevance and operational efficiency (Sonenshein, 2010; Vallaster and Lindgreen, 2011; Melewar, Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2012). Some of the widely cited and academically studied examples of corporate rebranding include rebranding of the automobile manufacturer Mazda (Ewing, Fowlds and Shepherd, 1995), LEGO Group (Hatch and Schultz, 2003), Eircell's takeover by Vodafone and the subsequent rebranding of Eircell to Vodafone (Daly and Moloney, 2004) and Canadian Tire a large auto and leisure goods retailer (Merrilees, 2005). Organisations such as Shell and more

recently Burberry have also had to refresh their corporate brand to be more relevant to their target markets (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). An organisation undergoes corporate rebranding by having a new name, term or symbol or a combination of them to represent it differently in the market and in the perception of stakeholders and competitors (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006).

Corporate rebranding and general corporate brand management can be differentiated. Whilst brand management or branding exercises can be a continuous process to strengthen the original market position, corporate rebranding is the disassociation of the original vision or ideas to a new formulation and therefore a new positioning strategy (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). As such the latter could also include a change in vision or in the corporate culture (Merrilees and Miller, 2008).

There is also a clear distinction between rebranding products and corporate rebranding. When product brands are rebranded consumer attitudes and associations are important however, corporate brands pose a unique challenge as it involves multiple stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). Managers therefore need to be aware of the brand associations of a variety of stakeholders such as employees, suppliers, customers, communities, and others (Jaju, Joiner and Reddy, 2006). Corporate rebranding also requires that all forms of communication or total corporate communication that targets external and internal stakeholders or employees, as they are instrumental in communicating the corporate brand promise to customers (Balmer, 2001).

Various definitions have transpired in literature over the years and a consensus of a single definition for corporate rebranding has not been reached. However, many scholars that have published articles on the topic have used one of the definitions listed in table 2.2. In an exploratory review of corporate rebranding, Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003, p.32) defined rebranding as the 'the practice of building anew a name representative of a differentiated position in the mind frame of stakeholders and a distinctive identity from competitor's'. This signalled a major strategic change and repositioning of the organisation (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin, 2003).

Similarly, other authors in recognising the attributes of the brand that changed in various cases of rebranding highlighted that, corporate rebranding often involved revolutionary creations of new corporate names, underpinned by a new corporate brand vision and new corporate brand values (Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). However other identifiers of the brand can also signify rebranding and can therefore also be defined as the 'the creation of a

new name, term, symbol, design or a combination of them for an established brand with the intention of developing a differentiated (new) position in the mind of stakeholders and competitors' (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006, p.805). This definition implies that it's not just the name of the brand that changes but also other visual attributes such as the logo, symbol and colour, thus adding these to the list of brand attributes that could be changed in corporate rebranding. Table 2.2 lists a few definitions found in literature which is used by most of the scholars that have published research on corporate rebranding.

Table 2. 2: Corporate Rebranding Definitions

Literature	Definitions
Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003: p.32)	The practice of building anew a name representative of a differentiated position in the mind frame of stakeholders and a distinctive identity from competitors
Stuart and Muzellec (2004), Hatch and Schultz (2003)	Corporate rebranding often involves revolutionary creations of new corporate names, underpinned by a new corporate brand vision and new corporate brand values
Muzellec and Lambkin (2006: p.805).	The creation of a new name, term, symbol, design, or a combination of them for an established brand with the intention of developing a differentiated (new) position in the mind of stakeholders and competitors
Gotsi, Andriopoulos, (2007)	Corporate rebranding usually involves changing the company's name, targeting, and positioning, in an attempt to assign new meaning to the corporate brand and communicate new benefits to its stakeholders (Stern, 2006).
Merrilees and Miller, (2008: p.538)	Disjunction or change between an initially formulated corporate brand and a new formulation
Lambkin and Muzellec, (2008, p. 331)	Corporate rebranding refers to the renaming of a whole corporate entity, often signifying a major strategic change or repositioning

Corporate rebranding as a concept thus has broader applications and an organisation can implement it gradually to keep abreast of the environment or suddenly and radically because of strategic changes to the organisation structure, ownership, or strategy such as in mergers or acquisitions. Some of the terminologies synonymous with rebranding in literature are 'renewal', 'refreshment', 'reinvention' and revitalisation of the corporate brand differing based on the attributes of the corporate brand that is changed (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014, p. 266). Corporate rebranding is also defined as the 'disjunction or change between an initially formulated corporate brand and a new formulation' Merrilees and Miller (2008, p.538). In examining these various definitions, it is evident that the nature of rebranding affects the

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perception of external stakeholders reflected in the corporate brand's image and reputation and, impacts the internal stakeholders as they are involved in the delivery of the brand promise.

2.3.1 Corporate Branding and Corporate Rebranding

Corporate brands and corporate branding are becoming increasingly important as the marketing of product and service brands are getting tougher in a climate of look-alikes, homogenisation of products and services, and the fragmentation of market segments (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). Differentiation in such a market requires the focus to be on positioning the whole organisation and not just the product or service which a corporate brand is able to leverage (Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Aaker, 2004).

Corporate brands can be seen as consisting of two dimensions, an external image as perceived by external stakeholders and an identity as perceived by employees (Abratt, 1989; Balmer, 1998). On that basis the corporate rebranding of a corporate brand can be seen as the modification of the external image and/or conforming to a change in the identity (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin, 2003).

In a later study, corporate brands were proposed as being made of three fundamental elements as seen in figure 2.2 that include, the vision, organisational culture and the corporate image (Schultz and Hatch, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2003).

Figure 2. 2: Three Elements of Corporate Branding
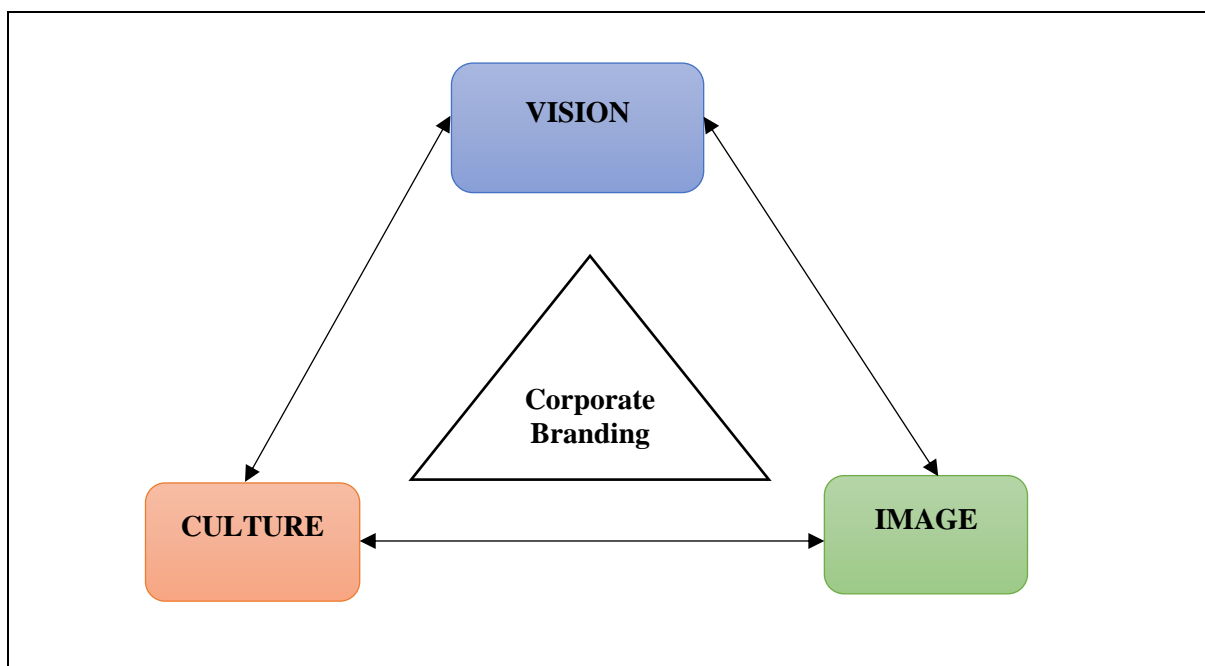
Source: Adapted from Hatch and Schultz (2003, p. 1047)

The three elements although distinct, needs to be aligned in their relationship with each other in order for the corporate brand to be successful (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). The vision is the main idea that encompasses what the senior management wants the organisation to become. The culture includes the values, beliefs, assumptions of employees about the organisation and the corporate image is what is perceived by the external stakeholders (Schultz and Hatch, 2001). Gaps between these three elements were explained in the following manner by Hatch and Schultz (2001, 2003).

The corporate image formed by the total corporate communications mix to the outside world many at times do not mirror the perceptions held by those inside the organisation. Similarly, external stakeholders in forming perceptions of the corporate image of the organisation can be influenced by factors outside the influence and control of the organisation which would contradict the strategic vision framed by the senior management. The correction of these gaps and steps taken by managers increases the chances of success of the corporate brand and the branding efforts.

This interrelationship can hence be significant in deciding the focus of the organisation when implementing the corporate rebranding strategy that redefines the corporate brand. Corporate brands undergo modification or a transformation when there are gaps in the relationship, and links between any of the three elements. For example, a poor corporate image among the external stakeholders such as customers can cause the organisation to rebrand by changing the corporate brand's name and repositioning it in the marketplace (Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin, 2003). In addition, the corporate rebranding strategy should aim for the re-alignment of the relationship between the strategic vision and organisational culture internally, and the corporate image held by external stakeholders as argued by Balmer (2001, 2012) and Schultz and Hatch (2001, 2003).

Although limited, it is interesting to note that most of the extant literature on corporate rebranding falls under the category of major or revolutionary changes such as a name change. However, there are other ways to categorise and typify rebranding strategies undertaken by organisations as evident by the definitions show above and a few of the studies that focus on minor changes to the existing corporate brand.

2.3.2 Corporate Rebranding Types and Typologies

The corporate rebranding literature in a few early exploratory studies identified different types of corporate rebranding implemented by organisations. They are detailed in this next section.

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One of the earlier ways corporate rebranding strategies was typified was based on the impact of these strategic actions on the organisation and its stakeholders. They were simply categorised as minor, intermediate, and major (Daly and Moloney, 2004). Minor changes focused on aesthetics and was termed as 'restyling' or renewing of the brand's appearance to signify a change from the old (Daly and Moloney, 2004, p. 31). Intermediate changes were about repositioning the brand in the marketplace to create a new image whilst a complete change was termed as 'rebranding' to signify the adoption of a new name and it was required that both internal and external stakeholders are informed through an integrated communications campaign (Daly and Moloney, 2004, p. 31). This however limited the application of rebranding strategies to a change of name and position. But as noted in the definition of corporate rebranding earlier, changes to the corporate brand can be in the form of its name, symbol, design, or a combination of them.

Figure 2. 3: Rebranding as a Continuum

Major Changes

Change in Positioning

Revolutionary Rebranding

Evolutionary Rebranding

Minor Changes   **Change in Marketing Aesthetics**   Major Changes
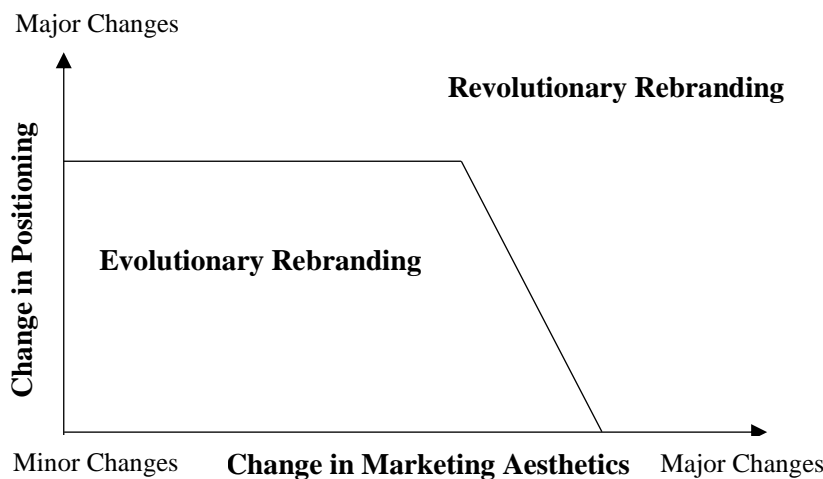
Source: (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006, p. 805)

These changes to the corporate brand can be systematically implemented over a period or be something sudden and radical that revolutionises the current state of the corporate brand and organisation (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006). The rebranding exercise undertaken by organisations can thus be viewed as either revolutionary or evolutionary corresponding to the degree of change as shown in figure 2.3 (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006). Minor changes of marketing aesthetics of the corporate brand such as modification of logos and slogan not easily perceived by external stakeholders can be termed evolutionary while revolutionary denotes major changes such as a name change that repositions the corporate brand in the marketplace

and creates new associations (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006). This typology applied to for-profit organisations.

A further typology of branding choices was proposed by Lomax and Mador (2006) based on the multiple case study of seven UK organisations including one non-profit that had changed its name and/or brand values and attributes. The four options mentioned in this exploratory study (table 2.3) are 're-iterating' (existing name, existing values and attributes), 're-defining' (existing name, new values and attributes), 're-naming' (new name, existing values and attributes) and 're-starting' (new name, new values and attributes) (Lomax and Mador, 2006, p. 91).

Table 2. 3: Typology of Corporate Branding Choices

		Name	
		Existing	New
Brand Values and Attributes	Existing	**Re-Iterating** Brand name and values are not changed, as they are congruent and address client needs	**Re-Naming** External perceptions are addressed through a change of name
	New	**Re-Defining** Values/Attributes are changed to meet identified concerns, either external or internal	**Re-Starting** Both values and their name are changed, to address fundamental problems

Source: Lomax and Mador (2006, fig. 1)

In table 2.3, brands in the first quadrant (re-iteration) do not need to rebrand as there isn't a need to change their brand values and attributes. In the second quadrant (re-naming) the corporate brand name is changed but the products/services and the brand values and attributes remain unchanged. In the third quadrant, organisations keep the corporate brand name the same but see a need to change the brand values and attributes to improve its positioning in the marketplace. In the fourth quadrant (re-starting), organisations decide on a giving a completely new start to the corporate brand with a new name, brand values, and attributes. Organisations that de-merge may consider this type of corporate rebranding.

Three of these options except re-iterating are initiated due to internal and/or external changes but only two options namely 're-naming' and 're-starting' are related to corporate rebranding. In re-naming, a corporate brand is given a new name by keeping its values and attributes unchanged to respond to external forces such as a weak corporate image. Re-starting is a more

significant change to the organisation structure, culture and possibly products and services such as in a merger or spin-off to deal with stronger internal and external stakeholder issues (Lomax and Mador, 2006). It is plausible that internal stakeholders are important in the latter two types of changes as they interact with customers and therefore their engagement and acceptance of the change is essential especially in re-starting. This coincides with what practitioners were implementing, however, rebranding studies also appeared in literature and in practice in the form of changes to the visual identity of the brand (Melewar, Hussey and Srivoravilai, 2005). Although these types of rebranding widen the scope it does not necessarily conform to the terminologies used in subsequent studies on corporate rebranding.

Figure 2. 4: Typology of Non-Profit Rebranding

QUADRANT II: NORMATIVE IDENTITY DOMINANT	**QUADRANT 1: HIGH NORMATIVE AND UTILITARIAN IDENTITY**
• Reinforce normative identity (re-connecting to its original mission) despite external changes • Remain true to its root • Retaining traditional values & beliefs • Focus on regional need	• Planned rebrand strategy to be the best in the category • Ability to articulate expectations • Integrative – unified identity • Strong leadership, leading from the top • Ambitious re-visioning with consultant • Leverage brand champions across the organisation • Brand tracking
QUADRANT III: LOW NORMATIVE AND UTILITARIAN IDENTITY	**QUADRANT IV: UTILITARIAN IDENTITY DOMINANT**
• A reaction to market changes such as other charities rebrand • Raising awareness of the charity • Weak revisioning • Minor changes to visual identity • Low investment and synergy in rebranding strategy	• Commercially driven • Focus on growth and long term goals • Exploring new brand opportunity to identify relevant corporate partners • Rebrand emphasised future income generation

Vertical axis: Normative Identity (Low to High). Horizontal axis: Utilitarian Identity (Low to High).

Source: (Lee and Bourne, 2017, p. 802)

A further typology applicable to the rebranding of non-profit institutions was created by Lee and Bourne (2017) after conducting a multiple case study research on ten UK based charities. The four typologies as shown in figure 2.4 were differentiated based on the dominance of either a normative or a utilitarian identity when deciding on the corporate rebranding strategy. A rebranding strategy with a dominant normative identity would have a greater focus on the roots of the institution and its history whilst that of a strategy with both normative and utilitarian focused on its employees, leadership strength, and the corporate brand (Lee and Bourne, 2017). A rebranding strategy with a more utilitarian identity focused on the external market place capitalising on opportunities whilst, the strategy that had a low emphasis on both normative and utilitarian identities accommodated some of the market forces and the internal changes but at a weaker scale (Lee and Bourne, 2017).

For the purposes of this study, universities that had undergone minor changes to its visual identity as well as those that changed its name with a new visual identity and brand values were considered. This type of rebranding although does not completely fit into one of the types noted above, it falls within the continuum of evolutionary or incremental to a radical or revolutionary change to the corporate brand.

2.3.3 Process of Corporate Rebranding Strategy

Corporate rebranding has been studied from a variety of perspectives and stakeholder views, however not many have proposed rigorously tested theoretical frameworks that can underpin further research and practice. This also shows that currently there is not a consensus on a theoretical framework that explains the corporate rebranding process and its outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, scholars that have researched corporate rebranding have emphasised upon the corporate rebranding process within an organisation and the principles to follow when implementing it.

An exploratory study of 166 rebranding cases from secondary sources by Muzellec, Lambkin and Doogan (2003:35) provided an early insight into the different stages of the rebranding process namely, 'repositioning, renaming, redesign and relaunching' (figure 2.5). In the repositioning stage objectives of a new position in the minds of stakeholders are set, followed by a new name and slogan in the renaming stage. In the redesign stage, the logo is redesigned which is reflected in the organisation's livery and finally in the relaunch stage the change is communicated to internal and external stakeholders. It is interesting to note that the communication of the rebranding to stakeholders especially internal was only initiated in the

last phase when, such a significant organisational change can potentially distance employees and customers (Morgan and Zeffane, 2003).

Figure 2. 5: Four Stages of Rebranding
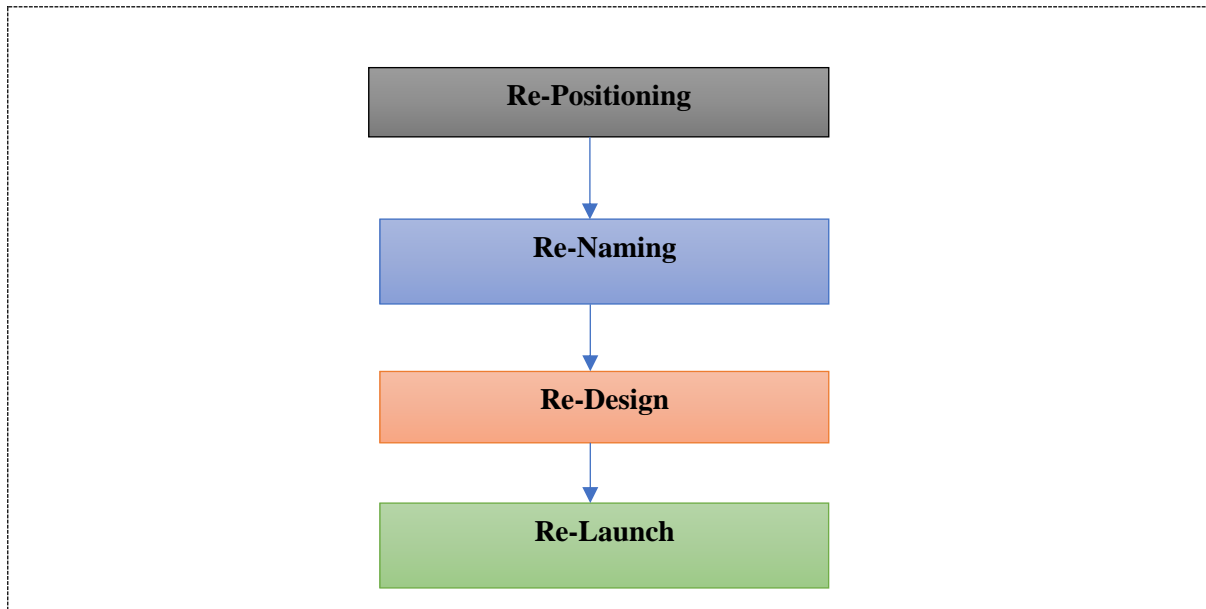
Source: (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin, 2003)

In the extant literature on rebranding, a qualitative analysis of four important case studies of organisations contributed to the identification of three major themes that depicted the corporate rebranding process (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). The first case study on Mazda in South Africa found that management sensitivity to customers', good advertising and internal branding within their dealers were important (Ewing, Fowlds and Shepherd, 1995). The second case study by Schultz and Hatch (2003) when studying the rebranding of LEGO found interesting inconsistencies that needed to be resolved for a successful rebranding exercise such as the paradox that the espoused corporate brand values needed to be old while remaining contemporary. The third case study on Vodafone's takeover of Eircell in Ireland and its later renaming of Eircell to Vodafone by Daly and Moloney (2004) found that advertising a joint brand name (Eircell-Vodafone) for a while as a pre-cursor to the eventual renaming would prove beneficial.

Internal marketing to the acquired company's employees to win their support and commitment also proved useful (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). The fourth case study by Merrilees and Miller (2005) of an auto and leisure goods retailer Canadian Tire demonstrated the importance of thorough market research before framing the new vision and an integrated marketing strategy.

The key findings of the latter case studies formed the basis of corporate rebranding theory and the three stages of corporate rebranding strategy as depicted in figure 2.6.

Figure 2. 6: Phased Process of Corporate Rebranding Strategy
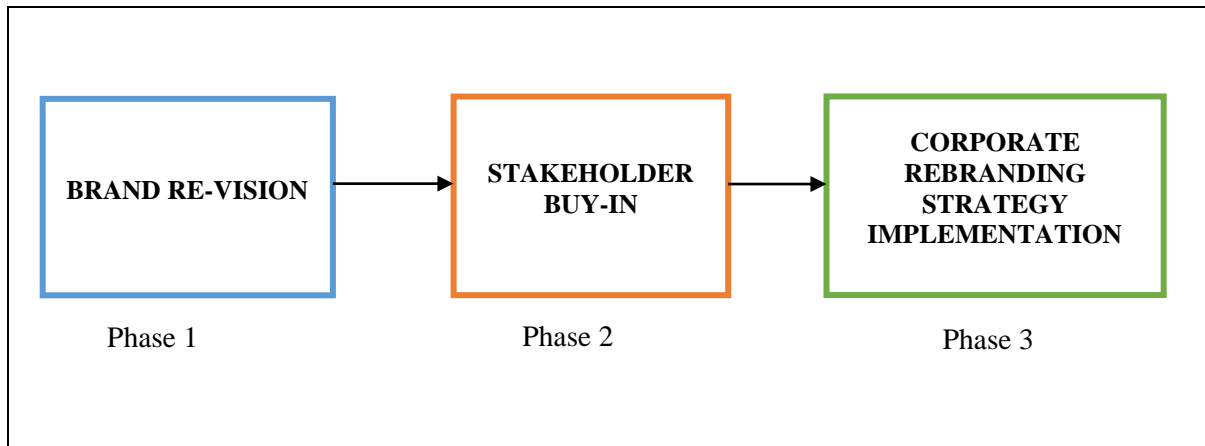
Source: Adapted from Merrilees and Miller (2008)

The three stages were; forming a new brand vision, values and identity and the processes involved in defining it, gaining commitment and buy-in from internal and external stakeholders (stakeholder buy-in) and corporate rebranding strategy implementation using integrated marketing communication (Merrilees, 2005; Merrilees and Miller, 2008; Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). In the brand re-vision stage, a new vision was formed founded on understanding its consumers and their existing and future needs. Gaining commitment from employees and other stakeholders through internal branding constituted the second stage.

The third and final stage featured the role of marketing and communication activities as part of the implementing the corporate rebranding strategy (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). This transition from the previous four stages by Muzellec, Lambkin and Doogan (2003) (figure 2.5) which only dealt with corporate rebranding from an external perspective to the three phases (figure 2.6), clearly positions gaining commitment from stakeholders especially internal as an intermediate stage before the strategy implementation. This three-stage model was updated later in a recent comprehensive literature review of corporate rebranding by Merrilees, Miller and Yakimova (2014) that showed triggers to corporate rebranding before the first stage and corporate rebranding strategy outcomes at the end.

The triggers for corporate rebranding are categorised into two dimensions: proactive/reactive; urgent/non-urgent. Triggers are proactive when the organisation decides to rebrand based on an opportunity to improve the brand whilst reactive is when an external factor drives the

change. Urgent cases were based on tight implementation deadlines whilst non-urgent cases did not have a strict deadline to adhere to (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014, p. 270).

Figure 2. 7: Non-Profit Rebranding Process
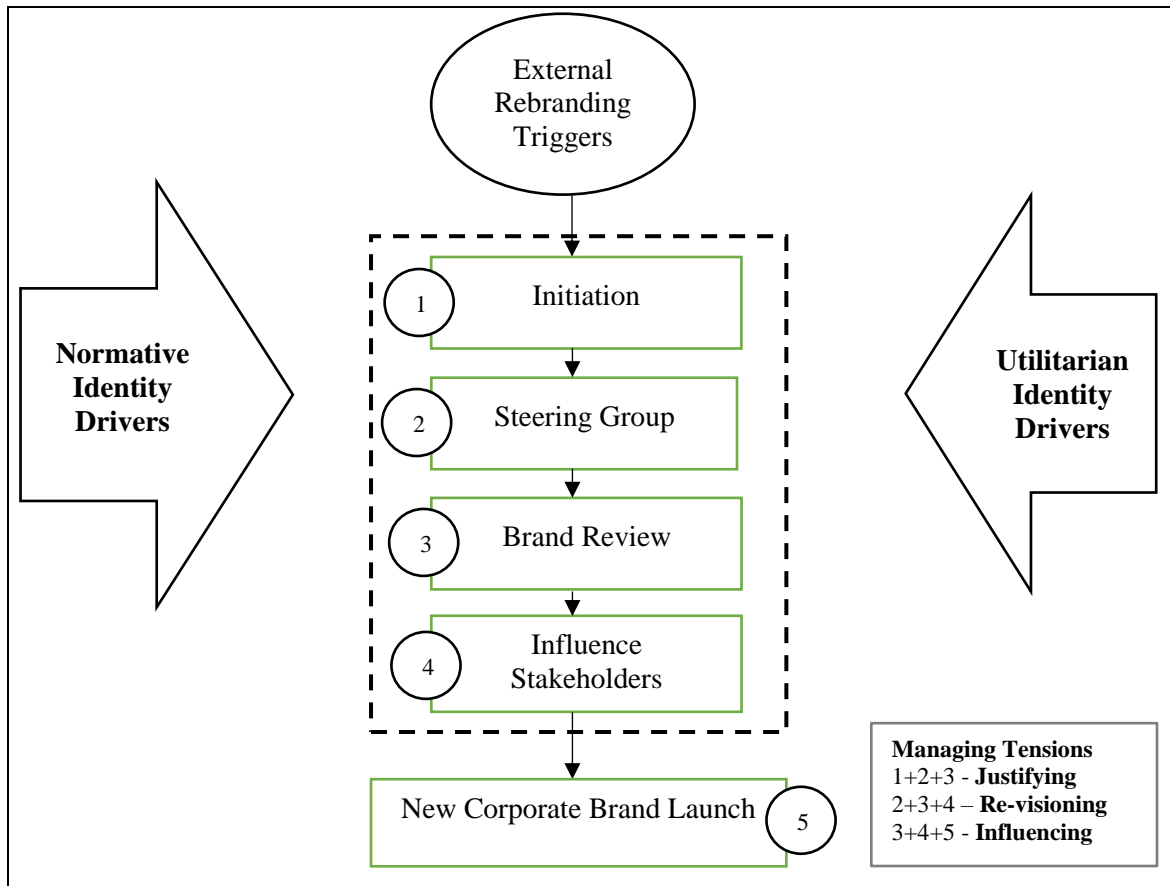
Source: Adapted from Lee and Bourne (2017, p. 803)

An internal corporate rebranding process framework was proposed by Lee and Bourne (2017) by conducting an exploratory study on ten UK charities and shedding light on the nuances of the process. The process as seen in figure 2.7 began with the formation of a steering group initiated by the brand managers and that included the CEO. A brand review was then conducted in consultation with multiple stakeholders. Strong internal communication was identified as necessary to make the transition from the old to the new identity, but it was also an iterative process that moved between the brand review and the stakeholder influencing phase.

To manage tensions, managers used 'justifying' of the need to rebrand as an approach to create a sense of urgency. 'Revisioning' was an approach that involved managers in asserting the greater purpose behind the rebrand to stakeholders, to reduce tensions. 'Influencing' was used by managers to facilitate employees to live the brand. This involved the engagement of employees in various internal activities such as the brand launch, roadshows, creating

marketing materials and others. This study was thus able to shed some light on the knowledge of corporate rebranding from an internal perspective.

All the studies discussed above were a good attempt to establish a framework for managers to adopt when their organisation undergoes corporate rebranding. But there was little mention of what would make the process successful. A study by Merrilees and Miller (2008) noted that success in implementing the corporate rebranding strategy is based on six principles. These principles include revising the brand vision whilst maintaining the values of the core brand; retaining core or peripheral brand concepts; meeting the needs of a new market segment; use of internal branding and marketing to internal stakeholders; aligning the brand elements such as logo, design, colour etc. to the corporate brand concept and integrated marketing communication to all stakeholders (Merrilees and Miller, 2008, p.546).

These principles were later utilised in an action research study of the corporate rebranding of an Australian charity by Miller and Merrilees (2013), which proved useful in delivering a successful rebrand. More recently a qualitative case study analysis of a non-profit organisation that had undergone rebranding was conducted by Chad (2016) where it was found that all six principles were supported in the corporate rebranding process. The principles were based on an extension of the current literature and an exploratory analysis of the case studies (Merrilees and Miller, 2008), therefore the principles itself were broad and not coded comprehensively allowing managers to use their discretion on whether to adopt these principles or not. The formulation of the six principles is thus a step in developing a rigorous theory of corporate rebranding and there is clearly room for a deeper look into for example the role of employees.

2.4 Corporate Rebranding - Role of Employees

Employees play an important role as mediators between the internal and external business environment of an organisation (Balmer and Gray, 2003). They communicate the corporate brand values to customers (Balmer and Gray, 2003) and help to build and maintain the corporate brand (King, 1991; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). One of the earliest studies on corporate rebranding was the case study of Mazda's corporate brand revitalisation in South Africa in 1993 (Ewing, Fowlds and Shepherd, 1995). The existing brand image of Mazda had to be changed owing to a slump in market shares in the country. Changes to the corporate brand were made to portray a new brand image that was more technologically futuristic, appealing, exciting, and environmentally friendly to its customers.

Ewing, Fowlds and Shepherd (1995), referred to this change strategy as a renaissance strategy to revitalise the corporate brand. The article addresses the importance of external marketing and communication activities thereafter to launch the brand to its customers and change their perception of the brand. The campaigns were successful, and the brand's performance improved in the marketplace. In achieving the success, the article mentions the need to communicate with its dealers through whom they sell the cars but, there is no mention of the role of employees in the success of the corporate rebranding strategy.

It is important to catalogue the various expectations that employees have when redefining the corporate brand identity (Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007). If not, a tension can be created especially when employees detect a mismatch between their expectations and the identity that is developed by a more brand-oriented approach (Lee, 2013). With brand-oriented organisations, where brand values are strongly intertwined with the organisational culture, change initiatives such as corporate rebranding is met with high resistance from employees as it challenges their existing identities (Fiol, 2001; van Leeuwen, van Knippenberg and Ellemers, 2003).

Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson (2008) studied the corporate rebranding of a leading telecommunications organisation to identify the cultural alignment of the employees with the new corporate brand values. The empirical study showed that employees organisation wide did not view the culture to be aligned with the new corporate brand values. However, when examining the results of the employees at a divisional level i.e., telecommunications, internet services, call centre and corporate, the results varied were different on the researchers' cultural scale that measured various cultural components. For example, employees from the internet services showed a resistance to the change and senior managers at the telecommunications division were concerned about the changes. Interestingly, employees that joined the organisation after the corporate rebranding strategy was implemented showed a greater alignment with the corporate brand values than existing employees who resisted the change (Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson, 2008).

In making corporate rebranding decisions, if the new corporate brand image and the desired associations are far from the existing corporate brand identity and core values, employees can be alienated (Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007; Lee, 2013). This could be the result of the top management following a top-down approach to the corporate rebranding strategy (Merrilees et.al., 2014). It should also be noted that matching the gap between the existing and new

corporate brand values and corporate brand identity with the stakeholder's expectations is challenging to accomplish (de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley, 1999). Prioritising certain stakeholder interests by managers such as shareholders above others to manage expectations in the corporate rebranding process can also create challenges (Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007) for employees.

The focus on external communications with limited or no internal communication disengages employees from the new corporate brand (Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007). They then become vulnerable to negative reviews externally especially if the external communications are unsuccessful (Dutton et al., 1994; Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007). This could also create a tension amongst employees as their varying interests and unfulfilled expectations are ignored during the internal brand communications (Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010). Such tensions can also exist and increase when the senior management adopts a brand-oriented approach where the brand becomes central to the changes taking place internally (Hankinson and Hankinson, 1998; Merrilees, 2005). LEGO adopted a brand-oriented approach when designing and implementing the corporate rebranding strategy where, employees' roles were revised that resulted in tensions to erupt (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). Lee and Bourne (2017) in their multiple case study of ten UK based charities showed how these tensions were managed by managers through communication.

Interestingly in the higher education sector where universities are not considered to be brand-oriented, employees such as academics struggle to view the university name as a corporate brand with an identity that needs to be managed (Frandsen et al., 2018). This poses an additional challenge for senior management when implementing corporate rebranding. This challenge is also identified by Gioia, Schultz and Corley (2000) in their study that argues that the identity of the organisation needs to be continuously shaped by reflecting on the image formed by the perception of its employees.

Another challenge for non-profit organisations is balancing the external identity that the marketing department communicates to raise funds and generate awareness to the identity that is internally acceptable (Lee, 2013). It is imperative therefore that employees play an important role in the corporate rebranding strategy to have successful outcomes. As an example, an employee appointed to the role of brand champion with a responsibility to represent and persuasively communicate the corporate brand to their peers affects their commitment and identification making the corporate rebranding strategy effective (Yakimova *et al.*, 2017).

Managing the tensions among employees during the change and addressing their expectations can be seen to be important in corporate rebranding. However, after the end of the internal processes of the corporate rebranding strategy, organisations at large do not really check if employees have bought-in to the new corporate brand. In one of the few studies to empirically determine the effects of corporate rebranding strategy over time, it was found that the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour of employees of nine UK based charities did not improve significantly and may have even dissipated after a few years (Hankinson et.al, 2007). This was possibly because of the lack of ongoing communication internally by the organisation to remind employees of the changes to the corporate brand, so they can conform to the new values and vision of the corporate brand and the organisation (Lomax and Mador, 2006; Hankinson, Lomax and Hand, 2007).

A multiple case study of organisations that underwent corporate rebranding revealed the importance of the involvement of employees in the new corporate brand building process (Lomax and Mador, 2006). The organisations studied by them and the level of involvement of employees are displayed in table 2.4.

Table 2. 4: Stakeholder Involvement in the Rebranding Process

Corporate Names (New/Old)	Stakeholders			
	Project Leadership	Staff	Customer	Agency
Carillion/Tarmac	Board of Directors &Agency	Some	Informal	Yes
BG, Centrica/British Gas	Board of Directors led by Marketing Director	None	No	No
Citrus/BLA	MD	All	Informal	Yes
HSBC/Midland	Corporate Centre	None	Only commercial clients	Yes
Thus/Scottish Telecom	Senior Management Team	None		Yes
Sodexho	Project Team including consultancy	Yes	Yes	No
Scope/The Spastics Society	Not available	Yes	Yes	No

Source: Lomax and Mador (2006, p. 88)

One of the organisations that was smaller in size involved all the employees in the different stages of decision making in the rebranding process. This was found to be motivational for the

employees. A few others in the study carried out a more top-down approach to the internal process and only communicated the changes to employees. Lomax and Mador (2006) in this study made a point of the importance of involving employees in the internal process of corporate rebranding.

A recent study on the corporate rebranding of an Australian charity's corporate brand by Miller and Merrilees (2013) using action research reported how a revolutionary corporate rebranding strategy affected employees positively and the strategy was a success as, they expressed support for the new corporate brand. Employees from this charity were however consulted throughout the corporate rebranding process and were involved in decisions about the new corporate brand (Miller and Merrilees, 2013). Thus, employees can play an important role in the corporate rebranding strategy but, how they respond within themselves to all the communication and their actions towards the new corporate brand is still to be examined.

2.5 Corporate Rebranding – Internal Strategy

The internal strategy of corporate rebranding is aimed at employees and refers to the internal branding and communication activities that encourage internal stakeholders i.e. employees to buy-in to the new corporate brand.

2.5.1 Internal Branding and Communication

Internal branding is helpful in the creation of powerful corporate brands (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007) and is an important part of establishing employee buy-in (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). Corporate brand management theory and practice in the past has focused on external stakeholders but there has been recent interest in producing coordinated external and internal branding programmes to benefit employees (Duboff, 2001; Schultz and Hatch, 2001). The concept has been widely researched in the services marketing literature and has an important bearing on the delivery and fulfilment of the brand promise by employees (Lee, Kim and Kim, 2014). Internal branding is shown to increase the quality of service delivery (de Chernatony and Cottam, 2006) and contribute to the cognitive and emotional attachment of employees to the brand (Foster, Punjaisri and Cheng, 2010). This attachment is what is expected to create the buy-in during the corporate rebranding process.

According to Merrilees and Miller (2008), engaging in internal branding and communication activities is an important principle in having a successful rebrand. This principle also states the need for stakeholders to buy-in to the corporate rebranding (Thomson *et al.*, 1999; Kaikati, 2003; Stuart and Muzellec, 2004).

The need for buy-in is elaborated later in section 2.8.1. Stakeholder buy-in is facilitated primarily by the organisation's approach to keep the brand as centre to all its operations and strategies. This is termed brand orientation (Urde, 1999; Merrilees, 2005), and the organisation uses internal branding activities to reach out to its stakeholders. especially employees who develop ownership and live the brand as a result (Urde, 1999).

Since a widely accepted definition of internal branding does not exist, the definition adopted in this study is that 'internal branding describes the activities undertaken by an organisation to ensure that the brand promise reflecting the espoused brand values that set customers' expectations is enacted and delivered by employees' (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011, p.1523).

The successful positioning of the corporate brand is also dependent on the employees' behaviour when producing and delivering the service (Coskun and Frohlich, 1992). More importantly customer-contact employees for service organisations act as the bridge between the internal and external branding world and therefore have an influence on what customers and other stakeholders perceive about the brand and/or the organisation (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Sirianni *et al.*, 2013).

Employees possessing unique skills can be a source of competitive advantage to the organisation and contribute to the perception of the brand as distinct from other competitors (Day and Wensley, 1988; Bharadwaj, Varadarajan and Fahy, 1993). However, the heterogeneous nature of human beings with variable attitudes and behaviour can cause customers to have differential experiences (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). Consistency in the approach of those delivering the brand promise (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) then becomes the key to achieving the competitive advantage that organisations seek. This also becomes important in achieving and maintaining the desired identity, corporate image, and corporate reputation (Fitzgerald, 1987; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001).

Internal branding emphasises the need for employee behaviour to be aligned with the corporate brand identity and brand values so that the customers would have the experience of the corporate brand and organisation that senior managers desire (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Baumgarth and Schmidt, 2010). This behaviour can be influenced and aligned by senior managers and leaders communicating about the brand, its values and attributes to their employees so they have brand knowledge which in turn affects the degree to which the corporate brand is rightly represented to their customers (Baker *et al.*, 2014). Additionally, organisations that consider their brands as strategic assets are quite likely to demonstrate high

brand orientation in all their actions and thus both employees and customers create brand equity (Gromark and Melin, 2011). However, for the orientation to develop employees and managers need to buy-in to the corporate brand (Gromark and Melin, 2011; Urde, Baumgarth and Merrilees, 2013).

Internal marketing helps to create a closer alignment of the corporate brands values and identity with the employee's behaviour by promoting the corporate brand inside the organisation (Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010). The concept of internal marketing that treats employees' as customers has been noted to act as a tool in change management as it can be developed into an organised effort to overcome organisational resistance and keep employees aligned, motivated and coordinated on the implementation of the corporate strategy (Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993). However, simply communicating to employees wouldn't suffice as this also requires them to buy-in at least intellectually and emotionally if possible, to the change (Thomson *et al.*, 1999; Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010). Thus, internal marketing and thereby internal branding can help with creating the buy-in needed among employees to transition from the old identity to the new identity created because of the corporate change which in this case is revolutionary corporate rebranding.

In literature, not having employees' buy-in to the changes to the corporate brand can affect its success (Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010). And as internal branding activities aims to create buy-in its plausible to propose that internal branding contributes to the success of the rebranding process mediated by employee buy-in. Consequently, a failure to market the brand internally can cause external failure (Causon, 2004). Thus, the use of internal branding activities to communicate the changes to the corporate brand such as its values, vision and identity is an important part of the corporate rebranding strategy internally in an organisation (Merrilees and Miller, 2008).

Previous empirical research has shown the various benefits to employees because of the organisations internal branding activities. Internal branding showcases the organisations activities to help employees embrace the values of the organisation while treating them as internal customers (Foster, Punjaisri and Cheng, 2010). These activities should ideally communicate messages that are congruent internally and externally as they assist employees to buy-in to the organisational goals, and mission when performing their roles (Mitchell, 2002; Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson, 2009).

A services branding model (figure 2.8) developed by de Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003), displayed the importance of the consistency in the internal and external communication.

Figure 2. 8: Criteria Influencing the Success of Services Brands
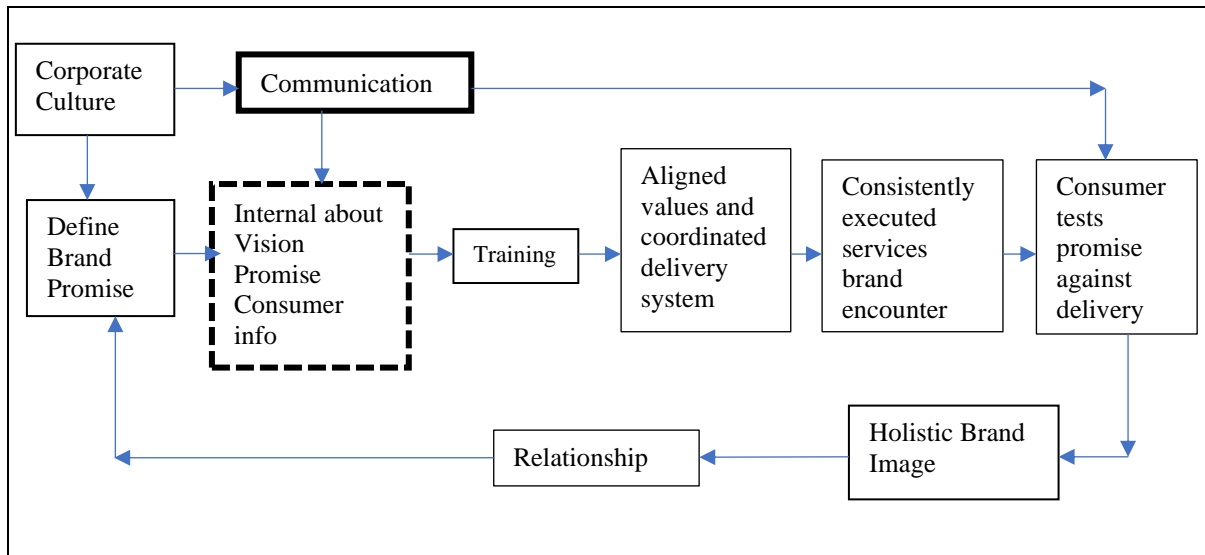
Source: de Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003, fig. 2)

Two main internal branding activities are internal communication and training. Internal communication by managers is used to affect employees at a cognitive level while training to develop skills and use techniques to perform the job well is an effective tool to affect behaviour (Lee, Kim and Kim, 2014). Internal communication aligns employees understanding of their roles in relation to the brand affecting their attitude and behaviour towards customers (King and Grace, 2005). It also enables employees to buy-in to the brand values at the emotional level (Lee, Kim and Kim, 2014; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007) and contribute to their commitment to the brand (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005).

Internal communication and training influences the employees brand knowledge, attitude and behaviour (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007) while producing commitment, shared understanding of the vision, satisfaction and loyalty to the organisation (Asif and Sargeant, 2000; Papasolomou and Vrontis, 2006). Having said that consistency of communication and coherency of the brand messages to what is communicated externally is extremely important in maintaining the quality of service encounters with customers (Punjaisri, Wilson and Evanschitzky, 2009). However, one of the pitfalls in internal branding is an overdependence on internal communication as it requires integration with corporate marketing, corporate management, and corporate human resource management (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007).

Another mechanism of internal branding is employee development through training. Training staff members ensures consistency to how customers experience the brand, and it also influences behaviour and enhances employee performance (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). Training through coaching also helps employees to model the behaviour that is espoused by the corporate brand (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011).

A study by Punjaisri and Wilson (2011) identified that the three outcomes of internal branding; brand commitment, brand identification and brand loyalty were positively influenced by internal communication and training activities. Brand understanding, and knowledge of the brand values is the aim of internal branding. Brand knowledge is important for employees to transform brand promises into reality (Miles and Mangold, 2004). A study also showed that employee satisfaction and their ability to carry out their roles and responsibilities was affected because of a lack of sufficient brand knowledge and information (King and Grace, 2008).

Organisations especially service-oriented have little control over the perceptions formed by the customer because of employee and customer encounters. Therefore, it is vital that employees have a good understanding of the corporate brand promise, so they can deliver it consistently (Baker et.al, 2014). Managing employee's experiences with the brand requires organisations to have an internal orientation to the needs and wants of their employees to implement appropriate responses to meet them (Lings, 2004). This is an extension of the external market orientation concept (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990) and is very helpful in developing brand knowledge for employees that attracts, retains and motivates employees to deliver the brand promise (King and Grace, 2008). The acquisition of brand knowledge is affected by the level of buy-in or support that employees have for the rebranding process (Hankinson, Lomax and Hand, 2007)).

When employees comprehend what the brand represents; values and promise to its customers, it helps them exhibit greater cognitive and emotional attachment and commitment to the corporate brand (Thomson *et al.*, 1999; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Punjaisri, Wilson and Evanschitzky, 2008). Furthermore, the view that the alignment of employee's values with that of the brand can influence the desire to remain loyal to the corporate brand is postulated by organisation identification and commitment theories (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994; van Dick, 2001). Brand identification is thus equally important and according to some authors is a predecessor to brand loyalty and commitment (Burman and Zeplin, 2005).

Internal branding is also being widely used in universities so that academic staff will have a shared understanding of the corporate brand values, take ownership of the brand and apply it to their roles (Judson, Gorchels and Aurand, 2006). The concept of applying brand management approaches in universities is still at a nascent state and research has shown that may still be a lack of acceptance to the concept of the university as a brand among academic staff (Frandsen *et al.*, 2018). But it is argued that internal branding can help overcome this internal resistance from employees and aid in having a brand-oriented approach to the operation of the university (Whisman, 2009). In fact, its noted by Whisman (2009) that success in any branding initiative requires an inside-out approach to where all the employees buy-in to the branding efforts.

Different corporate brand elements such as logo, style and colour can be changed in the corporate rebranding process as expressed in the definition. Each element of change is a signal or cue to an organisation's stakeholders (Roy and Sarkar, 2015). The effect of these changes on employees is significant as it affects how the corporate brand is perceived and if it is supported and represented correctly to an organisation's customers. Even an evolutionary or incremental change to the corporate brand can affect employees.

An empirical study conducted by Bolhuis, de Jong and van den Bosch (2018) investigated the effects of changes to the corporate brand's visual elements on the employees of four organisations that implemented the changes between eight months and four years. The quantitative study found the response of employees in the form of their appreciation of the new identity and corporate brand image varied depending on the internal communication of the changes and the corporate rebranding process followed by the organisation (Bolhuis, de Jong and van den Bosch, 2018). In general employees of organisations who were systematically exposed to the new visual identity and identified with the organisation were positive to the change post rebranding (Bolhuis, de Jong and van den Bosch, 2018). Additionally, the importance of communicating with the employees before, during and after the changes were implemented was identified to sustain support for the new brand and communicate appropriately when encountering customers (Bolhuis, de Jong and van den Bosch, 2018).

As the new corporate brand is launched it is likely that employees will need to build new brand associations. The meaning of the corporate brand name with its logo and values therefore needs to be communicated to its stakeholders especially its employees (Jevons, Gabbott and de Chernatony, 2005; Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007). This further requires that the

communication be not simply informative but reflective of the reasons why employees should adapt to the changes to the corporate brand (Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007). This helps overcome any challenges with the misalignment between what the new corporate brand is and what it means so that it is easier for employees to understand and internalise the new corporate identity.

Another challenge when communicating is posed by an organisation with multiple divisions or strategic business units. Organisations trying to align multiple sub identities or organisational subcultures to the corporate brand identity will be met with internal challenges. Therefore, a one size fits all approach can be met with failure (Balmer and Wilson, 1998; Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007). Its therefore risky for senior management to view a large organisation holistically and send a common message that could appeal to the culture and subcultures of the organisation. The managers need to understand the information needs of the employees they manage and the department or team they belong to. Thus, packaging the right information and communicating it effectively to meet the needs of employees, by managers, will determine the success of the corporate rebranding strategy internally.

2.6 Corporate Rebranding – Employee Response

The response to the internal branding and communication activities is examined in the form of an employee's identification with the new corporate brand and their engagement within their roles.

2.6.1 Employee Identification

An employee's internal identification with the organisation they work for is an important factor to consider in the organisations efforts to influence brand supportive behaviour (Dukerich, Golden and Shortell, 2002). As the corporate brand represents an organisations identity to its stakeholders (Greyser and Urde, 2019), an employee's identification with the corporate brand also represents their perception of the organisation's identity.

An employee's perception of their organisation's identity is unique to each employee but is also built on what they perceive to be the attributes that define the organisation's identity communicated to them. Changes in the organisation such as a change to the corporate brand can affect the perceived organisational identity and therefore the strength of employee identification (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994). When the corporate brand name and values are changed, the employee's perception of the corporate brand and the organisational identity would need to be revised. If left unattended, the employee's response and behaviour

towards the corporate brand could be affected. The corporate brand represents the organisation that stands behind the products or services offered to customers (Aaker, 2004). It is also a symbol of credibility to a customer, especially when the organisation has multiple products eg; Sony.

An interrelated concept to corporate brands is corporate identity. Although used synonymously with corporate brands a point of difference that separates them is that every organisation has an identity yet not every organisation has or needs a corporate brand and is based on the market demands (Balmer and Gray, 2003). There is a tendency to associate the corporate brand with what is associated to an organisation's mission, culture, values, heritage etc. which also becomes the corporate brand's identity. This identity now becomes the link between the organisation and the customer (Aaker, 2004). Corporate identity can be defined as 'the set of meanings by which a company allows itself to be known and through which it allows people to describe, remember and relate to it' (Topalian, 1984, p. 56). Corporate identity is described by the distinct characteristics of an organisation that addresses questions such as 'who are we?' and 'why are we here?'(Balmer and Gray, 2003, p. 979).

In dissecting the components of corporate identity concept, de Chernatony's (1999) article on managing corporate brand identity and corporate brand reputation proposed that the corporate brand identity is composed of six components that include brand vision, culture, positioning, relationships with employees, customers and other stakeholders, personality, and the external presentation of the brand. Melewar (2003, p. 197) in his paper on developing the corporate identity classification from literature identified eight antecedents' that influenced the corporate identity: 'corporate communication, corporate design, corporate culture, corporate behaviour, corporate structure, industry identity and corporate strategy'. This understanding of what formed the identity was later also extended in a study by Urde (2013) into a matrix based on literature and discussion with managers.

The matrix (Figure 2.9) comprised of nine components divided into internal, internal/external, and external components. The central or core component of the corporate brand identity was the brand promise and the core brand values (Urde, 2013). The core values supported the brand promise and led customers to it.

Figure 2. 9: Corporate Brand Identity Matrix

External	Value Proposition	Relationships	Position
Ext/Internal	Expression	**CORE** Promise and Core Values	Personality
Internal	Mission and Vision	Culture	Competences
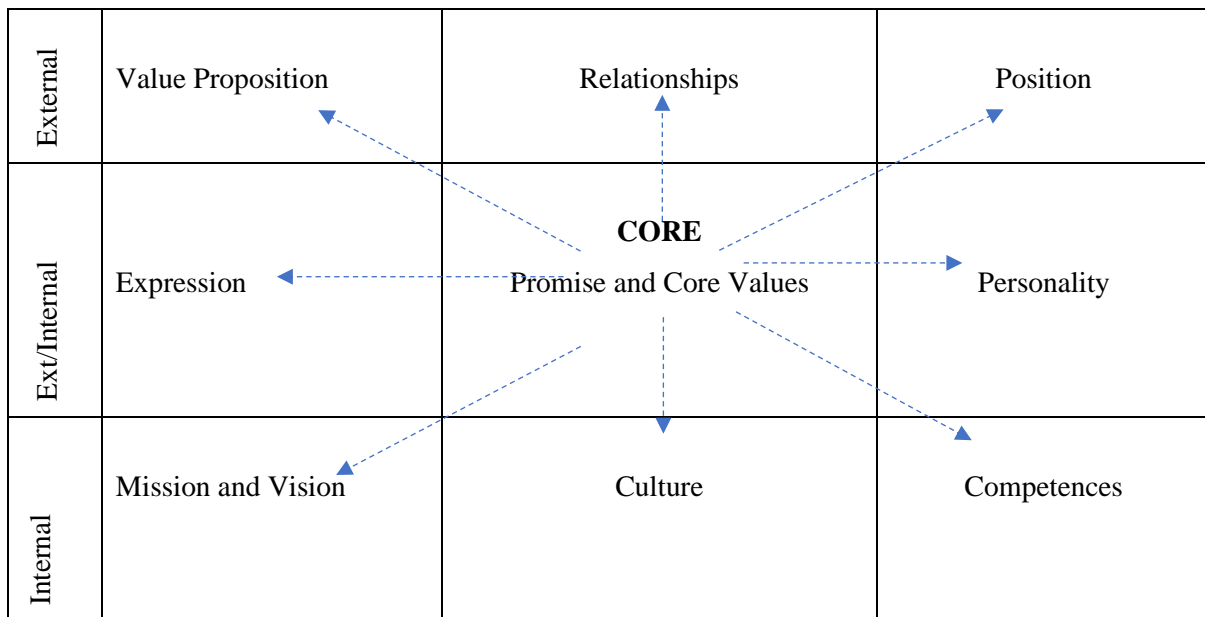
Source: Developed from (Urde, 2013)

The brand promise is communicated externally and is instrumental in helping employees live the brand (Baumgarth, 2010). These values are meant to be consistent with the other components in the matrix and vice versa. The values of the corporate brand are what is communicated to external stakeholders which is managed by manager's, but the organisations values are the wider shared values among all the employees of the organisation.

To develop the corporate brand, managers need to first define the corporate brand values and then ensure that employees are aligned with the employees' values and behaviour for better brand performance (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). As employees have a critical role in communicating the corporate brand to other stakeholders such as customers, managers will need to involve them in forming these values (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). This study has focused on an employee's identification with the core brand values of the corporate brand that is communicated to them, which helps to frame their perception of the corporate brand and its identity and their identification with it.

Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994:239) defines an employee's identification with the organisation as the extent to which an individual 'defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organisation'. An employee's identification is thus a form of psychological attachment that employees develop to the organisation when they utilise the central, distinctive, and enduring attributes that define their organisation to define themselves (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994, p. 239). It is also defined as a feeling of belongingness

to the organisation (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). As a result of belonging to an organisation, an employee can identify with the corporate brand.

Organisational identification is primarily based on the social identity theory (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Social identity theory states that an individual's self-concept is composed of two identities namely, a personal identity, and a social identity (Tajfel, 1978). An individual's social identity is formed by a classification of themselves and others with groups such as organisations, gender, and age to which they feel a sense of belongingness (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Social identification with a group such as the organisation or a football club is the perception of oneness and that of being an actual or symbolic member with that group. The individual also joins him or herself psychologically with the success or failure of that group. Organisational identification is thus a form of social identification (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1992)

The main premise of the studies on organisational identification is that an employee's self-concept is shaped by the evaluation of their membership with the organisation (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994). Another assumption is that an individual will strive to achieve a positive self-esteem from their social group membership, and maintain and strengthen a positive social identity by comparisons with those inside and outside that group (Dick *et al.*, 2004). It is argued that an employee's identification with the organisation is stronger when 'a) his or her identity as an organisation member is more salient than alternative identities and b) his or her self-concept has many of the same characteristics' as their perceived identity of the organisation (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994, p. 239). The self-concept is related to people's behaviour in a social context and refers to the 'totality of self- descriptions and self-evaluations subjectively available to an individual' (Abrams and Hogg, 1988, p. 24). This study is focused on the employee's self-concept as it pertains to their membership with the organisation.

An employee's identification is defined in a few ways as noted in table 2.5 according to social identity theorists and brand identification in related ways in internal brand management studies (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Punjaisri, Wilson and Evanschitzky, 2008). Empirical studies such as Punjaisri and Wilson (2011) and Helm, Renk and Mishra (2016) base their understanding of corporate brand identification on organisational identification theory.

Table 2. 5: Definitions of Employee Identification (Organisation and Corporate Brand)

(Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994, p. 239)	organisational identification is the degree to which a member defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organisation
(Ashforth and Mael, 1989, p. 21)	organisational identification is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization where the individual defines him or herself in terms of the organization in which he or she is a member
(Mael and Ashforth, 1992, p. 103)	organizational identification is defined as the perceived oneness with an organization and the experience of the organisation's successes and failures as one's own
(Hughes and Ahearne, 2010, p. 84)	brand identification is the degree to which a member defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organisation

Based on these definitions this study terms employee identification as, an employee's perception of belongingness to the organisation and the corporate brand representing it, and their definition of self, based on the attributes of the organisation. These attributes include the elements of the corporate identity such as the corporate brand values as noted in figure 2.9. When an employee's self-goals and that of the organisation merges with the fulfilment of the latter can be a satisfying experience (Hughes and Ahearne, 2010). Employees with a strong sense of identification with the corporate brand identity, are likely to exhibit a greater interest in the success and what benefits the organisation. Research has also shown how such employees exhibit organisational citizenship behaviour (Riketta, 2005). These behaviours can be instrumental in the change process to achieve success in the corporate rebranding strategy. An employee's identification with their organisation can thus serve as a strong motivational influence.

Balmer (2017) also discusses about stakeholder identification and uses a very related terminology to what (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994) calls organisational identification. A positive identification with the corporate organisation's attributes leads to employees' internalising those attributes as it is deemed a match to their tasks. They also end up developing a lasting and committed relationship with the organisation that is emotional in nature (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). The degree of internalising the organisation's identity is greater when the organisation's attributes are viewed as important, constant, and internally consistent (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

For front-end employees of a service organisation, their identification is very important in, attracting customers, positive word-of-mouth communication (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003) and loyalty. Negative identification or dis-identification causes stakeholders to reject the

characteristics of the organisation's identity. This leads to dissatisfaction, resistance and in extreme cases an expressed opposition to the organisation (Balmer, 2017). The leadership consisting of senior managers and the CEO's role in managing the organisation's identity is thus crucial as it influences the employees' identification.

The organisational identification of employees also positively affects their intentions to support the changes because of corporate rebranding (Jimmieson and White, 2011). An empirical study by Jimmieson and White (2011) showed that employees who were informed of the rebrand and identified with the new organisation and its brand were more likely to show intentions to adapt to the changes and be proactive in their behaviour with the new corporate brand. The employee's identification thus mediated these intentions when managers communicated with the employees. Additionally, employees that participated with the corporate rebranding process were more likely to have proactive intentions and behaviour such as informing managers of improvements to work practices (Jimmieson and White, 2011). The identification of employees can thus be a critical factor in the success of the corporate rebranding strategy as it enables an employee's acceptance to the changes (Rousseau, 1998).

As an employee's identification with the organisation is important in the corporate rebranding strategy so is their identification with the corporate brand. "Brand identification is the degree to which an employee defines him or herself with the same attributes that he or she believes define a brand" (Hughes and Ahearne, 2010, p. 84). In an empirical study of sales people selling products of multiple brands in a resellers organisation, it was found that the amount of effort and energy expended by the sales person on the brand's products depended on the strength of their brand identification (Hughes and Ahearne, 2010). Salespeople were going above and beyond in their effort towards selling that brand they identified with (Hughes and Ahearne, 2010). This additional effort however did not contribute to the brand's performance. The study identified other manufacturers brands, but it was not clear if there were corporate brands in them.

2.6.2 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has been widely researched mainly in the human resources context as managers seek those employees that are productive, efficient and have a positive attitude and behaviour. There are a few definitions and for the most part it has been defined as 'emotional and intellectual commitment' to the organisation (Saks, 2006, p. 601). In one of the earliest and most cited empirical work on employee engagement, Kahn (1990, p. 694) defines personal

engagement as, the 'harnessing of organisation members selves to their work roles; in engagement people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally'.

Khan (1990) also discusses the opposite state ie;'disengagement' as the 'uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role performances; (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). This implies that employees don't just come to work but also involve themselves psychologically and behaviourally in their roles when they are engaged (Kahn, 1990, 1992; Saks, 2006). Just as disengagement was conceived as the opposite, another study also described burnout as the opposite state of engagement (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001). They described engagement to be associated with employees' feeling energetic, involved and efficient in their roles (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001).

Rothbard (2001, p. 656) adds that engagement involves two critical components 'attention and absorption' where attention refers to the 'cognitive ability and the time one spends thinking about a role' while absorption refers to 'being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one's focus on a role'. Engagement is also defined as a state of mind that is not momentary or at a specific point in time but is consistent making employees feel fulfilled and satisfied and is 'characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption' (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002, p. 74). These definitions imply that engaged employees are highly involved in their roles cognitively emotionally and behaviourally and by extension to their organisation that offers them the role.

The possibility that the organisation is also benefitted was tested in Saks (2006) empirical study on employee engagement. Saks (2006) classified engagement as job and organisation engagement to differentiate the contribution of engaged employees to their roles and the organisation based on the idea that every employee has two roles; work related and as an organisational member (Rothbard, 2001). This notion is further established as he uses social exchange theory to conceptualise that employees will, reciprocate the organisation with favourable behaviour in return for the perceived support from managers and the organisation, and factors related to rewards, the job and procedural fairness and justice in the organisation (Saks, 2006).

In his survey of 102 employees, Saks (2006) found that an employees' perception of the organisational support they received predicted job and organisation engagement while job characteristics predicted job engagement and procedural fairness predicted organisation engagement. He also established a relationship between job and organisation engagement with

its consequences; job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intention to quit and organisational citizenship behaviour (Saks, 2006). Thus, an employee's psychological state cognitively and emotionally, and their behaviour in their role and in the organisation were related to employee engagement.

Research has also been conducted to relate employee engagement to organisational outcomes. In one of the major and most quoted studies, Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) examined the relationship between employee satisfaction and engagement and business unit level outcomes of customer satisfaction, employee retention, safety, productivity, and profitability. This meta-analytic study collected data from 7939 business units in 36 different organisations with the help of the Gallup organisation and found that employee engagement was positively related to all the outcomes in the study (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002). Other positive outcomes pointed out in the literature are commitment, positive reviews of the work place, innovative behaviour, job performance, job satisfaction and going the extra mile (Chughtai and Buckley, 2009; Slåtten and Mehmetoglu, 2011; Lee, Kim and Kim, 2014).

An employee's level of engagement will depend on the resources and benefits they receive from the organisation (Saks, 2006). This also includes information pertaining to their job and performance, so they know what is expected and have what they need to do their work well (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002). Internal branding activities provide this information through internal communication and training activities. The brand knowledge in terms of the brand values gained through this process will result in greater clarification of employees' roles within the organisation and the behaviour that enacts the brand promise (King, 2010; Buil, Martínez and Matute, 2016).

Internal branding activities and its influence on employee engagement can also be explained in terms of the social exchanges within the organisation where, employees reward the organisation with job engagement in return for the internal branding activities (Karatepe, 2013; Buil, Martínez and Matute, 2016). Karatepe (2013) argues that employees are likely to be in an engaged state of mind when they perceive that the organisation invests in their welfare and are appreciative of their efforts. A support for the relationship between internal branding and employee engagement was shown in Lee, Kim and Kim (2014) study of employees of the hotel industry. Further, employees can be engaged and involved with the new brand if the corporate brand identity is clearly communicated especially by its leaders (Yohn, 2018).

In this study it is thus argued that the internal branding and communication activities as a part of the corporate rebranding process will have a positive effect on employee engagement. Employees that are engaged are likely to have a greater level of attachment to the organisation and are less likely to leave the organisation (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Further, both the employer and the employee are also quite likely to develop trust, loyalty, and commitment between themselves when they abide by the exchange rules according to social exchange theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). This can prolong the level of engagement from employees and consequently reflected in the positive attitudes and intention towards the organisation and its brand (Saks, 2006). It is therefore argued that engaged employees will not be significantly affected by the corporate rebranding strategy if its managed well internally and that engaged employees will have a positive response and act in the best interests of the organisation.

2.7 Corporate Rebranding in HE

Corporate rebranding studies are limited in the higher education sector. There has however been an increasing stream of research focused on corporate branding and brand management within universities (eg. Lowrie, 2007; Chapleo, 2015; Frandsen *et al.*, 2018). Research on branding in the HE sector was identified as important for future theory and practice in branding (Melewar and Nguyen, 2014).

Universities have complex structures with unique student profiles, culture, faculties, departments and available resources (Asaad *et al.*, 2013). Although important, branding a university can be perceived as a challenge because, with some universities the corporate brand that represents the whole university may be popular with stakeholders while, in others a particular faculty or school such as business or medicine maybe a more popular sub brand than the corporate brand. Leadership at the university can struggle with decisions about allocating resources to focus on the corporate brand or the sub brands. A branding model suitable to such situations isn't well established but, research has suggested that universities maybe adopting a 'branded house' or a 'house of brands' structure (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000; Chapleo, 2015).

Nevertheless, branding has become necessary in a competitive marketplace, as in the HE sector, where, institutions are constantly engaged in activities to meet student recruitment targets, raise research funding, and build partnerships with businesses in the midst of increasing tuition fees (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Chapleo, 2010). Although the outcomes of investing in branding approaches in higher education are seemingly external, scholarly research

has started to focus more on internal stakeholders (eg. Sujchaphong, Nguyen and Melewar, 2015; Yu *et al.*, 2018). Employees such as academics, are a key source of delivering the corporate brand values to students in a personalised way (Woodall, Hiller and Resnick, 2014).

One important stream of research connecting employees with branding in HE has been on internal branding, to actively promote the university brand and its values to its employees. Internal branding in a university is viewed as an important asset to overcome internal resistance from branding practices (Whisman, 2009). A recent study shows that when internal branding and communication activities are carried out effectively in universities, it generates brand support from employees (Sujchaphong, Nguyen and Melewar, 2015).

Similarly, a study by Yu *et al.*, (2018) found that universities that have an internal market orientation (IMO) significantly affect the internal branding outcomes of their employees . IMO focuses the university's attention on identifying its employees needs and wants so that appropriate responses can be developed to meet them (Lings, 2004). It also allows the university to align its external market objectives with the internal capabilities of its employees (Gounaris, 2006). Internal market orientation is composed of three key parts: internal information collection, internal communication, and responding to the needs and wants of employees (Mitchell, 2002; Lings and Greenley, 2005; Gounaris, 2006).

Universities with a higher level of IMO had a greater degree of brand commitment and brand support from its employees (Yu *et al.*, 2018). But this effect was moderated by the demographic characteristics of its employees age, gender, tenure, and function. Male academics over the age of 45 were seen to be more influenced by a higher level of internal market orientation resulting in their brand commitment and support in this study (Yu *et al.*, 2018). These studies and others have further highlighted the importance of achieving buy-in from employees through the internal branding efforts of universities in the context of corporate rebranding.

In the context of corporate rebranding two empirical studies are particularly relevant for this research in the HE sector, and they are discussed here further. The first study by Williams and Omar (2014) reported on the corporate rebranding of an American university. The university had undergone a renaming process and the authors used a theoretical model called the Brand flux model previously developed to establish the need for the rebranding to take place. The university's decision to rename was shown to be necessary and an activity that helped in enhancing the institutions brand equity (Williams and Omar, 2014).

A more recent study by Clark, Chapleo and Suomi (2020) explored the role of internal branding in the corporate rebranding of a large Canadian university. A qualitative case study using in-depth interviews was conducted on employees including management working in different departments and faculties within the university. The focus of the study was to identify effective internal brand management practices that engaged employees in the corporate rebranding process and achieving employee buy-in to the new corporate brand. There was a clear need for communicating the new corporate brand and its values to its employees so that they deliver on the brand promise (Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson, 2009). This communication was suggested to be ongoing to relay the new corporate brand identity and inspire brand supportive behaviour (Whisman, 2009; Yu *et al.*, 2018). The importance of the need for the marketing and communications team to communicate how the rebranding affected management employees such as deans and administrators was established.

Two practices within the university were suggested as important with respect to carrying out internal branding. They are building a case before the corporate rebranding exercise to explain why it was necessary and the need to consult with employees (Clark, Chapleo and Suomi, 2020). Consultation with the employees helped collect input and feedback on the new corporate brand and in implementing the corporate rebranding strategy.

Employees that were interviewed in the study showed a certain degree of buy-in but it was reported that it was a challenge to build buy-in among all employees to the overall university brand (Clark, Chapleo and Suomi, 2020). There was a degree of resistance among some employees as they perceived the university imposed the new brand on them while others referred to their identification with their faculty or department as more salient than the university brand.

These studies have hence highlighted some of the key aspects of corporate rebranding namely internal branding and communication and employee buy-in that is similar to what is deemed necessary in other industries and sectors.

2.8 Corporate Rebranding - Employee Outcome

For an organisation, gaining the support of employees can be a critical success factor (Hankinson, Lomax and Hand, 2007). As proposed by Merrilees and Miller (2008) in their corporate rebranding model, gaining stakeholder buy-in is an important phase before the implementation of the corporate rebranding strategy. This study is focused on the internal

stakeholder ie: employees, and hence the outcome of interest from an employee's perspective is employee buy-in.

2.8.1 Employee Buy-in

Employee buy-in is composed of intellectual and emotional buy-in. In one of the earlier studies on employee buy-in, Thomson et.al, (1999) from a survey of 350 employees that included managers of large British organisations found a correlation between employee buy-in and business or brand performance. They also showed that internal communication was a key vehicle to create intellectual and emotional buy-in from employees (Thomson *et al.*, 1999). Intellectual or cognitive buy-in of employees occurs when there is an awareness of and intellectual alignment to the brand, its values, goals and strategies and an understanding of how they can contribute to its success within their role in the organisation (Thomson *et al.*, 1999). Emotional buy-in to the brand occurs when employees are committed to achieving the goals because of their emotional attachment and association to the brand (Thomson *et al.*, 1999).

Internal brand communication can help members of staff to be informed of the brand's values and its strategy, so they can enact the brand promise to customers. This also helps in building brand relationships with customers (Christopher, Payne and Ballantyne, 1991). Internal communication plays an important role in maintaining a brand's performance and their employees' job satisfaction. Schweiger and Denisi (1991) showed how the overall brand performance, job satisfaction and commitment of employees decreased during a merger when internal communication was not emphasised whilst it remained the same when it was salient. Internal communication builds brand understanding and employees are thus better equipped to determine their contribution based on their roles to the success of the brand's strategy (Thomson et.al, 1999).

In consumer research stronger brands are known to elicit both functional and emotional responses from its customers. In the same way for internal customers i.e., employees, both intellectual knowledge of the brand, its values, goals, and strategies and emotional attachment to the brand can increase the brand strength. A benefit of emotional attachment to the brand is employee commitment, which is a key ingredient in building long term relationships with customers (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Employee commitment is also found to be linked with employee identity, concern for the future of the organisation, loyalty, and trust towards the organisation (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Thomson *et al.*, 1999).

Effective internal communication can generate an emotional response towards the corporate brand and enable employees to buy-in just as customers act on the knowledge gained through a product or brand's marketing activities and then respond by purchasing the branded product or service (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer, 1999; Thomson *et al.*, 1999). The two types of buy-in discussed here should be present together in an employee for it to produce any results for the organisation. Brand knowledge disseminated through internal branding and communication creates a cognitive understanding of the brand vison, goals, and strategy whilst the emotional attachment brings the superior performance from employees the organisation seeks.

Various measures such as changes to brand equity, brand image, and profitability have been used to judge the impact and success of corporate rebranding processes. However, from an internal perspective, the literature doesn't specify an outcome other than mentioning the importance of an employee's buy-in in determining a strong and a weak rebranding outcome (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). This study therefore proposes employee buy-in to the new corporate brand as an outcome of the internal corporate rebranding process (Thomson *et al.*, 1999; Stuart, 2012; Miller and Merrilees, 2013; Chad, 2016).

Employee buy-in consists of the intellectual understanding and comprehension of the corporate brand, its promise and values, and the emotional attachment and commitment to achieving the corporate brand and organisational goals (Thomson *et al.*, 1999). When employees buy-in to the new corporate brand, and communicate the brand promise, and behave in a brand-oriented way, other stakeholders such as customers are benefitted. Employees will live the brand and stakeholders will develop the right image of the corporate brand. This could lead to improvements in financial and non-financial indicators thereby depicting the corporate rebranding as a success.

Although the role of employees and the leadership in the corporate rebranding process and its success is established in literature, only a moderate level of scholarly research focuses on employees and leadership in evolutionary or revolutionary rebranding. The purpose of this research study is to examine the corporate rebranding process within universities that have undergone a form of corporate rebranding (evolutionary or revolutionary) for re-positioning in the marketplace or other external reasons. This study has also included internal communication and internal branding as it is an important facet of the corporate rebranding process.

The new corporate brand will need to be effectively communicated with the help of internal branding and communication activities so that the employee internalises it and are aligned with

the organisation and the new corporate brand's identity. At this stage it is also possible that the revisions to the corporate brand identity may not be accepted as employees find that their self-identity is incongruent with it. This could cause them to leave the organisation or perhaps be not as effective in enacting the core brand values.

Changes to the corporate brand identity may not be immediate and can require time. It is also plausible that the employee buy-in, both cognitive and emotional, of the corporate brand values that would have pre-existed will now have to be re-formed to the new corporate brand. Internal branding activities can be a medium to influence the employee to conform to the new brand values and/or brand identity and brand name and buy-in to the new corporate brand. However, it is argued that the employee's buy-in and support of the changes post rebranding can be strengthened if there exists a strong sense of identification with the new corporate brand and the organisation. Equally, employees that are highly engaged and committed could have a greater degree of buy-in to the new corporate brand. This then allows the buy-in to be maintained post rebranding as it is supported by employee identification and employee engagement.

2.9 Research Gap

Based on an extensive literature review of corporate rebranding (table 2.6), a gap in the research on the phenomenon from an employee's perspective was identified. The process of identifying the gap is depicted in figure 2.10. The current research incorporates constructs from marketing, organisational behaviour, and human resources. The gaps in the literature were examined based on whether previous studies on corporate rebranding included the two constructs namely employee engagement and employee identification. As seen in table 2.6, a few studies have included employee buy-in and internal branding while a few others have included corporate and employee identity.

Further, there were a few exploratory studies on corporate rebranding and the predominant research strategy used was case study analysis. But there are very few empirical studies on rebranding that have examined corporate rebranding from an employee perspective including employee outcomes. On the other hand, from the very few studies that were employee focused, most of them related to not for-profit organisations and the main areas of focus were the responses of employees to corporate rebranding from an identity and buy-in perspective.

Figure 2. 10: Gap Identification
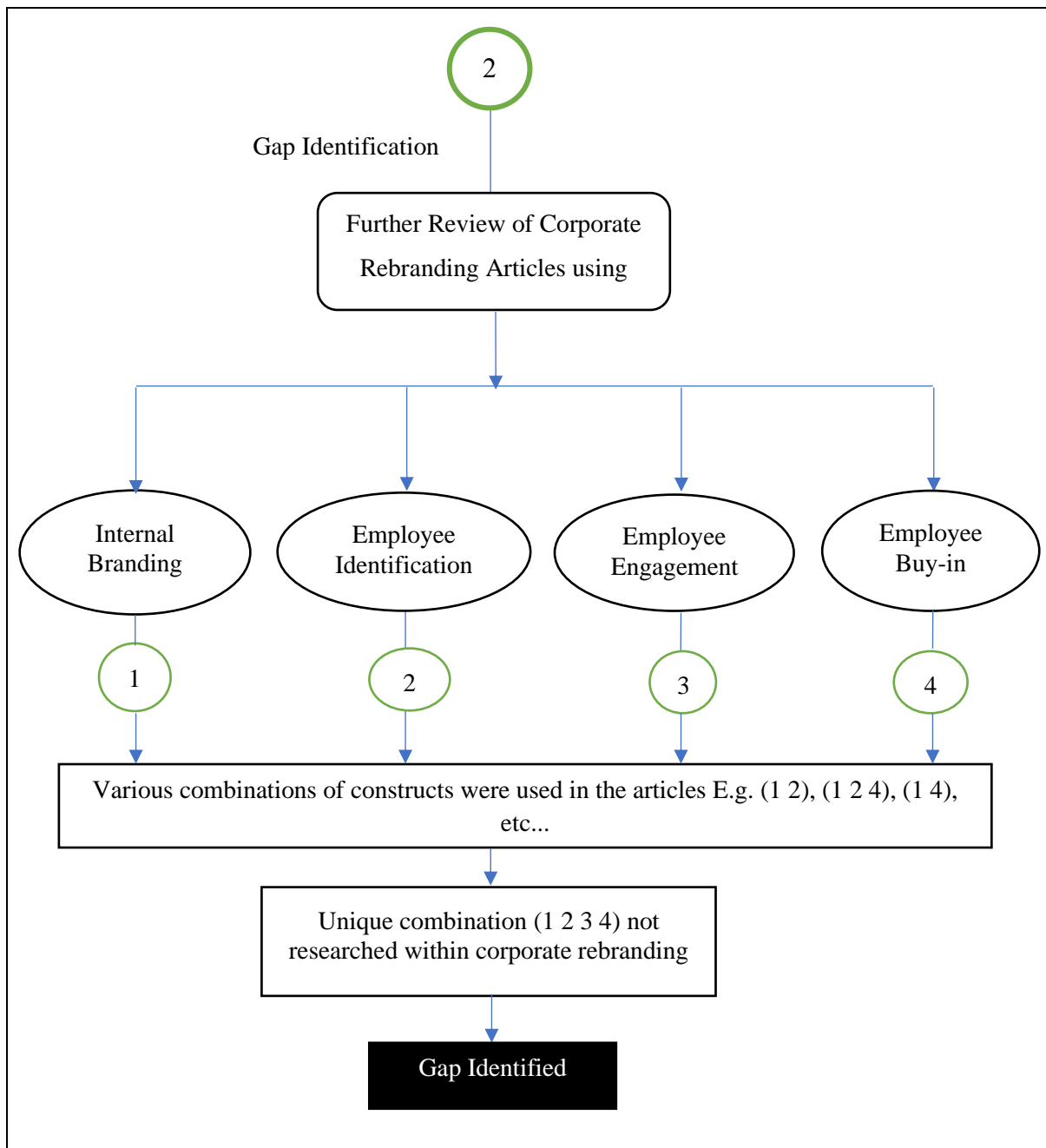
Sector specific studies in the higher education sector on the rebranding of higher educational institutions are also very limited in extant literature. There have been a few empirical studies on the rebranding of universities but with mostly an external emphasis. In one such study on the renaming of a university in the US, Williams and Omar (2014) showed that as a part of maintaining the health of a brand, rebranding was one of the necessary steps. Modifying the logo as part of rebranding a university in Ghana lowered the brand equity of the new brand

(Makgosa and Molefhi, 2012). From an internal perspective, a study of the rebranding by change of a university's name emphasised the significance of the involvement of academic staff in the change process to achieve desirable outcomes (Moorer, 2007).

The gap identified in the literature relates to examining the response of employees to the corporate rebranding strategy. Specifically, the study addresses the employee's identification to the new corporate brand and their engagement and commitment in their roles and towards the brand. As an outcome of the corporate rebranding process, the employee's buy-in to the new brand is also evaluated. Thus, the study will be employee focused and will examine employee buy-in, the internal process of the corporate rebranding strategy that includes the internal brand communication activities and employee perceptions and attitudes in the form of employee identification, employee engagement and employee buy-in.

One of the key contributions in this study is about the strength of buy-in being moderated by an employee's engagement with the new corporate brand and their role, and their identification with the new corporate brand. As far as the researcher is aware and based on the literature review, no study has covered the various constructs together in a single study.

Table 2. 6: Literature Reviewed for Gaps

Authors	Methodology	Variables Employed	Findings
Koku (1997)	Time series analysis of the pre (5 years) and post (5 years) rebranding effect on student enrollment. A sample of 104 colleges and universities were quantitatively analysed	Pre and Post Rebranding changes to Student Enrollment	Overall, there were no significant changes to the enrollment figures. Only 10% of the sample showed changes to their enrollment figures post rebranding.
Daly and Moloney, (2004)	Case review of Vodafone's acquisition of Eircell- secondary	Internal Branding, Employee Buy-in	Proposed a rebranding framework
Melewar, Hussey and Srivoravilai (2005)	Case study of France Telecom	Employee Buy-in, Corporate Identity	Positive change in perceptions from surveys conducted internally and externally post rebranding.
Muzellec and Lambkiin (2006)	cross-sectional sample of 166 rebranded companies provides descriptive data on the context in which rebranding occurs and an intranet survey of employees	Corporate Identity	The data show that a decision to rebrand is most often provoked by structural changes particularly mergers and acquisitions, which have a fundamental effect on the corporation's identity and core strategy. They also suggest that a change in marketing aesthetics affects brand equity less than other factors such as employees' behaviour.
Ettenson and Knowles (2006)	207 mergers were studied from a database and a few interviews conducted	N/A	Corporate branding had low/moderate priorities before the merger. 64% of the cases the target brand was eliminated or they co-existed
Jaju, Joiner and Reddy (2006)	3 pretests with university students and a main study2 x 2 x 2 x 2 experimental design with all variables manipulated between subjects. online consumer panel of 3,000 contacts	Brand Name, Brand Equity	Acquisitions where the target brand received the acquirers brand name had lesser loss of brand equity relative to synergistic strategies such as merger
Gotsi and Andriopoulos (2007)	Exploratory qualitative study semi-structured in-depth interviews with executives involved in the corporate rebranding of a leading telecommunications firm	Corporate Identity	Four pitfalls in the rebranding process: disconnecting with the core; stakeholder myopia; emphasis on labels, not meanings; one company, one voice: the challenge of multiple identities
Hankinson, Lomax and Hand (2007)	Quantitative survey of 465 respondents	Time, Brand Knowledge, Employee Behaviour	Time effect had a bigger impact on attitude of staff. acquisition of knowledge declines as time since the rebranding increases. Behavioural changes are more pronounced closest to the point of re-branding
Moorer (2007)	Multiple Case Study, in-depth interview with 12 faculty members of two universities in America.	Faculty Involvement, Strategic Name Change	Faculty involvement isn't necessary to facilitate name change events however, it's important to include them in the process. Including faculty members in the process increases their sense of belonging and engagement with the university processes. Its plausible that faculty involvement in the name change processes affects the outcomes of the event.

Authors	Methodology	Variables Employed	Findings
Gotsi and Andriopoulos, (2008)	Single Case study, Qualitative in-depth interviews with 14 senior managers and Questionnaire survey of 243 employees	Internal Branding, Employee Buy-in, Brand Values, Employee Behaviour	Except a few departments there is only a modest alignment of the employee attitudes and behaviour to the new corporate brand values due to resistance. Employees that joined post rebranding perceive the internal culture as more aligned to the corporate brand
Merrilees and Miller, (2008)	Single Case study of a major Canadian leather goods retailer that implemented corporate rebranding strategy. Theory was extended by forming 6 principles and then checked on the case study	N/A	Formulated the Principles of Corporate Rebranding theory
Lambkin and Muzellec (2008)	Review of 2 case studies in the banking industry in addition to literature on M&A and rebranding	Brand Equity	The size and marketing strength of the target brand relative to the one of the acquirers is the most significant variable influencing the branding decision
Finney and Hansen (2010)	Case study of a Canadian university college change of name. Grounded theory, 10 semi-structured interviews	Internal Branding, Employee Buy-in	addressed the barriers/considerations of an internal marketing program when facing a significant organizational change project such as rebranding
Lambkin and Muzellec (2010)	Case study of a national construction materials company, 12 semi-structured interviews	Brand Equity	In the case after merger when both brands still existed the target brand retained less brand equity. The acquirer wasn't affected much by the acquisition due to an existing strong equity
Branca and Borges (2011)	Event study, 17 observations, Lisbon stock exchange	Firm Stock Performance	No evidence of a positive impact of corporate rebranding on firm value, in Portuguese firms
Stuart (2012)	In-depth review of a Not-for-Profit organisation	Employee Identity, Identification, Organisational Structure, Employee Behaviour	Variations in the type and level of employee identity and identification, organizational structure and its corresponding cultural effects, and the nature of the rebranding activity, which is influenced by organizational structure, impact on the degree to which employees can live the new corporate brand.
Miller and Merrilees, (2013)	Action Research	Total Stakeholder Buy-in	Non-Profit sector: Total stakeholder involvement of employee, client and management in corporate rebranding process resulted in total stakeholder buy-in
Kalaignanam and Cem Bahadir (2013)	Event study	Corporate Name Change, Returns on Firm Performance	Business restructuring initiatives accompanied by a corporate name change generate higher cumulative abnormal returns. corporate name changes add value by making business restructuring more meaningful and informative to financial investors
Lee (2013)	Single Case study of a Not-for-Profit Organisation, 15 semi structured interviews, exploratory	Organisational Identity, Perceived Brand Image	3 tensions were identified 1. b/w identity and image 2. Multiple stakeholder dialogue and access 3. Balancing marketing requirement with organisational identity
Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, (2014)	Literature Review	N/A	Identified 5 enablers and barriers to corporate rebranding

Authors	Methodology	Variables Employed	Findings
Hanh Le, Sung Cheng, Kuntjara, Lin, (2014)	2×2 factorial experimental design. 120 undergraduate students in Taiwan were sampled	Brand Name Attitude, Brand Preference and Product Expertise as Moderators	The use of evolutionary rebranding strategies is superior in enhancing consumer brand preference in the case of pleasant original brand name attitude, while the use of revolutionary strategies is superior when consumers hold less pleasant attitude
Bolhuis, de Jong & Van den Bosch (2015)	Survey of employees and customers of 4 organization's	Corporate Visual Identity, Employee and Consumer reactions	CVI changes had larger effect on employees than consumers
Collange (2015)	Quantitative study was conducted of 320 customers and eight hypothetical brand name changes	Brand Name Change, Perceived Service Evaluation	Evaluation of a service declined significantly after the brand name change
Roy and Sarkar (2015)	Experimental design 2x2 and 2x3	Consumer Based Brand Equity	CBBE of an established brand diminishes following rebranding news whilst it enhanced for a less established brand, customers care more about revolutionary rebranding than evolutionary
Gilstrap and Smith (2016)	A study of the corporate rebranding of a Not-for-Profit organisation. Qualitative, Single Case Study, 16 interviews	Organisational Identity, Perceived Organisational Identity	NGO managers expressed pride in their organization, frustration regarding public ignorance about their organization, and broader connection with NGO identity. Managers identify more closely with their organization when it adheres to mission objectives and encourages stakeholder inclusivity, and less closely when their organization loses identity in the renaming process, or when there is less perceived transparency and inclusion
Lee and Bourne (2017)	Exploratory study of the corporate rebranding of a Not-for-Profit organisation. Interviews with 10 charity managers and 4 consultants	Organisational Identity, Employee Identity, Corporate Rebranding Strategies	Two types of identity normative and utilitarian were identified. four types of rebranding strategies based on the two identities and the potential drivers for their adoption
Zhao, Calantone and Voorhees (2018)	Event study, 215 rebranding announcements across 101 industries sampled	Firm Stock Performance, Mergers and Acquisitions	Rebranding decisions, on average, are associated with positive abnormal stock returns position. investors react favorably to rebranding projects that involve good fit and less favorably when there is a misfit

2.10 Conclusion

A thorough and systematic investigation of the extant literature on corporate rebranding was conducted. The researcher identified quite a few studies on the effects of implementing a corporate rebranding strategy on customers. During the time when mergers and acquisitions were common, empirical studies were also conducted to observe the effects of such strategies on the firm's performance in the stock markets and in general. However, there were only a few studies that examined the employees' perspective.

A systematic search revealed a few case studies that were conducted on not-for-profit organisations examining an employee's perspective. These studies examined issues such as employee identity tensions and its management, misplaced employee identification, employee buy-in and employee brand behaviour, due to the changes to the corporate brand's identity (eg: Stuart, 2012; Lee and Bourne, 2017). As this study is focused on the higher education sector, a search was conducted to locate scholarly research on corporate rebranding within HE. A few scholars such as Chapleo (2010; 2015) and Stephenson and Yerger (2014), published a few studies on utilising a brand management approach within universities. But, there were hardly any studies such as Moorer (2007), that investigated the rebranding phenomenon in universities. The literature review process ended with quite a few articles that were suitable for this study. The gap in the research was further investigated from these articles. The next chapter will detail the theoretical research propositions and conceptual framework developed for this study.

CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the researcher's propositions based upon a thorough review of literature covered in chapter 2 and the gaps in knowledge displayed in table 2.6 within corporate rebranding. The propositions are built based on literature covered in four distinct yet arguably inter-related concepts: internal branding, employee identification, employee engagement and employee buy-in. The proposed interaction of these concepts is presented in the conceptual framework (Figure 3.1). The corporate rebranding strategy and its implementation is viewed by the researcher in three distinct parts within the organisation: internal branding and communication activities, employee response and corporate rebranding strategy outcome. It begins with internal branding and communication activities that generates an employee response in the form of employee identification and employee engagement, which leads to the corporate rebranding strategy outcome which is employee buy-in. The theoretical propositions and its formation are discussed below.

3.1 Theoretical Propositions

It is considered desirable to undertake theory development based on key issues from literature prior to the data collection in case study research, as it helps determine the type of data and ways to analyse the data and generalise the findings (Yin, 2014). This aspect of the case study research differentiates it from other qualitative methods such as ethnography and grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

Based on an extensive literature review including academic journal articles, newspaper articles and trade journals the following theoretical propositions are made to address the gaps in the literature indicated earlier. The key concepts in the propositions are internal branding, employee engagement, employee identification and post rebranding employee buy-in (cognitive and emotional). The engagement of employees within their roles and the identification that employees have with the brand are proposed as key internal responses that need to be addressed for the corporate rebranding strategies to create buy-in from employees'.

As these concepts are arguably inter-related, the researcher has identified possible associations underpinned by literature between each of them and formed research propositions. This made

it possible to conceptualise how the corporate rebranding strategy is carried out internally in each of the organisations selected as case studies. These propositions are described below.

3.2.1 Internal Brand Communication and Employee Identification in Corporate Rebranding

An empirical study of 276 business-to-business front line employees in the hospitality industry by Baker *et al.* (2014) showed how that internal communications about the corporate brand led to an increase in their identification with the brand, affected by their perception of the brand's authenticity and the internalisation of brand values. When an organisation influences their employees with activities that communicate brand knowledge, it causes employees to increase in their identification with the brand, become aligned with the brand values and engage in brand building extra-role behaviours (Baker *et al.*, 2014; Kelman, 1961; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Burmann and Zeplin, 2005). Similarly, in an empirical study of the corporate rebranding of a hotel that was acquired, employees that received timely internal communication about the reasons and implications of the rebranding increased in their identification with the newly rebranded hotel (Jimmieson and White, 2011).

Another study of business-to-business sales people in 15 manufacturing companies showed that internal brand-oriented communications to employees affected their brand identification (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018). A similar study by Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos (2014) explains how the outcomes of internal branding activities such as brand knowledge increased the employees perception of the level of organisational support for brand building behaviours but mediated by their level of identification with the organisation.

In the HE sector, one empirical study showed that brand knowledge among university students influenced their identification with the university (Balaji, Roy and Sadeque, 2016). The internal communication activities by the universities in this study provided the knowledge of the values and beliefs. The student survey revealed that university brand knowledge acted as an antecedent for students to develop a sense of belonging with the university (Balaji, Roy and Sadeque, 2016). Although the sample in this study were students, employees as internal stakeholders are also likely to respond in a similar way when they receive internal communication about the corporate brand and its identity.

Another approach to communicate about the corporate brand internally is to focus on marketing it to employees and this is especially important in corporate rebranding as it can signify a major change (Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010). An empirical study conducted of hotel

employees during the early stages of an organisational change i.e. corporate rebranding, showed that communication with employees was an important predictor of their identification with the hotel (Jimmieson and White, 2011). The study also argued that employees that received communication and identified with the new corporate brand would support the rebranding with positive behaviour (Jimmieson and White, 2011).

Most of these studies were not in the context of corporate rebranding and those that did such as Jimmieson and White (2011), covered the early stages of the rebranding. But based on these studies it is argued that, as the organisation communicates with its employees throughout the corporate rebranding process, an employee's identification with the new brand will be positively affected. Hence an association between the internal brand communication activities and the employee's identification is proposed.

P1 a): In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities about the new corporate brand will shape an employee's perception and foster their identification with the corporate brand

3.1.2 Internal Brand Communication and Employee Engagement in Corporate Rebranding

Most organisations internally communicate its corporate brand values, goals as a part of its internal branding program. These internal branding activities influences an employee's brand building behaviour and internalisation of brand values (Baker *et al.*, 2014). However, it's important that the information provided through internal branding activities should also provide clarity to an employee's role within the organisation (King, 2010).

In a study of the employees in the hotel industry it was found that internal branding is an important factor in determining the level of the employee's engagement with their work (Lee, Kim and Kim, 2014). The organisations internal branding and communication activities conveys information through various means such as newsletters, staff meetings and training related to the corporate brand. The corporate brand knowledge in terms of the brand vision and values gained through this process will help employees understand, how their roles can impact the corporate brand, and the behaviour that enacts the corporate brand promise (King, 2010; Buil, Martínez and Matute, 2016).

A detailed discussion of the importance of internal communication in influencing an employee's engagement was highlighted by Welch (2011). Internal communication in this article was noted as, how an organisation promotes commitment and a sense of belonging to the organisation. It was also defined as the type of internal communication that informs employees of the changing business environment and the future goals of the organisation (Welch, 2011). A recent pilot study of employees in a small and medium enterprise also showed that internal communication with the employees affected employee engagement (Karanges *et al.*, 2015).

According to Karatepe (2013), internal marketing activities affects an employee's engagement with their role when they perceive that the organisation invests in their welfare and their efforts are appreciated. This effect on the employee's engagement could also manifest in corporate rebranding when, the organisation uses various internal brand communication activities to convey everything about the new corporate brand to its employees. The internal branding and communication activities are expected to affect the understanding of employees and hence their engagement level as it relates to their role.

Hence it is proposed that:

P1 b): In corporate rebranding an employee's understanding of the new corporate brand through internal brand communication activities is likely to help employees be more engaged in their roles

3.1.3 Internal Brand Communication and Employee Buy-in in Corporate Rebranding

One of the earlier studies to establish a relationship between an organisation's internal branding activities and the buy-in of employees was by Thomson et.al. (1999), where 350 managers and staff of organisations from a cross-section of industries were surveyed. The study evidenced that effective internal communication increased the level of cognitive and emotional buy-in (Thomson *et al.*, 1999). Previous research has also shown that an employee's buy-in can be negatively affected as a result of strategic changes to the organisation such as in mergers (Thomson *et al.*, 1999; Thomson and Hecker, 2001). Mergers and acquisitions are known to be one of the drivers of corporate rebranding (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). Various well-known studies published on internal branding has examined outcomes such as brand

commitment, brand identification, brand building behaviours such as organisational citizenship behaviour (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; King and Grace, 2008; Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson, 2009; Dechawatanapaisal, 2018). These outcomes are positive and can contribute to desirable behaviour in the instance of bringing changes to the organisation such as in corporate rebranding but, it does not show buy-in specifically.

Employee buy-in as defined by Thomson et.al (1999) and Thomson and Hecker (2001) has appeared in exploratory case study research on corporate rebranding such as Gotsi and Andriopoulos (2007), Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson (2008), and Merrilees and Miller (2008) and it's salience was identified in corporate rebranding. This was done alongside the argument that employees need to receive internal communication (Merrilees, 2005; Merrilees and Miller, 2008). When disseminating corporate brand knowledge through internal branding and communication activities, it is likely that employees will gain enough understanding of the corporate brand and develop a closer relationship with the brand and the organisation. Its therefore possible to argue that internal brand communication activities can cause an employee to respond positively to the changes to the corporate brand. It is thus proposed that:

P1 c): In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities will be instrumental in shaping an employee's perception of the new corporate brand and strengthening their understanding of it leading to their cognitive buy-in

P1 d): In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities will be an important influence in strengthening an employee's commitment to the new corporate brand leading to their emotional buy-in

3.1.4 Employee Identification and Employee Buy-in Post-Rebranding

Scholars have evidenced that the identification of employees with the organisation and the affiliated brand has an impact on brand building behaviours such as organisational citizenship behaviour (Riketta, 2005; Baker *et al.*, 2014; Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos, 2014; Buil, Martínez and Matute, 2016). There is strong evidence in literature to show that an organisation and/or brand stakeholder's strong identification results in an expression of supportive behaviour towards the organisation or brand (Ahearne, Bhattacharya and Gruen, 2005; Elbedweihy and Jayawardhena, 2014; Balaji, Roy and Sadeque, 2016). The identification

construct as defined by Wieseke *et al.* (2009, p. 124) and Dutton *et.al* (1994, p. 239) signifies the emotional attachment of the employee to the organisation and a cognitive understanding of the identity and values that the organisation represents.

Employee buy-in is also expressed as consisting of a cognitive and an emotional element (Thomson *et al.*, 1999). The cognitive buy-in represents the employees understanding of the corporate brand and organisation goals and strategies, while emotional buy-in is their added commitment to accomplish those goals (Thomson *et al.*, 1999). Employees who identify strongly with the organisation will tend to respond in a way supportive of the organisation in an effort to preserve their self-identity which is more aligned with the corporate brand identity (Van Knippenberg, Van Dick and Tavares, 2007; Wieseke *et al.*, 2009). A study by Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson (2009) found that identification of employees with the corporate brand influenced their commitment (extent of psychological attachment) to the corporate brand and their willingness to go the extra mile to fulfil the brand goals (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005 p.284).

A few studies conducted in the HE sector among universities and colleges showed an increasing emphasis of universities on branding to combat student recruitment pressures and diminishing government funding (Stephenson and Yerger, 2014; Frandsen *et al.*, 2018). A few of these studies such as Stephenson and Yerger (2014); Palmer, Koenig-Lewis and Asaad (2016) focused on the identification construct and its effect on stakeholders such as students and alumni. Identification with the university brand perceived by alumni as distinct and attractive was seen to influence their supportive behaviour that also included promoting the university to others (Stephenson and Yerger, 2014). Students that identified with university brand because of their academic and social experiences while studying were seen to be brand loyal even after a long time. Students that had positive experiences were also supportive of the brand (Palmer, Koenig-Lewis and Asaad, 2016). These studies have shown how identification with the organisation brand because of their relationship can contribute to a positive and supportive response from the stakeholder. Employees can therefore be included because they are the medium by which alumni and students experience the corporate brand.

As far as the researcher is aware there is not a study that establishes the relationship between employee identification and employee buy-in as defined by Thomson et.al (1999) in corporate rebranding. Based on these studies it is argued that employees who strongly identify with the

new corporate brand will exhibit a greater tendency to be supportive and buy-in cognitively and emotionally to the corporate brand.

Hence the following propositions are made:

P2 a): Employees that have a stronger identification with the new corporate brand are also likely to have a sound understanding of the corporate brand's values and identity thereby exhibiting a greater degree of cognitive buy-in post-rebranding

P2 b): Employees that have a stronger identification with the new corporate brand are also likely to have their values internally aligned with that of the corporate brand and be committed to fulfil its goals thus displaying an emotional level of buy-in post-rebranding

3.1.5 Employee Engagement and Employee Buy-in Post-Rebranding

Employee engagement according to a few scholars is characterised as the positive psychological state of mind of an employee due to which they are cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally involved with their work or role in the organisation and in achieving its outcomes (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Shuck *et al.*, 2014). The earlier concept of employee engagement had more significance to the job-role employees had in the organisation. Most of the initial research was therefore focused on job specific outcomes such as job satisfaction, job performance, organisational commitment and employee retention (Hakanen *et al.*, 2006; Rich *et al.*, 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Various studies as noted previously in section 3.2.2 have established the influence of internal communication on employee engagement (Welch, 2011; Karanges *et al.*, 2015; Tkalac Verčič and Pološki Vokić, 2017). Internal communication is essential for employees to develop brand understanding and knowledge of the values of the organisation and the corporate brand (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). Cognitive buy-in as defined by Thomson *et al.* (1999) requires this understanding and knowledge for employees to apply that to their respective roles. Engaged employees are productive in their roles and contribute to the organisations success (Saks, 2006; Albrecht, 2013). Hence it is also argued that it contributes to the cognitive buy-in of employees.

Employee engagement consists of three dimensions in its structure: absorption, dedication and vigour (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002) which are cognitive, emotional and physical in nature (Welch,

2011). Of these factors, dedication represents an employee's emotional link to their role expressed in their state of feeling inspired, proud and significant and, also in their identification with what they do (Kanungo, 1982; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002).

Emotional buy-in as defined by Thomson *et al.* (1999) energises employees to go beyond the call of duty and engage in behaviour that prioritises the organisations success. Hence it is argued that engaged employees with a dedication can also attain an emotional buy-in.

Employee buy-in is being examined in this study as an internal organisational level outcome of the corporate rebranding strategy which has some bearing on the job-role performed by the employee. Based on these studies, it is thus argued that engaged employees are likely to support the organisation and the corporate rebranding strategy and buy-in to the changes. This influence of an employee's engagement on their buy-in to the corporate rebranding strategy is novel as far as the researcher is aware.

Hence it is proposed:

P3 a): Employees who have received internal communication and engaged in their roles are likely to exhibit a greater degree of cognitive buy-in to the new corporate brand post-rebranding

P3 b): Employees who have received internal communication and are engaged and committed to their jobs are likely to have an emotional buy-in to the new corporate brand post-rebranding

3.1.6 Employee Identification, Internal Brand Communication and Employee Buy-in

When employees identify with the organisation they feel a sense of belongingness and oneness to it and will find the organisation's goals and outcomes significant (Wieseke *et al.*, 2009). During corporate rebranding however, new brand values, brand identity and vision can be developed (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). This would affect the employee's level of identification with the organisation and the new corporate brand.

Internal communication can build brand understanding and a knowledge of the vision and values of the organisation as noted previously however, in the context of an organisational change this effect may not be realised. Thus, when the new values, vision and identity are then

communicated through internal brand communication activities its ability to directly impact employee buy-in may be diminished.

Hence it is proposed:

P4): The impact that internal brand communication activities have on an employee's buy-in is likely to be enhanced by how closely they identify with the new corporate brand

3.1.7 Employee Engagement, Internal Brand Communication and Employee Buy-in

As stated in 3.2.3 internal branding activities has a positive impact on organisational outcomes and in the context of this study, cognitive and emotional buy-in. However, if employees are disengaged it could affect their response to the internal corporate communication and branding activities. Corporate rebranding can signify a strategic change to the brand values, culture and possibly structure of the organisation such as in a merger or acquisition (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006; Gotsi et.al. 2008).

But as highly engaged employees have a positive attitude towards the organisation with a readiness to contribute to the organisation's success (Albrecht 2013), it is expected that they will respond positively to the corporate communication internally and be relatively more willing to adapt to the changes. However, disengaged employees will not exhibit the same willingness to receive the internal communication during corporate rebranding. Hence the following is proposed:

P5): The impact that internal brand communication activities have on an employee's buy-in is likely to be enhanced by the higher engagement levels of employees

A summary of the propositions with the corresponding literature that they were based on are summarised in table 3.1.

Table 3. 1: Case Study Propositions

Propositions	Literature
P1 a): In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities about the new corporate brand will shape an employee's perception and foster their identification with the corporate brand	(Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos, 2014; Piehler *et al.*, 2016; Dechawatanapaisal, 2018)
P1 b): In corporate rebranding an employee's understanding of the new corporate brand through internal brand communication activities is likely to help employees be more engaged in their roles	(King, 2010; Baker *et al.*, 2014; Lee, Kim and Kim, 2014; Buil, Martínez and Matute, 2016)
P1 c) In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities will be instrumental in shaping an employee's perception of the new corporate brand and strengthening their understanding of it leading to their cognitive buy-in	(Thomson *et al.*, 1999; Thomson and Hecker, 2001; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006; King and Grace, 2008)
P1 d) In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities will be an important influence in strengthening an employee's commitment to the new corporate brand leading to their emotional buy-in	(Thomson *et al.*, 1999; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Merrilees and Miller, 2008)
P2 a) Employees that have a stronger identification with the new corporate brand are also likely to have a sound understanding of the corporate brand's values and identity thereby exhibiting a greater degree of cognitive buy-in post-rebranding	(Thomson *et al.*, 1999; Van Knippenberg, Van Dick and Tavares, 2007; Wieseke *et al.*, 2009)
P2 b) Employees that have a stronger identification with the new corporate brand are also likely to have their values internally aligned with that of the corporate brand and be committed to fulfil its goals thus displaying an emotional level of buy-in post-rebranding	(Thomson *et al.*, 1999; Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson, 2009)
P3 a) Employees who have received internal communication and engaged in their roles are likely to exhibit a greater degree of cognitive buy-in to the new corporate brand post-rebranding	(Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Welch, 2011; Shuck *et al.*, 2014)
P3 b) Employees who have received internal communication and are engaged and committed to their jobs are likely to have an emotional buy-in to the new corporate brand post-rebranding	(Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Saks, 2006; Albrecht, 2013)
P4): The impact that internal brand communication activities have on an employee's buy-in is likely to be enhanced by how closely they identify with the new corporate brand	(Thomson *et al.*, 1999; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007, 2011; Wieseke *et al.*, 2009)

P5): The impact that internal brand communication activities have on an employee's buy-in is likely to be enhanced by the higher engagement levels of employees	(Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson, 2008; Lambkin and Muzellec, 2008; Slåtten and Mehmetoglu, 2011; Albrecht, 2013)

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework described in figure 3.1 describes the proposed relationships described in the theoretical proposition in the previous sections.

As displayed in the diagram the researcher proposes that internal brand communication activities by the organisation influences the employee's identification and engagement and their buy-in to the corporate rebranding strategy and the new corporate brand. Both the employee's engagement and identification also directly influence employee buy-in while also exerting a moderating influence on effect that internal brand communication has on the employee's buy-in.

Figure 3. 1: Conceptual Framework
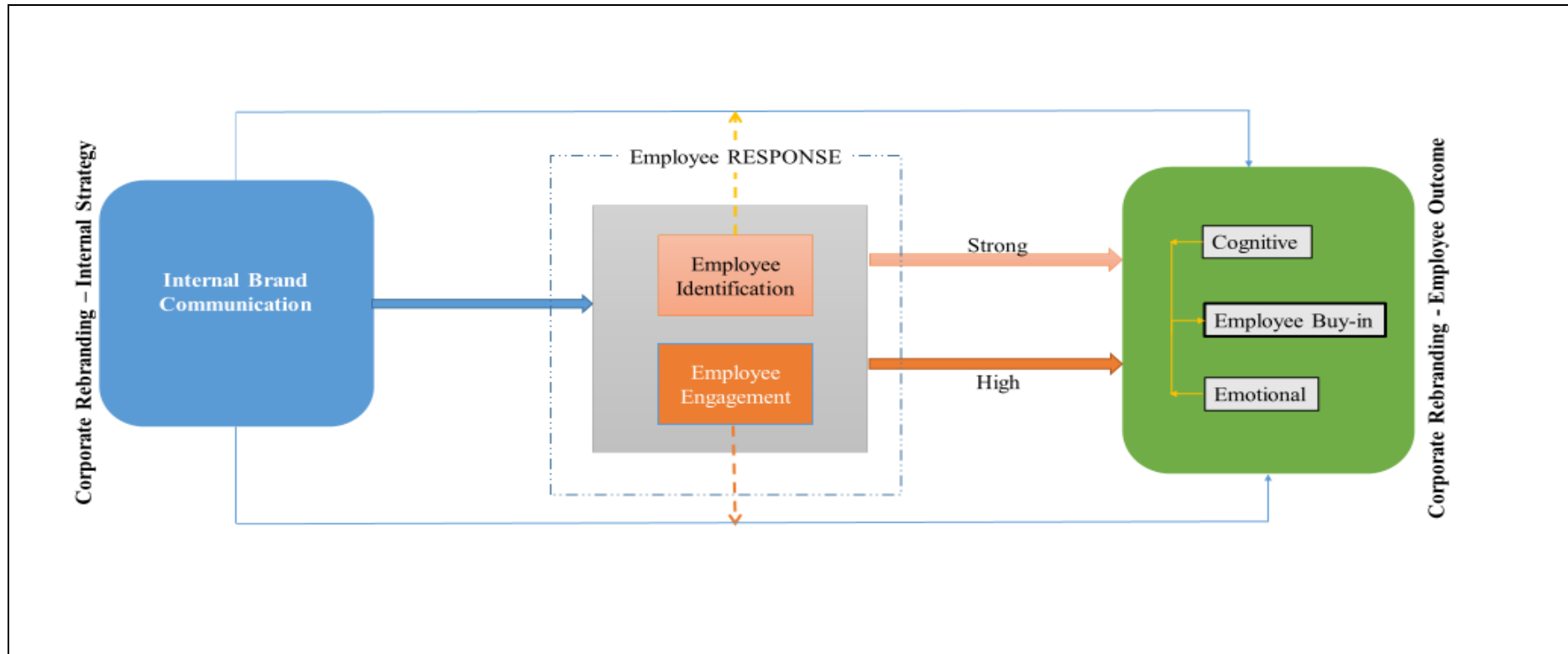
3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has been able to present the theoretical propositions generated based on the extensive literature review and the gaps in knowledge identified thereby. The four main concepts related to each of the propositions was thoroughly studied to propose possible associations between them when an organisation undergoes corporate rebranding. Research on the corporate rebranding phenomenon is an emerging area and it lacks an explanation of an employee's buy-in a few years after the rebranding strategy is implemented. Employee buy-in would be the focus after the implementation and launch of the new corporate brand. The post rebranding employee buy-in is important as it correlates to how employees respond to their internal environment and in the interaction with other stakeholders. Equally important is sustaining this buy-in. This study will make a strong attempt to shed light on employee buy-in with the help of empirical data.

CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology and research design used for this study. This includes a justification of the research philosophy that underlines the perspective taken by the researcher to research this phenomenon, the research approach and research choice chosen based on an evaluation of alternative methods (Table 3.1). A case study research strategy was adopted for this study, so the chapter discusses the case study protocol that is recommended to be followed (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014). This increases the reliability of case study research (Yin, 2014). The different parts of the protocol and how they were used are described in the chapter. An overview of each the four university cases selected for this study and the corporate rebranding undertaken by each university is discussed.

The data collection process in the field with details of the instrument and data sources used are then discussed. The drafting of the semi-structured in-depth interview guide and the questions with details of the sampling technique used and sample size follows next. In the data analysis part, the techniques, tools, and systematic process used in arriving at the findings are described. The use of CAQDAS specifically NVivo 12 Pro in the coding and analysis of the data is described. The software helped systematically organise, code, and analyse the data using visual and textual tools.

The chapter also discusses how the validity and trustworthiness of the data was ensured. Since the research carried out data collection from human participants and as there were various documents accessed from the universities for the purpose of data triangulation, a full-fledged ethics process was observed. This included receiving an ethics approval for the project from Newcastle University before the data collection started. All the participants and the university's anonymity including the purpose of the data collected were ensured. This included any research publication and this thesis.

Section 4.1. describes the research philosophy, 4.2 research approach, 4.3 research choice, 4.4 research strategy and 4.5 data collection and analysis. Finally, section 4.6 and 4.7 discuss the ethical considerations and time horizon for this study followed by a chapter summary at the end.

4.1 Research Philosophy

This section will aim to justify the researcher's philosophical stance with respect to the various options that could have been adopted. The term research philosophy refers to a 'system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge' (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019, p. 130). The five philosophies considered were positivism, interpretivism, critical realism, post modernism and pragmatism and each of them differ in their ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019).

Ontological assumptions refer to how the researcher views reality (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). Epistemology refers to the assumptions about knowledge i.e., what is acceptable, valid, and authentic knowledge constituted of, and how that can be communicated to others (Burrell and Morgan, 2016). Axiological assumptions relate to the values and ethics of the researcher and the participants in the research process (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). It is said that a researcher's values influences their research philosophy and data collection method preferred (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019).

Positivism as a philosophy is the objective view of a scientist who studies an existing social reality that is observable and measurable to be able to generalise the findings as a law (Saunders et.al, 2016). It emphasises the use of quantitative empirical methods and epistemologically only focuses on generating credible data that has causal relationships and not influenced by human beings or bias (Crotty, 1998; Gill and Johnson, 2002; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019).

Critical realists view reality as structured and external and independent of observations and experiences but uses that to explain what is observed and sensed and experienced (Fleetwood, 2005). Critical realism does not just rely on the perceptions or feelings of the actors that is empirically recorded but tries to retrospectively determine the underlying causes (Reed, 2005). Thus, this philosophical standpoint attempts to explain events in the light of reality that isn't obvious and alerts the researcher to the possibility of actors not perceiving the full extent of what happened (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016).

Pragmatism as a philosophy views reality as an extension of the practicality of ideologies, and knowledge as that which enables actions to be carried out with success (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). The researcher's values would cause them to cast doubt or recognise the existence of a problem and thus their aim would be to identify practical solutions to those problems such as in an organisation (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). For the same reason, the research problem and the research

question are instrumental in determining the research design and strategy that will be used (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). Table 4.1 compares the key philosophies suitable for this research.

Table 4. 1: A Comparison of Research Philosophies

	Critical Realism	Interpretivism	Pragmatism
Ontology (The nature of reality)	External, independent, and fixed	Complex and rich, Socially constructed, Multiple realities and interpretations	Complex and external, Multiple views, focus on what answers the research question
Epistemology (The researchers view of what constitutes acceptable knowledge	Knowledge is historically situated and temporary, Facts are socially constructed, Offers a historical causal explanation	A focus on narrative, stories, perceptions, and interpretations	Practical, problem solving and a focus on what's important, True theories and knowledge are those enable successful action
Axiology (The role of the values of the researcher)	Value-led, Researcher tries to minimise bias and errors	Values of the researcher are important, Subjective, Interpretations of the researcher is important	Value-driven
Data Collection Methods	Range of methods and data types that fit subject matter	Small samples, In-depth investigations, Qualitative data	Follows the research problem and research question, Range of methods: mixed, qualitative, quantitative

Source: Adapted from (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016, p. 137)

Interpretivism takes a subjective perspective and considers that human beings create meanings in their interaction with the social world based on their cultural backgrounds or circumstances (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019). Researchers can adopt various paths notably hermeneutics, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism (Crotty, 1998). The richness and complexity of the nature of human being interaction with their social world can produce multiple realities and thus can't be analysed like a physical phenomenon in natural sciences (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). Interpretivists believe in a reality that is not constant but progressive or changeable as it may have been the acceptable norm at a certain time but that is not necessarily what can be considered real at another time. This can be a limitation as it does not accept the applicability of law like generalisations and is constantly in search of truth.

Post modernism as a philosophy in business and management research this would imply that a researcher would question existing concepts and theories with the intent of exposing realities that may have been excluded or suppressed or biases in them (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). Postmodernists do not necessarily accept the natural order of things and tends to question the realist ontology emphasising a state of change and fluidity (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016).

This study adopts an interpretivist approach. This has allowed the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the corporate rebranding phenomenon from an internal perspective that occurred within each case. Although some research on the corporate rebranding phenomena from an employee's perspective has been published, an interpretivist approach has allowed the researcher to acknowledge the existence of multiple realities specifically within higher education institutions (Yin, 2014). This approach also permitted the researcher to produce an interpretation of the events that transpired in each of the cases studied. The existing literature on corporate rebranding and the researcher's propositions of the corporate rebranding process internally has influenced the data collection from the participants in the case study. As is seen in an interpretivist approach, this view of theory building has also assisted the researcher in developing a conceptual framework and model that explains the phenomenon internally (Yin, 2014).

Corporate rebranding although a common phenomenon in industry is not sufficiently researched in academic publications (Kaikati, 2003; Stuart and Muzellec, 2004; Merrilees and Miller, 2008). Much of the earlier research has been exploratory where the phenomenon was investigated with the help of case studies (Schultz and Hatch, 2001; Kaikati and Kaikati, 2003; Daly and Moloney, 2004; Melewar and Akel, 2005; Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). Although the evaluation of these case studies has led to the identifications of common themes and principles (Merrilees and Miller, 2008) and a phased approach to the corporate rebranding process, there is not a widely accepted theoretical framework that explains the forming and maintenance of employee buy-in post rebranding.

Based on an interpretivist approach, this exploratory study aims to contribute to extending the knowledge of corporate rebranding theory from an internal perspective. This was achieved by a thorough examination of the corporate rebranding process that allowed the researcher to obtain insight into an employee's buy-in post rebranding. Employees that bought-in were positive in their behaviour and interaction with the corporate brand.

4.2 Research Approach

Various approaches to theory development have been examined before deciding on the approach that has been chosen in this study. In the deductive approach that is common to natural sciences, a phenomenon and their occurrences are explained with the help of laws that also allows them to be predicted and controlled (Dubois and Gadde, 2002; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016) The research usually starts with theory developed from literature review which is then used to develop hypotheses that is rigorously tested (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). Conclusions are derived logically from these hypotheses and is termed as true when the hypotheses are proved to be true (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010). This approach also involves the use of data from large samples so that well defined concepts can be measured, and the results formed into law like generalisations (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016).

The inductive approach to theory development focuses on first understanding the phenomenon in question within a context especially its interpretation by human beings before theory is conceptualised. This usually involves the collection of qualitative data using smaller samples to understand the nature of the problem resulting in the formulation of theory that is unique or building of existing theory offering an alternative explanation to a known issue with little concern to generalise (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). However, Hyde (2000) adds that this theory building approach using observations of specific instances where the phenomenon occurs is with the intention to arrive at some generalisation of the phenomenon investigated.

The abductive approach combines both inductive and deductive methods (Suddaby, 2006) and approaches a problem by first exploring the phenomenon, developing, or modifying a theory and then testing propositions based on theory (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). This approach involves qualitative data to explore and quantitative data to test the propositions. The table 4.2 compares the characteristics of the deductive, inductive, and abductive approaches in research.

However a few scholar discusses the need to have pre-determined theoretical propositions or premises that explains the phenomenon and its relationship to intended outcomes (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Hyde, 2000; Yin, 2014). In case study research, Perry (1998, p. 790) states that *"the prior theory informs all main data collection equally and theory is generated from all cases in one operation of cross-case data analysis across all the main cases"*. The researcher has thus taken this approach in this study which has led to the formulation of initial

propositions and a conceptual framework based on literature and an understanding of the research gap. This coincides with the use of a deductive reasoning process in building of theory.

Table 4. 2: Deductive, Inductive and Abductive Approaches

	Deduction	Induction	Abduction
Logic	• Based on scientific principles • Moving from theory to data • When the premises (hypotheses) are true the conclusions are also true	• Gaining an understanding of meanings humans attach to events • starts with specific observations of instances • known premises are used to generate untested conclusions	• Combines deductive and inductive approach • begins with the observation of a surprising fact which is a conclusion • a plausible explanation is then constructed and tested
	• Sufficiently large sample sizes are required • Data collected is used to evaluate hypotheses related to an existing theory	• Smaller sample sizes • Data collected is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework	• Data collected is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework • The framework is then tested using additional data
Generalisability	• Generalising from general to specific	• Attempts to generalise from specific to general	• Generalises the interactions between the specific and general
Theory	Theory testing	Theory Building	Theory building or modification

Source: Adapted from (Dubois and Gadde, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019, p. 153)

Most scholarly publications from the researcher's review of literature have focused on external stakeholders especially customers and therefore there isn't much contribution to the rebranding process that impacts employees. Further, corporate rebranding research within the higher education sector is limited (Chapleo, 2010). This study focuses on the corporate rebranding phenomenon from an employee's perspective in higher education institutions. As noted above in an inductive approach with a deductive reasoning, the study developed an initial set of theoretical propositions that was then linked to data. This helped the researcher to check if its supported or if it needed to be modified to make meaningful contributions to theory and practice.

4.3 Research Design

This section will detail the methodology adopted for this study, followed with sampling and sampling techniques, the data collection and analysis tools and procedures and the ethics process considered in the implementation of the research design. A purely quantitative design advocates the collection of numerical data using instruments such as questionnaires and analysing it statistically whilst a purely qualitative design uses textual data for analysis to reach conclusions (Saunders et.al, 2016).

Table 4. 3: Research Methods

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Philosophy	generally associated with positivism but can also be used with realism and pragmatism	generally associated with interpretivism but can also be used with realism and pragmatism
Approach to theory development	Deductive or Inductive	Inductive, Deductive or Abductive
Characteristics	examines relationship between variables	studies respondents meanings and the relationships between them
	analysed using a variety of statistical and graphical techniques	analysed using a variety of analytical procedures to make a theoretical contribution
	involves the use of controls to ensure data validity	data collection is non-standardised
	uses probability sampling to ensure generalisability	uses non-probability sampling as methods of data collection maybe altered to suit the research process
	can be used a mono method or multi-method (use of two types of quantitative instruments to collect data to minimise the weaknesses associated with the use of a single method (Bryman, 2006))	mono method or multi-method
Research Strategies	Survey Research, Experimental Design, Case Study	Action Research, Case Study, Grounded Theory, Narrative Research and Ethnography

Source: Developed from Saunders et.al (2016)

Table 4.3 compares the two types of research methods applicable to research. Research based on qualitative methods are usually founded on an interpretive philosophy (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p.1) qualitative studies are a *"source of well-grounded rich descriptions and explanations of process in an identifiable local context"*. In the absence of sufficient empirical research and theoretical knowledge on corporate rebranding especially in the education sector, a qualitative research design is deemed suitable to study

processes in organisations and for explanatory/exploratory research (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). This study has therefore adopted a qualitative methodology and a case study research strategy to answer the research questions.

4.3.1 Case Study Method

A case study is defined as *" an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real world context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident"* (Yin, 2014, p.16). (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534) adds that a case study research strategy *"focuses on understanding the dynamics present within a single setting"*. In addition to case studies in research producing an in-depth insight into the study of a phenomenon in its real life context, it also leads to deep empirical descriptions and the development of theory (Dubois and Gadde, 2002; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). This research has examined an employee's perspective and their buy-in of the corporate rebranding strategy and implementation that occurred within higher education institutions in the education sector.

Case study research can be conducted with a single case or multiple cases. Single cases could represent something critical that needs to be studied, extreme in that it goes against theoretical norms, revelatory of a phenomenon previously inaccessible to researchers or a case that needs to be studied at two different longitudinal points in time (Yin, 2014; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). It is possible to build or extend theory on the basis of a single case however, it is argued that multiple case studies can build richer theories (Perry, 1998).

Multiple case studies are used to offer compelling evidences making the study more robust (Herriott and Firestone, 1983). To study the nature of employee buy-in at a deeper level post rebranding, multiple cases of universities that underwent this change were selected. An important factor to consider when selecting cases is that it should follow a replication logic and not a sampling or representative logic (Perry, 1998; Yin, 2014). Two types of replication are put forward by Yin (2014): literal and theoretical. When cases are chosen so that similar results are predictable based on a theoretical standpoint, they exhibit literal replication, while, cases selected that predict contrasting results show theoretical replication (Yin, 2014). This logic is also supported by other scholars such as Eisenhardt (1989, p. 537) who argues that a *"random selection of cases is neither necessary, nor even preferable"*.

The multiple cases chosen for this study was based on a literal replication logic as they all underwent a corporate rebranding exercise resulting in a change to the brand's visual identity.

However, in one of the cases (case D), the change was incremental, and the rigour of internal rebranding processes used compared to the other cases were fewer. The number of cases to be selected for the study was the next step. Scholars do not recommend a specific number of cases however, Yin (2014) mentions 2-3 cases would be ideal for literal replication while 4-6 for theoretical replication. Similarly, Eisenhardt (1989) recommends a selection of between 4 and 10 cases to generate theory with sufficient complexity and empirical grounding. This study selected four universities that underwent corporate rebranding in the last few years. The following five components were used in the design of the case study research by the researcher (Yin, 2014):

1. Forming the case study question
2. Developing theoretical propositions
3. Unit (s) of analysis (defining and bounding the case)
4. Case study protocol and data collection
5. Logic linking data to the propositions
6. Criteria for interpreting the findings

The extended design for this study is depicted in figure 4.1 and the process followed in this study for theory development is displayed in table 4.4. There were two research questions that motivated the need for the researcher to adopt the case study method as pointed out in section 1.3.1, page 24. They are:

1. How does the corporate rebranding process influence an employee's buy-in to the new corporate brand?
2. What determines the strength of an employee's buy-in in corporate rebranding?
   a. How does employee identification with the new corporate brand influence employee buy-in?
   b. How does employee engagement influence employee buy-in?

The theoretical propositions are covered in chapter 3 and are based on an extensive review of the corporate rebranding literature (e.g. Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014) and the ensuing research gap identified in the process. The unit of analysis in this study is the organisation. Scholars such as Yin (2014) stresses the importance of defining boundaries for a case such as

by using time periods, so that the scope is fixed, and the case study does not address broader areas connected to the topic.

Table 4. 4: Theory Development Process followed for this Study

Step	Activity	Reason
Getting Started	An initial definition of the research questions Definition of theoretical propositions from prior research	Provided better grounding of theoretical constructs and research of corporate rebranding
Selecting Cases	Theoretical sampling to select universities that undertook corporate rebranding	Focused the study on cases useful to theory building
Crafting Instruments and Protocols	Interview guide development and review by experts Multiple data collection methods adopted Interviews, documents, websites, and observations (Appendix C)	Helps in triangulation of findings and strengthens rigor
Entering the Field	Overlap data collection and analysis	Improve the data collection instrument and helpful in identifying emergent themes
Analysing Data	Within case analysis Cross case analysis using thematic analysis	Familiarity with data and preliminary view of theory generation
Shaping Theoretical Propositions	Iterative evaluation and gathering of evidence for the propositions Replication logic (literal and theoretical) across cases Evidence for theoretical associations between constructs	confirmation and update of propositions initially framed Improves and sharpens theory and conceptual framework Builds internal validity
Wrapping Literature	Comparison of theory with extant literature	Builds internal validity Sharpens theory, construct definitions and theoretical associations between constructs

Source: Adapted from Eisenhardt (1989)

In defining a boundary and context for the cases in this study (Miles and Huberman, 1994), a few criteria were put forward. Each case had to have a corporate rebranding exercise that began and ended few years before the study took place, only employees that were around before and after the rebranding would be selected for data collection and the corporate brand should have undergone a noticeable change.

Figure 4. 1: Multiple Case Study Design
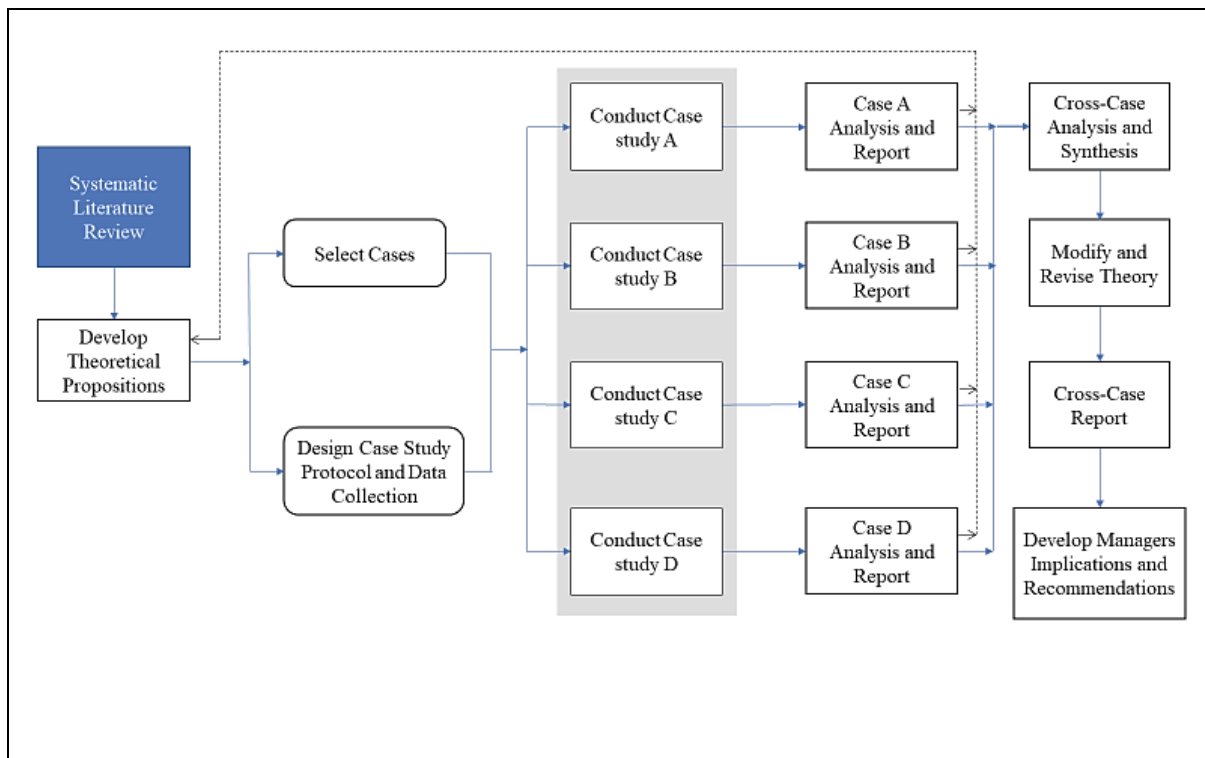
Source: Developed by the researcher for this study based on (Yin, 2014, fig. 2.5)

The logic linking the data to the propositions that were developed is the thematic analysis of the data that validated or revised the propositions in each case and the cross-case synthesis. This iterative process helped the researcher to focus on relevant data and enhance the robustness of the findings.

4.3.1.1 Case Study Protocol

In order to conduct a rigorous and in-depth study of the chosen cases it is recommended that a case study protocol be used (Eisenhardt, 1989; Rowley, 2002; Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) also advises the use of a case study protocol so that the researcher develops a robust research design that guides the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings from the case study. A case study protocol refers to guidelines that the researcher can use to conduct the case study research. It contains the instrument, procedures, and rules to follow in using the protocol. This increases the reliability of the findings and guides the researcher in the data collection from each case (Yin, 2014). The protocol includes providing an overview of the cases, data collection procedures and identifying sources of data, interview guide or data collection questions and a guide to completing the report (Yin, 2014).

A similar approach is recommended by Eisenhardt (1989, p. 533) and refers to it as *"crafting the instruments and the protocol"*. This procedure of working systematically is especially helpful when there are multiple investigators in the study. For the purposes of this study, as the researcher is working alone, a protocol was devised in developing and implementing the case study research design as outlined below:

A. Research and understand the rationale, aims and objectives for each corporate rebranding exercise carried out by the case study university

B. Identify contacts and emails addresses of participants that meet the criteria within each case, send emails to schedule interview appointments (face to face preferable) and follow-up as needed, conduct the interviews, identify other sources of data such as marketing literature, slides used, evidence of branding, record all the sources of data

C. Develop the interview guide mapping the questions to the theoretical model and constructs used

D. Conduct individual case analysis and write individual case study report (iterative)

E. Synthesise cross-case analysis and report (iterative)

The interview guide was developed based on the key theoretical concepts that were investigated in this study. The interview questions went through a few iterations. The questions were reviewed by an expert panel of academics that included the researcher's supervisors. The questions were also piloted with 3 interviewees two of whom were in higher education and one participant that worked at a local primary school. The data collected from one of the participants in higher education was included in the analysis while the others helped in reviewing the questions to make the data collection focused on the conceptual model and theory.

4.4 Data Collection

The research is aimed towards the education sector with an emphasis on higher education institutions namely, universities in the UK. There is a growing interest among universities to focus on their branding to enhance the perception of their value and competitive advantage (Chapleo, 2010, 2015). Business schools are striving to build strong brands that can withstand the competition for national and international students, faculty, and resources (Syed Alwi and Kitchen, 2014). This is in an environment where ranking and league tables determine admissions, placement, and funding prospects (Argenti, 2000; Corley and Gioia, 2004).

Public sector organisations such as universities or colleges have complexities in that each university has a unique student profile, culture, development stage, availability of resources among different faculties and institutions within them (Asaad *et al.*, 2013). This makes it important to study how brands are perceived by employees and managed when changes are made to its brand.

The unit of analysis for this study is a higher education institution that had undergone a form of rebranding exercise. The aim of choosing each of the cases was to attain literal replication in terms of the results (Yin, 2014). Various organisations in the service sector were researched to identify those that had undergone a form of corporate rebranding exercise i.e., evolutionary and/or revolutionary rebranding based on the literature and definition of rebranding. The concept of branding and the brand management approach within universities is at an early stage and has only recently attracted the attention of marketing scholars (Chapleo, 2010, 2015; Frandsen *et al.*, 2018).

Empirical research on business schools are even more limited (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007), whilst research on colleges can hardly be found in internet searches or online databases as far as the researcher is aware. The study of the corporate rebranding phenomenon is also at an early stage with respect to higher education institutions with only a few empirical studies published (eg. Koku, 1997; Williams, Osei and Omar, 2012; Clark, Chapleo and Suomi, 2020). Thus, an emphasis on universities was considered valuable in making contributions to literature. The four specific institutions that were selected were based on accessibility to collect data for the study and the fact that each of the institutions had undergone a form of a rebranding exercise.

To have access to the universities, the researcher contacted individuals using personal contacts and references provided by other academics known to the researcher. As noted in the case study protocol, the contacts were made using emails and phone calls and introductory meetings. Among the participants that volunteered for the research there was a good mix of employees in various managerial, academic, and other front-end roles. However, a few academics were not as keen to be interviewed relative to the rest. Case A had the largest number of participants volunteer after a meeting between the researcher and the corporate communications and brand director. The director then provided a list of names and email addresses that included senior and junior academics and professional services staff. Most of the participants in all four cases were selected based on an overarching criterion that they must have been in employment before

the rebranding and then based on availability and convenience of the participants. Details of the participants have been provided in Table 4.5.

4.4.1 Expert Interviews

Interviews are research instruments used to collect subjective data from respondents whose 'views about the social world are socially constructed' (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016, p. 390). The data is essentially co-produced as the interviewee's perspectives of the questions asked are interpreted by the interviewer during its analysis (Denzin, 2001).

Three widely accepted types of interviews are termed as structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016; Hair et.al, 2016). Structured interviews use a predetermined and standardised list of questions when administered to respondents one to one. Questions must be asked in the same order and even in the same tone of voice to avoid potential bias (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). Semi-structured interviews are conducted one to one using a list of open questions formed, based on themes identified from literature and the focus of the study. The order of questions need not be strictly followed and some of the questions can be avoided based on the interview context and organisational setting (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). The researcher also has the option to add probing questions based on the respondents answers to reveal new insights and explore the research question and objectives further (Hair et.al, 2015; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). The researcher usually opens the interview with a set of comments or an overview of the topic to be discussed and will also be prompting the respondent to further the discussion.

Unstructured interviews also termed as in-depth interviews and are informal in terms of the structure of the interview and is usually used to explore a topic of interest (Hair et.al., 2015; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). There is no particular list of questions created before the interview and the respondent is allowed to freely discuss and talk about the topic, event, phenomenon, behaviour etc as he/she wants (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). The questions asked by the researcher are largely based on what the respondent says.

Of the three main types of interviews used in research, this study has used semi structured interviews. Although there is not enough literature related to employees' perspectives in the context of corporate rebranding, some of the concepts such as brand and organisation identification and internal branding exist as separate research strands and themes in marketing and organisational behaviour literature. An interview guide (Appendix A) that contained a brief description of the research topic and a list of open questions based on themes identified from

the literature review (Miles and Huberman, 1994), was prepared and sent to the main contacts in each of the institutions before the interview.

The open questions in the interview guide was developed by cultivating a thorough understanding of the literature on corporate rebranding (Rowley, 2012). The process used in developing the interview guide from the research questions and themes identified in the literature review is displayed in figure 4.2. Participants were also briefed initially before the interview started. The order of questions was not strictly followed and some of them were omitted whilst a few questions were added depending on the participants responses (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019).

Figure 4. 2: Interview Guide Development
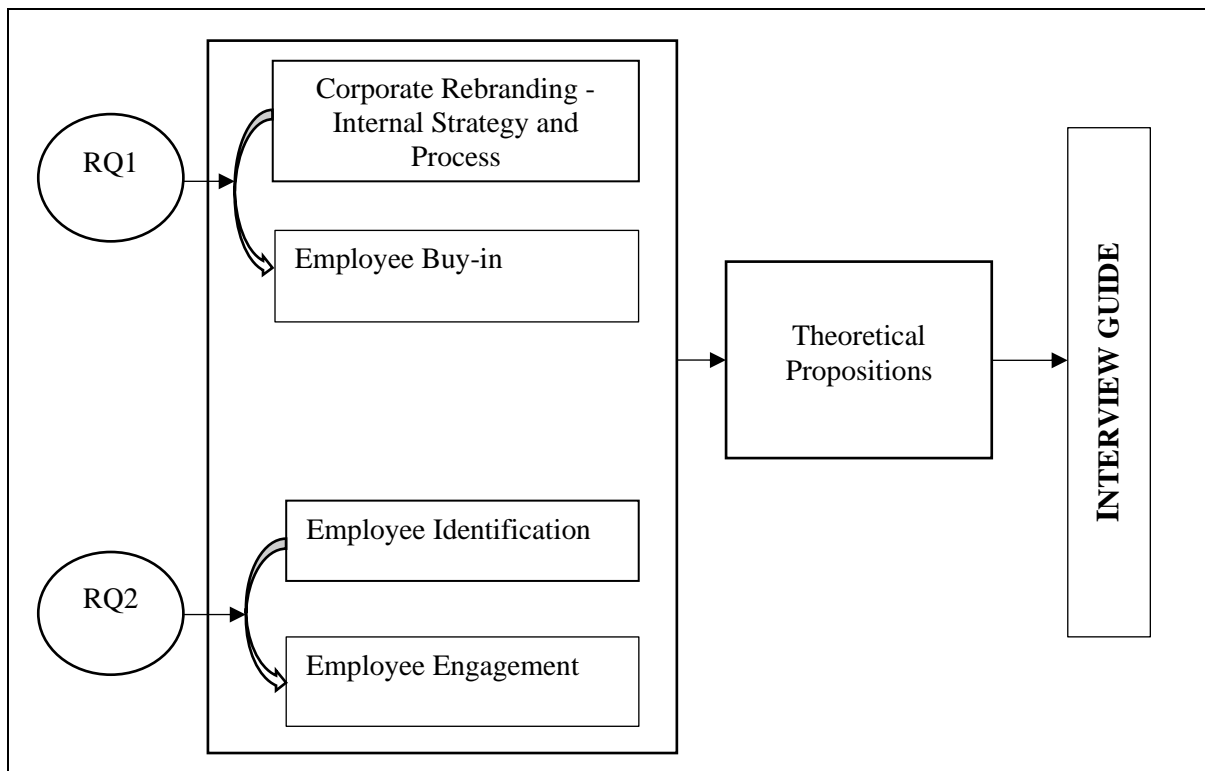
Source: Developed by the researcher for this study

4.4.2 Selecting Participants and Interview Process

Interviewing more than one person in an organisation has been considered valuable in previous studies as it enables greater insight into the phenomena being studied (Goffin et al., 2006; Krause, 1999). In deciding the number of participants to interview, a common practice amongst qualitative researchers is theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Creswell and Miller, 2000; Mason, 2010). However, there is a general lack of consensus or guideline in providing specific sample sizes or ranges for non-probabilistic samples (Guest, Bunce and Johnson,

2006). A recommended number of participants to interview for phenomenological studies according to Creswell (2007) is between 6 and 25, whilst for homogenous participants selected using purposive sampling is between 6 and 12 for reaching saturation (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006).

For the purposes of this study the researcher conducted a total of 21 interviews of participants from four different universities. The list of participants is displayed in table 4.5. This was supplemented with documents available to view, website, and a walk around of the premises. Each interview was an average of 40 minutes with the longest being 1 hr and 10 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in the respective premises and they were digitally recorded, and field notes were made. The interview with participant A11 however could not be recorded due to technical reasons but, field notes were recorded and used in the analysis. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim with non-verbal cues included wherever possible soon after for analysis purposes.

The interviews were conducted with the themes that were identified from the researcher's systematic literature review on corporate rebranding. The interview questions were modified for those in leadership positions as displayed in Appendix A.1. This was done to identify the process of implementing the rebranding strategy internally in addition to the other questions. The open-ended questions were based on four major themes: internal branding and communication, employee engagement, employee identification and employee buy-in as seen in figure 3.2. These themes also reflected the gaps in the extant studies on corporate rebranding especially with respect to employees.

During the interview, the researcher took a neutral stance and acted simply as a medium through which questions were transmitted and received to avoid any bias (Irani, 2002). Similarly the interviewees confidence in sharing information and a response bias was minimised by assuring participants of their anonymity in any research output (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). Each interview conducted resulted in data that contributed to a rich insight on the concepts and themes identified on corporate rebranding for this study. After the interview, the researcher was permitted to scan the environment (premises) to view displays of the corporate brand elements in the form of interior design of the building using colour schemes of the corporate brand, information communicated internally and the vision and values of the corporate brand. This also included viewing literature such as brochures and other marketing material used to communicate externally.

Table 4. 5: Interview Participants

Cases	Participant	Age Group	Job Title
A	A1	30-40	Student Recruitment
	A2	30-40	Alumni Communication
	A3	50 +	Academic
	A4	40-50	Academic
	A5	30-40	Business Development
	A6	30-40	Personal Assistant
	A7	30-40	Academic
	A8	30-40	Employee Relations
	A9	30-40	Employer Relations
	A10	30-40	Careers
	A11	40-50	Corporate Communications
B	B1	40-50	Marketing
	B2	40-50	Branding
	B3	20-30	Student Union
	B4	30-40	Branding
C	C1	30-40	Marketing
	C2	40-50	Marketing
D	D1	50 plus	Academic
	D2	40-50	Academic/Collaborative Partnerships
	D3	40-50	Learning and Development
	D4	50 plus	Academic

A few photographs of banners used in the premises were taken. In addition, the researcher visited the websites of the universities to view strategy documents such as the strategic plan to examine the significance of the vision and values in what was communicated. A list of these additional data sources is listed in Appendix B. This activity has helped the researcher in triangulating the empirical data collected from the interviews and is a practice encouraged in research when the environment of study allows it (Irani, 2002).

A description of the 4 cases selected within higher education are detailed below. Four universities were selected to be part of this study as they all went through a corporate rebranding exercise.

4.4.3 CASE A

The Business school is a division of a University College in London and is a world leader in science and technology. A few of their MSc and MBA programmes such as in Finance and Management are among the top 10 in the UK and has a reputable spot in Europe and the rest of the world according to their 2017 annual report. The business school was given faculty status in 2003 to be recognised alongside the other faculties of medicine, engineering, natural science. It was also given a sub-brand license to compete with the other top business school brands in the world in attracting students.

Although the business school's programmes are highly ranked in the UK, the school embarked on a corporate rebranding and re-positioning strategy in 2013 to enhance its brand position among students and stakeholders. With the help of a London based branding and graphic design agency the business school received a new corporate brand identity that included a change in logo, tagline, and colour schemes of the brand name. The visual identity was integral in design of the interiors of the business school. The visual identity has now been rebranded with a two-letter acronym as logo and separate tagline that appeals to its target market. The logo and visual identity were launched in 2015 and symbolised a dynamic, bold, innovative, analytical, and rigorous brand. The modified name still remained connected to its parent name as it exemplified the strong historic roots, values and vision of a member of the royal family in the late 1800's and its reputation in one the disciplines of medicine, engineering, and natural sciences. At its core, the brand was all about the fusion of business and technology.

The business school undertook an extensive study of stakeholder's views before deciding on the new corporate identity that it currently has. The feedback from stakeholders interestingly pointed out a lack of awareness of the existence of the business school as part of the main university. This approach is unique in that it was a collaborative in nature whereby, the stakeholders were approached to provide their views on 'who were they as a business school' before deciding on how the school should be rebranded. This makes it a unique case to study. In literature this is also referred to as co-creation of the brand (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). The rebranding and re-positioning strategy was implemented in 2016.

4.4.4 CASE B

On the eve of its quarter of a century as a university, this higher education institution decided to take the plunge and invest in a rebranding exercise that would not just revitalise the existing image but add depth and flavour to it. It was meant to represent who they really were as a university. The university rebranded its brand identity to position itself better in an increasingly competitive student recruitment marketplace. A new brand image emerged from the internal corporate rebranding process that was built upon the output from a consultation exercise that involved nearly ten thousand employees and stakeholders.

The university went through the rebranding process in early 2017 having realised that the existing corporate brand did not represent who they were and their heritage in the town and community they existed in. It was an opportunity to connect with a variety of stakeholders internal and external. School students aged 9-18, prospective undergraduate students, businesses corporate partners and investors were among a few external stakeholders that were targeted. The rebranding was relatively a very expensive exercise as it also involved changing and updating old and irrelevant marketing and branding literature. The process included a university wide consultation exercise because of which employees were able to voice out their view and opinions of who they thought the university was. The senior management including the vice chancellor were very involved in the process and was driving and supporting the exercise from the beginning to the end. The rebrand was perceived to be a success and was launched the same year. The researcher was able to access four participants from the marketing, branding, and student union departments to be interviewed as shown in table 4.5.

4.4.5 CASE C

This university was established more than a hundred years ago and has been an important part of the local community's development and represented its diversity. In the academic year 2018-19, with the arrival of a new vice chancellor the university developed a new 10-year strategy. The strategy was formed as part of a new vision to transform the curriculum, pedagogy, research impact and partnerships. The university's senior management had developed an ambitious goal to become a leading careers-focused, enterprising, and forward-looking institution that prepared its students for futuristic jobs. This led to the decision to undertake a corporate rebranding exercise as soon as the management realised the existing image and brand identity did not reflect their heritage and the new vision.

The new corporate brand's visual identity was meant to capture the diversity of its employees, its heritage, innovativeness, and the life in the community. The corporate brand's logo was changed to represent an institution that was bold, confident, and forward-looking. Every part of the logo such as the coat of arms were symbols of its history, its community, and the future.

Employees from various departments and faculties across the university were involved as part of the internal rebranding process. Due to the university employees being quite busy during the time they were contacted, the researcher's access to a wider range of participants was limited. However, two participants with a significant involvement in directing and facilitating the rebranding process from the marketing department volunteered to be interviewed.

4.4.6 CASE D

This UK higher education institution was established nearly 175 years ago and has a rich heritage and reputation in providing education to women longer than any other university. They have had close ties with the community and their core values are built upon changing the lives of students irrespective of their background. decided to update its existing brand logo to effectively market its brand locally and internationally. The logo was also meant to represent the different colleges and partners of the university. An external agency was recruited to assist in the design and development of the logo.

The rebranding process included workshops and focus groups with external stakeholders such as students and partners to collect their views and opinions but, the employees did not seem to be very involved. The marketing and branding team along with the agency went through an exercise to define who they were? and what they represented? However, it appeared this was not a widely publicised exercise. The rebranding exercise was perceived by employees as an incremental and evolutionary update of the existing logo and nothing further. There was also the impression that the corporate rebrand was aimed at the external stakeholders and not internal.

From all the four cases, the researcher was able to gain access to twenty-one participants that included academics, managers and others as shown in table 3.2. The interview with the participants lasted an average of 40 minutes with the longest being 1 hour and 10 minutes.

4.5 Data Analysis

The collection, recording, transcription, analysis, and interpretation of the data took place within short intervals (Gummesson, 2005). CAQDAS specifically NVivo 12 was used for the

data analysis. Various methods are used for qualitative data analysis such as discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and thematic analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Wooffitt, 2005; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Although a discourse includes 'all kinds of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p. 7) and maybe considered suitable, this study has adopted a thematic method of analysis.

As a first step to the analytical process the data received from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and coded. The second step consisted of using thematic analysis to generate thematic and sub-thematic categories that fit the research question and research objectives. The coding, identification of themes and analysis of the data was performed with the help of NVivo 12. Both these steps are covered in further detail in the following section.

4.5.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used in the data analysis to identify and locate themes. This method of analysis is commonly used in qualitative studies and is applicable to a range of epistemologies and research questions (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). It is defined as 'a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The thematic analysis of the data in this study is conducted in six phases as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) in table 4.6. Although the phased approach is systematic it is not always a linear process. It is iterative and there is a constant moving back and forth of the phases making it rigorous to achieve reliable and insightful findings (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Nowell *et al.*, 2017).

A theme signifies what is important in the data in relation to the research question and is the representation of a patterned response or meaning within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In the *first phase* of thematic analysis, the researcher went through a data familiarisation process. All the participants data (text) was organised and recorded in NVivo. Each participant was characterised using attribute values of gender, age, position/role, and university.

The semi-structured interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis purposes. The transcription process which involved listening to the audio multiple times allowed the researcher to acquaint himself with the data at a deeper level. The text was transcribed onto word documents. After the first attempt at transcription, the text was reviewed for accuracy with the recording. This process was carried out multiple times until the transcribed text was an accurate representation of what was communicated by the participant in the interview.

Table 4. 6: Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description of the Process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data	- transcribing data - reading and re-reading the data - noting down initial ideas about potential codes/themes, theories - organising data and keeping records of field notes, documents, and other data sources
2. Generating initial codes	- coding interesting features of the data across an entire data set in a systematic fashion - collating data relevant to each code - use of a coding framework
3. Searching for themes	- collating codes into potential themes - gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing the themes	- checking if the themes and subthemes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set - creating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
5. Defining and naming themes	- ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells - generate clear definitions and names for each theme
6. Producing the report	- selection of vivid compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts - relating the analysis back to the literature and research question - producing a scholarly report

Source: (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Nowell *et al.*, 2017)

The raw field notes collected in the process were converted into summary notes that highlighted the key information from the interviewees. The transcribed text and the summary notes were together used for data analysis and interpretation. A systematic filing process was used to categorise participants from each of the four cases study universities. The same data organisation system was used on NVivo. Once the transcribed text was imported onto NVivo, the coding process began. Prior to the commencement of the coding process by the researcher, the data collected was also reviewed with other academics and experts to avoid any bias in the interpretation of data and maintain internal validity (Linclon and Guba, 1985).

In the *second phase* of the process, initial codes were generated using an extensive literature review of corporate rebranding. Based on the review, this study identified four key theoretical and conceptual themes that needed to be examined in corporate rebranding from an employee's perspective. The codes generated followed this definition. A code is defined as 'a word or short

phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data' (Saldana, 2013, p. 3). Two cycles of coding were adopted in the formation of the final coding framework (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014). The first cycle of coding is suited to the second phase in table 4.6 while the second cycle is suited to the third and fourth phases of the thematic analysis.

Various types of codes were used in the blended approach to coding as mentioned above. In the first cycle, Descriptive and In Vivo codes were used to create and refine the theoretical themes. A descriptive code summarises 'in a word or short phrase most often a noun-the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data' (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014, p. 74). In vivo codes are popularly used in qualitative coding as it 'uses words or short phrases from the participants own language in the data record as codes' (Saldana, 2013; Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014, p. 74). This helped in the further discovery of recurring phrases using words of interest that helped in the understanding of important themes and in identifying directions of research.

In the first cycle of the coding process, a pre-defined list of codes were developed based on the theoretical concepts and themes, identified during the literature review and based on the conceptual framework presented in figure 3.1 (Ridder, 2016; Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019). The researcher used this deductive coding approach for the first cycle of the analysis and generated four descriptive codes to identify data that fit into these codes (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014). This approach helped to focus the coding on the issues and concepts identified in the literature and to generate generalisable findings across cases (Eisenhardt, 1989; Rowley, 2002). After the initial coding process of the interviews, the codes were reviewed for suitability to the text and renamed as needed. The initial codes were also reviewed by my supervisor and comments were made to improve.

In the *third phase* of thematic analysis, the resultant codes or themes were collated together based on similarity. This was achieved in the second cycle of the coding process. Second cycle codes are more analytical and recognised as useful in 'classifying, prioritising, integrating, synthesizing, abstracting and conceptualizing, and theory building' (Saldaña, 2009, p. 54). Pattern coding was predominantly used in the second cycle of coding. New subcodes (sub-themes) were created for the major codes (themes) and then new themes and theoretically informed categories were formed based on careful parsing of text line by line in the transcripts.

An inductive approach of coding was thus initially used to generate new subcodes (sub-themes) from the transcripts in this second cycle. Further, deductive coding was used to expand on the main theoretical themes and categories identified in the first cycle of coding and also to refine the new themes and concepts uncovered in the second cycle (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014; Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019). For example, the code 'Rebranding Strategy and Process' as a new thematic category with a set of sub themes was identified through a process of inductive coding in the second cycle but they were also deductively refined based on examination of literature. A blend of both deductive and inductive approaches was thus used in the two cycles of the coding process. This type of an abductive approach is considered a common approach in qualitative studies (Graebner, Martin and Roundy, 2012). This process also helped identify relationships between themes and sub-themes as proposed in the conceptual framework in chapter 3. The initial coding framework within the first cycle and second cycle codes had 471 nodes and sub nodes in NVivo.

In the *fourth phase* of thematic analysis, a further refinement of the codes and their organisation into major themes and categories was carried out. In this refinement process, certain themes that did not have sufficient supporting data or not meaningful enough were either discarded or merged with other overarching themes. Codes that did not align with the research question and focus of the study were moved into a category called 'unused'. A few codes were re-worded to appear more meaningful to the data extracts. This produced a coding framework with 305 nodes and sub nodes. This is presented in Appendix C. The final seven main categories of codes with sub-codes in the coding framework were on corporate rebranding – strategy and process, internal branding, employee engagement, employee identification, employee involvement, role of leadership, and employee buy-in.

In the *fifth phase* of the thematic analysis, complex themes were simplified (Braun and Clarke, 2006), so that the narratives and the story that the themes signified fit into the overall purpose of the study. Sub-themes were also reviewed to check for alignment to the main themes and if necessary, refinements were made. Additionally, the researcher revisited a few of the analytic memos created during the coding process. Analytic memoing is a tool to record emerging patterns, categories, themes, propositions, and relationships (Saldana, 2013). Analytical memos help the researcher narrate in brief or extensively, reflections, thinking processes about the coding, the phenomenon and their interactions (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014; Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019). They are not meant to be just descriptive narrations but

analytical musings and higher order synthesis of the data (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014).

For this study, the researcher created a few analytic memos during the iterative data collection and analysis routine, which helped in the formation of new codes, establishing of relationships between themes and drawing of conclusions from the results beneficial to theory and practice. Reviewing them again at this stage helped the researcher to check the overall story for each case study and compare them with the themes and sub-themes in the coding framework. Another task in this process was to reflect on the relationships between the themes as proposed in the conceptual

In the *sixth* and final phase of conducting the thematic analysis, the researcher conducted the final analysis and review of the themes. In the reporting process, the themes were organised based on the research questions and the conceptual framework, and the narrative was written. As this is a multiple case study, the final findings were presented, case by case in a within case analysis in chapter 5 and across cases in chapter 6 (Yin, 2014). The findings were presented using data extracts for themes and sub-themes and various displays. Matrix displays are very common in qualitative studies including case studies to tabulate results and display first and second cycle codes (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014; Yin, 2014). The overarching themes, sub-themes and relationships from the analysis were then presented using matrix displays in chapters 5 and using matrices, charts and other analytical diagrams taken from NVivo in chapter 6.

4.6 Bias, Reliability and Validity

The interviews were conducted face to face and on one-to-one basis. Care was taken to avoid interviewer bias by avoiding leading questions or comments and in appropriate non-verbal behaviour (Saunders et.al, 2016). As the questions asked revolves around processes in use by the organisation, perceptions of them and other non-sensitive information there will be no response bias expected in the answers provided. The responses were anonymous and confidential and did not include feedback on other staff or management, responses will not be manufactured to appear positive (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016). This also avoids any potential common method bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Participation bias will also be avoided by agreeing on interview time periods and schedules that are not challenging for employees to fulfil (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2016).

The term reliability is commonly acquainted with testing and evaluating quantitative research (Golafshani, 2003), however for qualitative studies the test is of the quality and dependability of the research (Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001). Similarly, reliability and validity are important measures of a study's accuracy and replicability of results from a positivist paradigm (Saldaña, 2011). However in qualitative studies comparable terms are credibility and trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This research study was conducted with a view to satisfying the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria and establishing trustworthiness as noted in table 4.7.

Table 4. 7: Establishing Trustworthiness in Case Study Research

Criteria	Strategies adopted in this research study
Credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and Validity (Yin, 2014)	- Data triangulation by using multiple data sources (Appendix C) - Care was taken to avoid biases such as participant and common method bias - Reviewing initial codes with the supervisor during the data analysis stage - Offering a complete and transparent view of the data analysis process
Transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)	Following a literal replication logic in the selection and analysis of multiple case studies (Yin, 2014)
Dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and Reliability (Yin, 2014)	- Following the case study protocol outlined in 4.3.1.1 rigorously (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014) - Offering a complete and transparent view of the data analysis and coding process - Maintaining recordings of interviews, field notes, and other documents for repeated reviews
Confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)	Maintaining a chain of evidence in carrying out the interviews, field notes, recordings, coding framework and the annotations and memos used in arriving at the findings and conclusions (Yin, 2014)
Construct Validity (Yin, 2014)	Deriving constructs and concepts by carrying out a comprehensive literature review on corporate rebranding

Source: Developed by the author for this study

Transferability is about the generalisation of the qualitative inquiry and the transfer of the findings from case to case (Tobin and Begley, 2004). A literal replication logic was used in the selection of cases in this study (Yin, 2014). As far as case studies are concerned the aim of reliability is to ensure that errors and biases are minimised so that the same results are generated if the case studies were conducted again (Yin, 2014). To allow for greater reliability for this study care has been taken to follow each step of the case study protocol so that the process is rigorous (Yin, 2014). Similarly dependability which is about having an audit trail of the interviews, recordings, documents and field notes (Tobin and Begley, 2004) was reflected in this study.

Confirmability is about establishing that the findings and its interpretations are firmly grounded on the data and not conjured up by the researcher (Tobin and Begley, 2004). This was achieved because of the strategies adopted to satisfy credibility, transferability, and dependability, and by maintaining a chain of evidence.

In terms of validity, Yin (2014) discusses the importance of construct validity which is a reflection of the "operational measures for the concepts being studied" (Yin, 2014, p. 46). This was ensured by identifying concepts related to corporate rebranding from an extensive literature review and using employee buy-in as an outcome measure of an employee's support of the changes to the corporate brand. Further multiple sources of data were collected for the purposes of triangulation of the findings which also enforces the validity (Healy and Perry, 2000; Golafshani, 2003; Yin, 2014) and credibility of the data and the study . These sources include websites, strategy documents, marketing literature, field notes and observations. They are detailed in Appendix C.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

This study has adhered to Newcastle University's ethical guidelines and processes in conducting data collection. An ethical application months before the field study was submitted according to university regulations and approval was received soon after. All the participants interviewed were given a participation consent form to accept to the terms of the research before data was collected. The form stated that the data was collected strictly for research purposes and none of the participants or the organisation would be identified in any research output published by the researcher. The interview was also recorded, and field notes were made. Permission was granted by every participant for the data to be recorded this way. The interview guide used was also made available to the participants.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research methodology adopted and research design used to answer the research questions posed at the beginning. A multiple case study research approach was used, and qualitative data was collected for each of the four cases identified. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted and other evidence such as photographs, marketing literature were also collected. Observations were also made of the premises to inspect brand related messages and designs. NVivo 12 pro was used to code and analyse the data collected. Triangulation with the data was done to cross-check findings. The next chapter discusses the conceptual framework developed from the literature.

CHAPTER 5. WITHIN-CASE ANALYSIS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the within-case analysis of each of the four cases studied. Case A represents a university's business school that rebranded its corporate brand to form a separate identity. Case B represents the corporate rebranding strategy of the whole university that included all the various faculties and disciplines. Case C represents the university wide corporate rebranding of its more than a century old corporate brand and Case D represents the incremental or evolutionary rebranding of the university's corporate brand. The analysis and findings from each of the four cases are presented below. The major themes used to present the findings include corporate rebranding - internal strategy and process, employee identification, employee engagement and employee buy-in. In addition to the key similarities within these themes for each case, any significant differences or deviations and any additional theme deemed important for this study are also included.

The case study analysis is presented in the manner detailed here. The findings from each case are presented individually and is organised based on the key and sub themes identified from the thematic analysis and literature review. The findings for each case also address the theoretical propositions identified in chapter three section 3.2. For each case study, at the end of presenting the analysis a summary of the case is provided to highlight the main findings with respect to each of the constructs internal brand communication, employee engagement, employee identification and employee buy-in.

5.1 CASE A

Rebranding the business school for this university was a lengthy process which lasted at least six months. It was an exercise to establish a separate identity for the business school to compete with other UK and world leading business schools. The parent university and college to which it has belonged to, is recognised globally but the senior management team of the business school decided to take the bold step of establishing a separate identity from the parent by rebranding the existing business school's brand elements including the name. A few of the participants commented on how that students and academics everywhere knew of the university college name and recognised the brand but were unaware that the college had a business school. They wanted to change that perception. There were two main aims to the corporate rebranding

strategy that was implemented. One of the aims was to establish a unique visual identity separate from the university college. Secondly, the rebranding strategy was used as an opportunity to set a unique vision, mission, and strategic direction for the business school instead of adopting what the university college had.

5.1.1 Corporate Rebranding – Internal Strategy and Process

The corporate rebranding process internally had two main phases. The first phase was to develop the brand messaging and the second was the visual identity of which the latter was the more significant change to distinguish the business school in the HE sector. One of the managers in the careers department commented as below:

Participant A9: "I think the biggest definable change, the most concrete was, the visual identity. There was a big change in visual identity because previously we would very much stick to, using the College's visual identity with the Business school. So, we were representing ourselves as a department of the College rather than a standalone Business School"

Another aspect of the corporate rebranding process was that there were several intermediate launches throughout the whole period as and when decisions were made about the messaging and the visual identity. The involvement of employees was key through each part of the process.

5.1.1.1 Employee Involvement

The internal process in the business school included extensive consultation with employees at various hierarchical levels before the rebrand was implemented. A senior academic A3 and the student recruitment manager A4 commented:

Participant A3: "The Dean had a completely different approach. And the approach was to have a series of workshops with various levels of stakeholders. About what they thought, what they wanted, and that also included some of the people from the college marketing area, they don't really call it as marketing area as such people who are in charge of the image of the college"
Participant A1: "So we had a series of workshops. I think prior to the new corporate brand"

These workshops were structured, and it covered discussions on the strategic objectives, definitions of the vision and the mission statements followed with employees' opinions about the existing visual identity and the changes needed. There were also quite a few staff meetings where the consolidated feedback was discussed.

Participant A7: "And I remember that they had a number of consultations that started if I remember well, for the kind of definitions for the Vision and mission statements. So basically, what they will stand for? I think there was also a consultation to sort of discuss the strategic objectives of the business school. And then basically as soon as the Vision and the mission and the tagline which is part of our brand were decided only at that point if I remember well, we received proposals for the graphics and the visuals".

Although the consultative workshops were well attended in general, one non-management employee from the careers department commented that he was not very involved in the workshops, but that he attended the staff meetings. The staff meetings were mainly used to communicate what was decided rather than collect further input as noted below.

Participant A10: "We have our all staff meetings where all the professional staff are invited, and then you get to hear updates on the Business School, what's going on, where, and what the future plans are. So, in there we had a meeting about the brand change or information about the brand change and there was a short visual demo about how the new logo would look and how it can be used in departments and so on"

Interviewer: So was this also to, sort of get input from the staff as to what they think about it? Or was it simply to communicate what has been decided?

Participant A10: "So, it was 90% communication... It was 90% information. So this is what was decided, this is what we'd be doing".

However, it was said that as involvement with the consultation workshops were not mandatory, the academics were outnumbered by employees from other departments. There were a few senior academics that participated but, in general academics were the least involved in the internal process as noted by a couple of senior academics in the text below.

Participant A7: "So basically, it was you know up to the faculty to join those meetings or not. So personally speaking, because I'm in the senior management of the business school I wanted to be involved".

Participant A4: ".during the initial workshops, I certainly spoke, I certainly contributed. I certainly felt that I was able to, to, chip in if I wanted to".

Interviewer: "Do you think academics engaged with what happened before the rebrand was completed? Was it attended by a lot of academics equally as much as the others?"

Participant A4: "No, no, I think it was probably more administrators than academics probably. Yeah, maybe not a lot more. But I do think it was probably more administrative than academics"

It was also noted that academics do not generally engage with the brand building process due to a lack of interest which then leads them to possibly disconnect. The branding messages communicated internally would therefore seem misaligned to their work which furthers their disinterest in the corporate brand. A senior academic member commented in this way,

Participant A4: "In the sense that academics are too busy or, or well, not terribly interested in questions around branding so they don't engage with the process that helps to form and articulate the brand. And then because of that, the articulation of the brand happens without their input. They see something that doesn't kind of reflect or incorporate what they do and that feeds back into a sense that they're not terribly interested in"

5.1.2 Internal Brand Communication

As the business school changed its brand's visual identity there was a corresponding change to the interior décor of the school, the branded artefacts, brochures, posters and other marketing materials. It reflected the new colours, logo and strapline that the new brand had. There were also a few marketing campaigns online launched based on the new brand messaging that was aimed at students, academics, industry and other external stakeholders. The business school's website was also changed to reflect the new brand identity. Most of the employees mentioned that the internal communication was an important part of the internal process. To better express the role of communication, the findings in this section has been separated into inception period, intermediate and post-rebrand period.

The marketing and communications team at the directive of the dean of the business school put together an internal communication strategy that was initiated before the changes to the business school brand were decided. Initially, a series of workshops were organised to consult with employees and collect their opinions, ideas, and thoughts on what the business school brand was about. These workshops appeared to run a few times. One of the senior academics commented that following every consultation workshop, the feedback from employees were collated and decisions were made. Any contentions or issues were then discussed in the next round of workshops. Any decisions made based on the opinions and feedback given were communicated through staff meetings, newsletters, and email briefings.

Participant A1: "So we had a series of workshops. I think prior to the new brand and then when the brand was launched, we were given some merchandise so that helps the internal staff. But we were also in the meetings that told what the brand identity was about and as I say the different statements that we should be thinking about using".

As part of the internal communication strategy employees were given constant updates on, the decisions made concerning the new brand identity and reviews of corresponding marketing actions taken.

Participant A7: "I remember receiving a number of updates from the marketing team, kind of marketing analytics associated to the marketing actions that we carried out at the time. I think there was if I remember well there was a certain emphasis to kind of you know feedback on the new brand and the impact of the new brand in the first probably 3 to 6 months".

An interesting finding in this case study was the use of brand representatives within each department to complement the formal communications that came through department or school level meetings. A manager at the careers department commented below.

Participant A9: "And then while it was ongoing, immediately afterwards we had, we effectively had a brand, brand representative within each team".

This was an informal role and did not last very long but was effective in driving the brand messaging and answering any questions other team members had about the brand. The brand representatives were used for both the brand messaging and visual identity development phases as mentioned here:

Participant A9: "It was making sure people understood why we're making changes, you know, and just keeping people up to date with the changes. So, there was sort of the formal communication, but then they actually said within each team we will have someone who's a bit, bit more informal just in sort of a network that can just keep an eye on things, feedback back when changes take place".

5.1.2.1 Internal Brand Communication (Post-Rebranding)

The internal communication activities about the brand became sporadic and very infrequent towards the end of the internal processes and after the launch of the new corporate brand. Communication that went out to employees from the marketing and communications team were mostly around the use of the visual identity to ensure consistency of usage. It was about reminding employees of the boundaries of what can and cannot be used in any external

communications. One of the employees also commented that it had stopped as noted in the excerpts below.

Participant A9: "Now they sporadically do, presentations. So, we have someone come to, a team meeting last year. So just, just saying, make sure this is how you're presenting stuff, this is why we're doing what we're doing".

Interviewer: "Do you receive any newsletters or anything like that via the intranet about the new corporate brand? any messages about the branding of the business school or what it's trying to do?"

Participant A7: "Not anymore"

5.1.3 Employee Identification

Identification of the employees with the brand was evident in various ways. During the interview, participants talked about their perception of the business school's brand identity and how it aligned with their identity. As noted by one of the senior academics below:

Participant A7: "When I moved here it was because I'm a very entrepreneurial academic. I felt that this was the right environment for me to kind of you know develop initiatives for my way of working which does not necessarily fit with other business schools. This business school is the youngest faculty of the university college so formally speaking I think it's 18 years old something like that. In a way, its still operating as a start-up and is definitely more open to innovation, more open to experimenting with things more open to fail than the college so that's what basically what attracted me to the business school. As I said I'm very entrepreneurial, so I feel very comfortable here because of that".

Employees pointed out the alignment of their actions with the brand values when discussing their identification as commented below by a manager in the careers department:

Participant A9: "I think we were about supporting the students and I think the way......we've sort of, the way the values are sort of expressed about, trying to benefit business and society. I think that's the way that I sort of react with students".

A reason provided for the alignment of their values was the acting out of those values by senior management and the corresponding action taken by them. This instigated a belief in the brand messages and values that were communicated. This strengthened their identification and helped them perform better in their roles when interacting with other stakeholders such as students and other businesses. The comments below from one of the participants highlight these views:

Participant A1: "And I think as a business school, the mindset is quite open and I guess we think like a business as well. Also, in the way that we can do things differently. We are constantly reviewing and seeing what technology we can use and how we can use that not just to implement it but improve our practices in terms of what we do. and for me that that really resonates. I think the statements and what we say who we are as a business school is something that I can speak to prospective students about and I believe what I'm saying"

Quite a few of the participants discussed their pride in working for the business school when talking about their identification with the brand and the school's values. A director at one of the departments said:

Participant A8: "So for me as an employee I wanted to work somewhere I feel I would be proud to work at. I feel like that alignment with both the college and the Business School."

When discussing their association and belonging to the brand and the business school, an importance was also placed on being a part of the more infamous university college brand. Those who identified with the business school also expressed pride in working and believed in the brand values of the school. The excerpts below point to that:

Participant A8: "So the college is a great brand to have on your CV for argument sake. a great brand to be part of"

Participant A1: So generally, I think that this is a great business school to work for because it is part of the college."

The success of the business school was quoted as important while noting that their department and team's success was related to it. The department's goals were related to the corporate brand goals. SRH from the career department said:

Participant A8: "I want to see the business school succeed. I want my team to succeed and then my wider department to succeed and I suppose that's aligned to the growth sort of goals of the business school".

5.1.4 Employee Engagement

The engagement of employees with their role was impacted and, in some cases, enhanced due to the rebranding strategy that was implemented. There was a better understanding of why certain corporate brand objectives were made and pursued in departments as one employee from the alumni team commented:

Participant A2: "I feel much more engaged now that our team objectives are directly linked to the School strategy and objectives – I can see how my efforts input into the wider scheme of things and why we do what we do."

The rebranding also bought in better alignment of the brand values with the brand identity which affected the employee's commitment to their role positively leading to consistency in what was communicated to external stakeholders. As noted here:

Participant A2: "I feel there is a renewed commitment from us all. I think the values and visual identity are now aligned, so it is much easier to support it and get behind it and promote to our external stakeholders".

The commitment of another participant to his role and the organisation had increased every year since the rebranding because of the various brand related initiatives that he could start post rebranding. This aligned well with his entrepreneurial nature and he reported thus:

Participant A7: "I think for me it's a very easy answer. I think it (commitment) went up every year".

Interviewer: "Can you explain why?"

Participant A7: "Absolutely. As I said I'm very entrepreneurial in what I do. I've been able to basically launch many initiatives at the Business School. Some of them made a pretty good impact in what we do. And so I'm proud of that".

There was greater emotional support and behavioural engagement with the business school branding efforts because of the rebranding. Employees didn't struggle to engage with these activities as they understood the branding messages and even went the extra mile to support them. The excerpt below communicates that:

Participant A2: "I am always very open to adopting new ideas and making them work. The marketing team rolled out a new social media campaign last year and I was very supportive of this. I think we were one of the few teams who really went the extra mile to support this – finding relevant case studies, alumni profiles and spending money on new branded merchandise to support the campaign. I used my own initiative on the campaign to promote it to alumni resulting in some great alumni engagement".

While discussing engagement the loyalty of employees to the organisation was mentioned. As was said by an academic:

Participant A7: "So I think I'm definitely very motivated after 5 years I'm still very happy to be here at the business school".

5.1.5 Employee Buy-in

The buy-in of employees is an important aspect of this study. The questions asked during the interview was about the employee's buy-in to the rebranding and the factors that influenced their buy-in. Based on the literature two types of buy-in were identified: cognitive and emotional. Both have been discussed here.

Most of the participants that were interviewed were able to describe the business school's brand identity. The school's internal communication and the involvement of the employees in the rebranding process in providing their views on the rebranding were cited as two of the reasons. One of the management employees said this:

Interviewer: "and what do you think facilitated that buy-in process?"

Participant A1: "I think it was it was always about communication and I think the rebranding was quite a big project, but I think it was well communicated across the board and I think it needed to have certain people who were fully promoting that, the brand, so that you need allies behind it in order to promote it."

The participants comprehension of the brand messaging and its relevance to their role in the business school was evident in their discussion. One of the participant's said how the rebranding strategy and the aim to create a unique brand identity made his job easier:

Participant A5: "From a branding perspective, I am interested in how it makes us more attractive to... industry essentially how it makes us more relevant, how to differentiate ourselves and also with the branding it made my job easier".

Another participant commented how communicating the brand values came easily for her as she had internalised those values over a period and believed in the brand. She said:

Participant A1: "the brand and the business school is something that I believe in and I want to talk to people about it so yes, the brand is something that actually comes quite easily because of that reason".

There was a sense of pride among some employees when the brand or the business school achieved something. Especially when, it was related to their role or they had something to do with it. One participant stated:

Participant A8: "I think I want to see the business school succeed I want my team to succeed and then my wider department to succeed and I suppose that's aligned to the growth sort of goals of the business school. I do feel a sense of pride when something good happens or something is achieved as a collective."

There were quite a few positive responses to the corporate rebranding strategy, and many agreed that the rebranding of the business school brand was necessary. It is therefore important to look further into what influenced their buy-in or the lack of it.

A few factors were identified from the analysis that influenced the employee's buy-in. A frequently mentioned factor for the buy-in from employees was their involvement in the rebranding process. This was a key aspect in the rebranding process of the business school and in the decision making. Employee involvement made the process inclusive and collaborative, and it had a positive effect on the employee's perception.

The main purpose of involving employees in the process was to collect their views on the corporate brand's identity, vision, mission, and values. This helped create a sense of ownership of the renewed corporate brand. The providing of views and any feedback was facilitated through various workshops and departmental meetings. Decisions were made about the brand identity and then communicated back to employees. Most of the participants quoted their involvement as a key reason for their buy-in to the rebrand of the business school brand.

Various participants said this:

Participant A7: "so I think it was collaborative as a process and personally speaking I felt engaged I felt that my opinion was valued and probably I think others also had a similar impression"

Participant A9: "But I think there's an interesting point here because I was involved in helping with the messaging. I was involved with the feedback into that. et cetera, et cetera. But yes, I feel I've got buy in because I help shape it"

Participant A5: "So I was part of, I guess the stakeholder analysis side of it. and then quite very much involved just for my opinion. No creativity. I don't create anything. but it was just that I was quite involved in terms of giving my opinion and the challenges I face".

Another factor that contributed to the employees buy-in was their belief in the brand. An employee's belief in the brand represents their perception that the business school acted on what was communicated about the brand. This included implementing policies and taking steps to actualise the brand values of the corporate brand at a corporate and departmental level. This produced a sense of alignment with what was communicated and what was acted upon in the minds of employees. This perception facilitated the buy-in from employees. A participant quoted this:

Participant A1: "And I think as a business school, the mindset is quite open and I guess we think like a business as well. Also, in the way that we think and how we do things differently. we are constantly reviewing and seeing what technology we can use and how we can use that not just to implement it but improve our practices in terms of what we do. and for me that that really resonates. and I think the statements and what we say who we are as a business school is something that I can speak to prospective students about and I believe what I'm saying".

An important contributor to the understanding that employees expressed of the brand's identity was the effective communication employed throughout the rebranding process. But this led to employees understanding what the brand identity meant overall and what it meant for them in their roles and work. A manager commented:

Participant A8: "I think I've bought into it I think it makes sense to me. I think we know who we want to be. I think we are slowly moving towards that mission".

An interesting factor in this process was the mention of the drive and interest from the senior management such as the Dean to make the rebranding a success. There was a strong support from the leadership. A sense of significance and value was imparted to the rebranding process and the notion that it wasn't just another marketing exercise. A participant said:

Participant A8: "I feel like its and I'm not saying that just because I work here but I feel like that is more of a drive to act on some of those things we are talking about. And more sort of passionate senior leadership buy-in into what that means. And how to make it happen".

An important factor that stopped many employees from resisting this process of change was their agreement that the rebranding was a necessity. Most of the participants agreed that the existing identity of the business school was outdated and not distinct from the university college. One of the participants stated:

Participant A1: "I think it was important to modernize the business school. Bring it into kind of I think those key points about Technology Innovation Entrepreneurship that I mentioned before I think, we had to be a school that you know you can talk about it, but if you're not doing something about it then you know there's a bit false advertising I suppose, but I think definitely the school needed to be rebrand and I think that yeah, they did it in a in a good way".

A few of the participants especially those that represented a few academics had different views about their buy-in to the rebranding. One participant clearly stated that it's unlikely that academics would buy-in to the rebrand.

Participant A4: "and it's difficult to get academics to buy-into this stuff anyway. They don't tend to think in those sorts of corporate terms, and I think things like the brand and the website redesign, all those sorts of things… the marketing function within the school is a very, very important function. But in the absence of buy-in from academics and proper contribution from academics, they can end up driving it to perhaps a greater extent than they themselves might wish".

A reason suggested by the same participant and another academic was the lack of involvement with such branding activities in general and in this case the rebranding process. Involvement wasn't mandatory and was a choice which many academics didn't exercise. One of these academics said he chose to be involved because of his hierarchical position and interest:

Participant A7: "So, it was you know up to the faculty to join those meetings or not. So personally speaking because I'm in the senior management of the business school I kind of you know I wanted to be involved."

A participant who worked with other academics in a senior administrative role felt that there wasn't a necessity for him to buy-in to the rebranding as it was mainly aimed at the external stakeholders.

Participant A4: "I do see the brand and very much as an external facing thing. And my role is not an external facing role. You know, I'm, you know, a back office person".

5.1.6 Case Summary

A summary of the key findings is presented in table 5.1. Case A participants communicated the importance of employee involvement, and the proactive role of the university's leadership (senior management), early in the corporate rebranding process. This contributed to the employee's perception of the corporate rebranding process in a positive light contributing to a

preliminary level of buy-in of the strategy and the new corporate brand. The internal brand communication contributed to the employees understanding of the new corporate brand allowing them to apply it to their role and jobs with adequate clarity. This enhanced the employee's engagement in their role.

Table 5. 1: Summary of Key Findings from Case Study A

Key Findings	Thematic Category and Associations
Workshops, staff meetings and online communication was an important medium to keep employees updated, increase brand understanding, and involved in the process	Internal Brand Communication
The employees knowledgeable of the brand identity and its values were able to buy-in to the new brand	Internal Brand Communication _ Employee Buy-in
The new brand identity and the corresponding branding activities and initiatives post implementation refreshed the commitment from employees	Internal Brand Communication _ Employee Engagement
Employees who comprehended the brand messaging and identity were able to do their jobs better	
Employees who comprehended the brand messaging and identity were able to do their jobs better	Internal Brand Communication _ Employee Identification
The business school's success was important to employees who identified with the university	
Employees that identified with the brand values were able to communicate the brand confidently to others	
The internal brand communication activities caused employees to internalise the brand values and act in alignment with them	
Employees who identified with the brand expressed their pride when the business school achieved success	
Emerging Findings	**Emerging Themes**
Employees that were involved in the rebranding process understood the brand identity and were able to express it	Employee Involvement _ Employee Buy-in
Employees that were involved in the rebranding process bought-in to the rebranding and the new brand identity	
Employees that perceived the brand values were acted upon such as by leadership bought-in to the new brand identity	Role of Leadership _ Employee Buy-in
Employees valued the leadership drive and support of the rebranding strategy	

The employee's comprehensive understanding of the corporate brand also helped them act in alignment with the new corporate identity confidently communicating it to others. This affected the employee's identification with the new corporate brand and its success was important to them. An in-depth insight was thus gained on the importance of employee involvement, role

of leadership, internal brand communication activities in the employee's engagement, identification and buy-in of the new corporate brand.

5.2 CASE B

In the higher education sector, competition among universities to recruit student began to increase in the wake of new funding policies by the UK government. Due to the various changes in the marketplace, University B decided to rebrand to create a corporate brand identity that really represented who they were. This was done on the eve of celebrating 25 years of having its status changed to that of a university. The whole process from developing the brand narrative to the visual identity and then the launch lasted six to eight months. The following themes communicates what happened during the process and the employee's perceptions and response to the rebranding.

5.2.1 Corporate Rebranding - Internal Strategy and Process

The corporate rebranding strategy internally consisted of developing the brand messaging, narrative, and the visual identity. In the first phase of the rebranding there were in-depth consultations with employees and other external stakeholders about what the university represented. One of the participants from corporate communications said:

Participant B2: "We developed the brand narrative, the proposition and the messages through a consultation process with employees."

The consultations were done by organising townhall meetings, having conversations with employees and online surveys. Conversations revolved around who they were as a university and what they represented. The feedback collected was collated and then a second round of consultations were held to discuss and show what came out of the first consultation. The following statements were made by a participant from corporate communications:

Participant B2: "There were structured peer to peer conversations and town halls, and there were consultations done with staff."

"We then got those themes. We then had another consultation. It said this is what we took, we think you've told us."

"We also did online surveys as well so that we could reach as many people as possible."

A similar process was carried out for developing the visual identity whereby the brand messages that were formed were used to decide on the visual identity as noted by the same participant:

Participant B2: "That's what we did with the brand narrative bit. Then we did it all again with the visual bit"

"We kind of said, right here is some, here's some visual themes. Tell us what you think and then we'll know through that. And we asked them a number of, you know, kind of like quite pertinent questions in terms of actually you've told us the university is x, x, x, which of these images articulate that for you best".

It was interesting to note that the consultation process in the rebranding pointed out a bottom to top approach of decision making as desired by the senior management. A participant with a senior role within corporate communication conveyed this and the thinking process behind the consultative exercise with employees:

Participant B2: "So, when we had the brand narrative and the brand messages. We took that together, we whittled it down to a manageable set so that we could go back to the second part of the consultation with, but then that went from the consultation up to the executive board, it didn't come the other way, if that makes sense".

5.2.1.1 Employee Involvement

The involvement of employees in the process was perceived as unusual but an important and fundamental part in the rebranding process. It was said:

Participant B2: "So, we did something very unusual is that we consulted with staff over the visual identity, which an organization would not normally do".

Participant B1: "And I think the key thing was that…, it was all about taking the employees with you. That was fundamental to the rebrand process".

However, the medium of input into the consultation process varied among employees. It was reported that managers were involved in the meetings and discussions so their input into the decisions and other suggestions could be taken, while subordinates were involved in surveys. There were also apparent disagreements in these meetings as one participant reported:

Participant B3: "There was a survey around choosing which logos, what would be the best. I didn't personally go along but there were focus groups that my manager went to and he was

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saying that it was really interesting because they were taking views from everybody and some members of staff were really angry about certain things and others were really on board. So the process was carried out about a year before it was implemented".

Interviewer: "Did you personally get a chance to input into the process?".
Participant B3: "Only from a survey".

The consultation with employees in the rebranding process was holistic in that view, opinions and feedback were collected for both the brand messages and the visual identity. This communicated to employees that their involvement was important and, that their opinions were valued even though the final design or colour chosen wasn't what they had voted for. It was reported thus by one participant:

Participant B4: "I remember like the consultation period. Where they would debate and went out and did a lot of colour surveying, staff opinions, feelings about this concept. I think the one that eventually won was not the one I voted for. but I think I did enjoy the kind of…, I felt like we were consulted you know as the present staff. I felt like they did kind of value the opinions of staff and so you know I felt involved in the process to an extent".

5.2.2 Internal Brand Communication

There were various internal communication activities used within the university. The activities and mediums of communication used in the rebranding process from the beginning to end are discussed. During the initial stages, the university used several staff meetings, town halls, focus groups and surveys to consult with employees and collect their views on what the corporate brand represented and should represent. The decisions taken or results of surveys were communicated through newsletters. A few participants said:

Participant B4: "there were lots of kind of focus groups emails newsletters updates"

Participant B3: "So, we, throughout the process had, we used our staff news and our Vice Chancellor regularly does town halls".

The intermediate period of the rebranding process began with the completion of the decisions taken on the brand narrative and messaging. Once the brand messaging and narrative was decided, the university's marketing and corporate communications department worked with and through brand champions in various departments and faculties to relay brand messages and be custodians of the brand. The brand champions were selected by the deans of the various

faculties and departments. This was conveyed by two participants from the marketing and communications team:

Interviewer: "When you had the brand champions, how did you select them? Did you select them in a particular way?"

Participant B1: "The faculties selected them"

Participant B2: "We just, went out to the Dean of each faculty or the Director of each service and said Pick your champ".

The brand champions were placed as the gatekeeper of the brand in those faculties. One of the participants said this about her role as the brand champion:

Participant B4: "I got brought in as a brand champion at that point as well (rebranding). They wanted to pick certain staff members in key faculties in departments to be like a kind of the gatekeeper of the brand or someone that helps to implement a rebrand".

The purpose of having brand champions were to help the department streamline communications through them and so that every departmental or faculty employee had one brand representative to answer any queries. A participant said:

Participant B4: "…attending the brand champion meetings getting the updates and then taking it back to my department and relaying back the information that was shared or discussed or any tasks that needed doing"

The brand champions also had the responsibility to ensure any marketing materials and other literature used were on-brand.

Participant B4: "So one of the tasks was to do an audit for materials that we had, so trying to get my staff members on board to look around the offices look around their workspaces. Gathering a lot of content and data like where the brand was and where it needs to be removed from".

5.2.2.1 Internal Brand Communication (Post Rebranding Period)

The post rebranding period covers the period after the launch of the new corporate brand identity. During this phase, the corporate communications and branding department had to ensure that any information that was communicated through its website or other mediums that could be accessed by students and other stakeholders were on-brand. The communications and branding team then set out to create a marketing portal that had all the updates and information

on the identity of the new corporate brand. This platform was also used to communicate updates about the corporate brand identity to the brand champions. It was a valuable resource as communicated here by one participant:

Participant B1: "B2 was involved with launching the marketing portal, which is a key component of branding in terms of its delivery and its access really. So that we have got, you know, a digital solution to providing everybody with the photographs that they need but also for them understanding the brand, it's a place where they can go to get the right logo. It's a place they can go to get briefing forms for photography, also the place they can design their own posters because I've got all these templates, but they can just drop in photographs and texts".

The brand champions became an invaluable resource for the communications and branding team to regularly communicate key updates on the brand to their respective faculties. The brand champions also met with the communications and branding team regularly. It was said by a participant from the communications team:

Participant B1: "We regularly get the brand champions together to kind of show them how it works. And the key to that was sort of always making them feel that they were at the start of it and not the end of it. So, bringing them on board really early with what we were doing before we told somebody else".

However, it was noted that not every employee had access to the brand champions. It is possible that the employees they were responsible for were possibly restricted or their role wasn't widely advertised within the university. A participant said this when asked about brand champions:

Participant B3: "I heard the word but no I don't think I've had a meeting or anything like that with a brand champion".

Although the brand champions were regularly updated with developments to the corporate brand through meetings and online mediums, some employees only received a few emails intermittently. This was usually to make announcements or give instructions but there was not a regular stream of communication on the new corporate brand identity.

Interviewer: "Now that it's complete was there any sort of communication to yourself and to your department about what has changed and what next and so on?"

Participant B3: "Not really. kind of. There were communications but it was just kind of blanket communications explaining why they went with the logo they did and then communications around how to use the brand the photos, background that was sent out separately with contacts we already had. so yeah, it didn't feel like anything too structured came through from that".

5.2.3 Employee Identification

In the interviews when discussing identification, it was evident that since the rebranding, the university brand had become more important in the mind of employees. Employees responded with pride in working for the university when asked about their identification with the brand as commented by an employee here:

Participant B1: "I'm really proud to say I work for the University so that says a lot about the brand"

The rebranding brought in structure and a system to how the brand was communicated and how it looked to external stakeholders. Employees began to perceive that the brand now had a corporate feel to it, but that had also caused some to not accept it completely. They appreciated the fact the brand still had a focus on values that were dear to them such as its focus on the community but, it had also evolved and possibly become less genuine. An employee from the student's union stated:

Interviewer: "are you able to identify with what the university brand is now? from a personal point of view?"

Participant B3: "I am. I think that community feel that they are going for is relatable and positive."

... what kind of gets me that is that corporateness that comes from the values and the way they are".

Interviewer: "is that because you knew what the university brand was before and now that you've seen the changes, do you think what was before was kind of better in some way?"

Participant B3: " Yes, aspects of it felt more honest and it just felt like who they were. But I don't know if that's just because the changes are always going to be different and they are on a different path now".

The new brand values that were communicated had a corporate feel to it as mentioned above. The feeling of genuineness according to some had departed but there were still values that they

could identify with. In discussing the alignment of their values with the brand's, responses were mixed. One employee felt that their identification with the brand had boundaries in that it was work related but, when it came to aligning it to their own personal values, it felt a bit far-fetched. The participant said:

Participant B4: "it's very much my workplace. it is something I am passionate about and I will you know advocate the university all night long if I could. But it definitely does not encroach my personal bounds".

However, the above response could also have been attributed to the employee's dislike of aspects of their role. The employees' sense of belonging to the university and the brand was expressed by using the expressions of 'my' and 'we' in the discourse. It would also seem that the rebranding and the new brand hierarchy within the university facilitated the sense that although there were different departments and faculties with their own identities, everyone belonged to the university. It reduced the silo mentality of faculties in some respect. One of the participants said this:

Participant B4: "And the way that the hierarchy of the brand is where like the other faculties have colours and we're all under the same umbrella. It does make you feel like you have got something bigger now. But you still have the kind of departmentalised identity as well. Yeah, I would say that the I do feel like I can identify with the rebrand. Now I do, than previously… initially it was a little bit of a shock".

5.2.4 Employee Engagement

The engagement of employees with the brand was identified in how the participants related it to their role in the university. As discussed above the university decided to have brand champions who were knowledgeable of the brand and were updated with the developments to the brand identity. They would, besides ensuring that other colleagues were following brand guidelines, also go as far as defending the brand outside the workplace. One of the participants who said she was highly engaged was also a brand champion and said:

Participant B4: "I consider myself to be highly engaged to the point where i would defend the brand outside of my workplace. on social media sometimes. so yeah really highly engaged. highly involved. Almost kind of brand policing in a way. So again based on my role it's my job to find out when people are making mistakes within the brand help them advice them correct them when they are doing stuff to make sure that everything is on-brand".

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The commitment of an employee to the work they do, and the corporate brand was another aspect discussed when the participants were asked about their engagement. There was commitment and greater engagement among the participants that were involved with the brand on a regular basis as part of their role. A participant said this about their commitment:

Participant B4: "Made me feel quite committed personally. It's nice to oversee the brand for a few years now to drive it across campus and just now we're kind of seeing a bit coming through all the nooks and crannies in the university it makes me feel even more committed to see it through to the end make sure that the previous brand is gone kind of like the job is never done until the Old brand is still out there. I'm committed to helping incorporate that brand identity and then hopefully take it further in the next year so that's ready to adapt it and change it a little bit and make it again a bit more fresh so I'm excited to see that out as well".

In their roles participants were also willing to go the extra mile by ensuring that any brand queries were answered, or brand misconceptions were clarified.

Participant B4: "I do go above and beyond defending the brand outside of work sometimes as well especially when other colleagues really don't get it I like to send strings on social media".

However, it was also noted that some employees felt less engaged with the brand because of the corporate feel that came about as part of creating the new brand identity and the management of it.

Interviewer: "Do you think the rebranding and the changes that came as a result of the rebranding has helped you in your engagement with your role?, Has it made you feel more or less engaged or the same?"

Participant B3: "I would say oh that's a tough one. In certain aspects it has. Things like when we are putting up communications together it's made it a lot easier to relate to as an employee… in terms of kind of the corporate side how things are managed, I may disengage a little bit".

The same participant also reported how the new brand identity had lost its honesty in its representation.

Participant B3: "Yeah aspects of it felt more honest and it just felt like who they were. But I don't know if that's just because the changes are always going to be different and they are on

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a different path now. Because I was a student of the university as well so I did have a lot of exposure to the previous brand".

The new brand identity did help individuals and teams that engaged with the brand as part of their role to think and work synchronously but, it did not affect their motivation. It was reported that:

Participant B3: "In my day-to-day role I wouldn't say it's made a massive difference to my personal motivation but it has made a difference to our team as a whole and the effort we put into what we do".

5.2.5 Employee Buy-in

None of the participants objected to the rebranding and it was considered a positive change for the university. There was an agreement. All of them had bought in to the rebranding as stated by one of the participants below:

Participant B3: "I think I have bought into it overall. yeah I think overall it was a positive change".

Employee buy-in was found to be influenced by a few factors during the implementation of the corporate rebranding strategy internally and some of those factors contributed to the strength of employees' buy-in.

The vice chancellor of the university supported the corporate rebranding strategy and had an important part in driving the process internally. This helped the other managers especially in the marketing and branding department. One of the participants said this:

Participant B2: "And what I would say that I think was really so encouraging about that is that it didn't come from us as a project it came from the Vice Chancellor? He was like, "I want that we go on this together". And that he was absolutely passionate about that".

However, the vice chancellor's support was not felt wide enough by other employees as stated by one of them:

Participant B3: "I think if it came from the VC maybe that genuine side of things would be there. I don't know if he has led it through".

The senior management especially the vice chancellor played an important part in driving the rebranding process and it was decided early on that all the employees would be consulted in deciding the new brand identity. One manager said this:

Participant B1: "...from the outset, it was never ever an autocratic decision. It was always going to be a real, this is something that you need to aim as staff."

The involvement of employees in the process made the rebranding a collaborative process and this led to buy-in from them. The rationale behind it was to allow employees to take ownership for what would be eventually decided. As expressed by a manager:

Participant B1: "It was making them feel a sense of ownership over the final outcome, because for them to be on board, they needed to feel listened to, but included in the decision making"

The type of involvement of employees varied. It appeared that managers attended more meetings and focus groups whilst subordinates gave their input through surveys as stated previously. A participant stated:

Participant B3: "I didn't personally go along but there were focus groups that my manager went to.."

Interviewer: Did you personally get a chance to input into the process?

Participant B3: "Only from a survey… around choosing which logos what would be the best…"

Further, it was also noted that if there was an equity in the opportunities given to involve employees in the rebranding process, the strength of their buy-in would have been higher. This could also be followed up with regular communication and feeds from management on what they were trying to accomplish with the brand and how employees fit into that post rebranding. A participant mentioned that:

Interviewer: "Is there anything that could help you sort of increase you're buy-in to what the university wants to communicate through its brand?"

Participant B3: "I think more involvement would be nice. So even just like a regular once a quarter update or where they are and what they're trying to achieve and how we fit into that that would be quite interesting and helpful".

The use of brand champions to communicate about the brand, to answer queries and support others in being on-brand was an important factor in the buy-in of employees. This was especially true for those that were selected as brand champions as pointed out in this excerpt:

Interviewer: "what do you think contributed to you to your buying-in to the identity of the brand as it is today?"

Participant B4: "I think being brought in as the brand champion definitely. Like the constant updates being informed made you feel like you are part of it. ……So yeah just being a constant part and seeing the progress you know and maybe now as well like in the job, I mean I still feel like I'm overseeing the brand."

The university thus gave employees the feeling that they not only involved them in the rebranding process but also in implementing it across the university once the decisions were made. A participant said this:

Participant B4: "It wasn't just you were consulted, and it was decided. it was like well we have decided but now we need your help to change the identity of the brand all over the campus".

One issue identified though was that the brand champion didn't talk to everybody and inevitably some employees were left out as mentioned by a participant:

Interviewer: "Did you have any interactions with anyone called a brand champion?"

Participant B3: "I heard the word but, no I don't think I've had a meeting or anything like that with a brand champion".

There was a consensus that this rebranding was a positive change for the university. Employees perceived that the previous brand had become outdated and that it needed a refresh. It was said:

Participant B3: ...But it was a positive one I think it was something that needed to happen. And coming out of the other side it was a good thing to have happened…I think overall it was a positive change."

Participant B4: "The previous brand had a long history of being a polytechnic as well so it was time to kind of just say, you know we're trying to make an impact here and it was long needed and especially with the recent achievements we've had.".

5.2.6 Case Summary

A summary of the key findings is presented in table 5.2. Participants of Case B communicated the importance of employee involvement and the leadership's role in helping them perceive the corporate rebranding strategy in a positive light. This contributed to their preliminary buy-in of the new corporate brand and was an emerging finding from the data. Internal communication was essential for employees to develop a sound understanding of the new corporate brand and identity. Assigning brand champions was an important step in establishing communication lines at a department level and, to oversee the assimilation of the new corporate brand identity.

Table 5. 2: Summary of Key Findings from Case Study B

Key Findings	Thematic Categories and Associations
Focus groups and surveys can be effective in collecting input from employees about the new brand	Internal Brand Communication _ Employee Buy-in
Internal Brand Communication through newsletters, emails and townhalls are effective means to update employees on the rebranding process and build understanding	
Internal Brand Communication activities with the help of brand champions positively influences the employee's buy-in	
Employees who have brand-based roles feel more committed and highly engaged with the brand and their work	Internal Brand Communication _ Employee Engagement
An employee's engagement with their work is positively influenced when the brand identity is communicated	
Employees who have brand-based roles feel more committed and highly engaged with the brand and their work	Employee Engagement
Employees that identify with the brand values express their pride in working for the university and the brand	Employee Identification
Employees who identify with the university also feel a sense of belonging to the university and brand	
Employees that agree that the rebranding is a positive change are more likely to buy-in to the new brand	Employee Buy-in
Emerging Findings	**Emerging Themes and Associations**
Involving employees in developing the new brand identity is perceived as an important part of the rebranding process	Employee Involvement _ Employee Buy-in
Employees involved in the rebranding process are more likely to buy-in to the rebranding and the new brand identity	
Employees who perceive the role of leadership in driving the rebranding as significant are more likely to buy-in to the new brand	Role of Leadership _ Employee Buy-in

Employees that had brand based roles expressed a sense of commitment and pride to the new corporate brand resulting in their engagement. Employees also felt a sense of belonging. In-depth insight was gained on the importance of employee involvement, role of leadership, internal brand communication activities in the employee's engagement, identification and buy-in of the new corporate brand.

5.3 CASE C

This university embarked on a corporate rebranding journey that lasted between 8-12 months, after deciding that their rich heritage and history alone wasn't enough to keep the university attractive to their external stakeholders such as students and industry and maintain its position

in the league tables. The higher education sector had gone through some changes because of factors such as increase in tuition fees, changes to the regulations on recruiting students and the decrease in the overall student intake. In its attempt to remain competitive the university decided to rebrand and form an identity relevant to its audience. The various faculties within the university also had their own identity and that needed to be addressed. Hence it was decided that the corporate brand identity must represent the whole university while also allowing each faculty to have a sub identity connected to its core brand identity. It was the right time to refresh the existing brand's visual identity. With the joining of a new vice chancellor, a new 10-year vision was developed, and the corporate brand had to reflect what the university was conceived to look like in the future. The new brand identity and brand aesthetics was meant to be unique and distinct.

The following themes were identified in the rebranding that was implemented. It should however be noted that the two participants interviewed from this university were both managers. Hence some of the perspectives presented below are from an implementation point of view.

5.3.1 Corporate Rebranding - Internal Strategy and Process

The rebranding of the corporate brand and the formation of the new brand identity was a phased process. In the first phase the emphasis was on aligning the 10-year vision and the brand identity as reported here by one of the participants in marketing:

Participant C2: "...it was actually a vision first and that linked into the brand because of all that, the terminology starts to come through in the brand".

As part of the process, the rebranding of the university brand's visual identity had a central theme which then allowed the faculties and other departments to create sub-identities. A participant said this:

Participant C2: "And then we've got the academic schools. Now we've got six schools that we'll be looking at. They'll hold the corporate brands, but they'll have something like an accent colour or something that differentiates them from each other".

Right from the outset, the rebranding process was envisaged to be an event where everyone in the university is involved rather than being solely driven by the marketing department. It was purposed by the senior management (vice chancellor) that the university should take pride in what was achieved and that it was not going to be a top-down decision. A participant from the marketing department said:

Participant C1: "I think at every stage there has been a real focus on it (rebranding) not just being something that's imposed or that is written by the marketing department. This is very much an institutional thing and I think our Vice Chancellor's been very clear about that. It's not just a project, a vanity project. It's something that that's owned by the entire institution that everyone should be proud of."

5.3.1.1 Employee Involvement

The involvement of employees was fundamental to the rebranding process. There were various workshops and focus groups to consult with employees and get feedback on the progress made. Employees were sent regular updates about the decisions taken on aspects of the brand identity as it was being developed. A participant commented:

Participant C1: "So yeah, there's, there's been a lot of the kind of workshops, meetings where we've been developing particular elements of it. We've been holding focus groups across lots of different stakeholder groups."

Through the employee involvement and consultation process valuable data and feedback was gathered about the brand values, messaging and the visual identity as stated here by a participant:

Participant C1: "briefing in the project to, to start to pull together the brand proposition and the values and the messaging and the visual identity"

5.3.2 Internal Brand Communication

The internal brand communication activities undertaken in the university can again be separated as those activities conducted at the start and during the rebranding process and those that continued after the launch of the new corporate brand.

One of the ways employee views and feedback was collected was with the help of workshops. These workshops were also recorded and stored digitally on the intranet site for employees that could not attend to access at any time.

Participant C1: "there there's been a number of workshops."

Participant C2: ".... then on our internet site…………. people could go for information where all the workshops were stored. So, if people missed it, everything was stored."

A web page about the corporate brand and the changes to it were published on the university's intranet page.

Participant C1: "There's an internet page that, highlights all of the key areas of the vision, the work that's going towards, towards it as well."

At the initiative of the new vice chancellor an email address to specifically answer questions around the rebranding and the new brand identity was created. A participant stated this:

Participant C2: "There was an inbox email, a VC inbox, that collated questions, that they could invite them. We did a number of FAQ responses to other questions."

Another approach used during the corporate rebranding process to communicate with employees was sending weekly updates about the progress of the rebranding activities in the form of a newsletter from the vice chancellor as reported here:

Participant C2: "The VC started writing a weekly newsletter herself, that started to incorporate updates according to the vision and the brand."

There was also a fortnightly newsletter that went out specifically dealing with the vision for the brand and the university.

Participant C2: "And then we have fortnightly communications newsletters that went out that always had a headline under vision..."

5.3.2.1 Internal Brand Communication (Implementation and Post Rebranding Stage)

Soon after a new corporate brand visual identity, brand values and messaging were decided the marketing and communications team initiated digital branding campaigns aimed at both internal and external stakeholders. Brand videos that explained the brand values and associated it with the visual identity especially, its link with the prestige and heritage of the university was broadcasted. This helped the communications and marketing team embellish the meaning of the brand values and messaging as stated here by a participant from the team:

Participant C1: "And I think that we've made videos about our alumni recently and we've really got across those brand values. We have really got across that kind of overarching proposition as well in those showing the kind of impact of them. And I think that's one area that we can, from a kind of marketing point of view, really kind of create that kind of engagement with a staff".

5.3.3 Employee Identification

Identification with the brand identity, its values and what it represented was prevalent in the discussion with the participants. One of the participants mentioned that working with the

university helped them accomplish things that they were passionate about and be involved in projects they were interested in. The participant said:

Participant C1: "I think that passion for me... I've really been able to kind of make a difference with the passion I have got for what I do here,...there's scope for me to, to kind of get involved with projects and to really kind of put myself forward because of the type of institution that we are."

There were three brand values: passion, courage, and diversity, formed because of the rebranding and one participant reported they could identify with all three and it was aligned to their personal values as mentioned here:

Participant C1: "I think all three values actually I can identify with…"

A participant described how they were able to live the brand values of 'passion', 'courage' and 'diversity' through what they were able to do and how it made them feel. It was pointed out that here in this university those values were not just on paper, but it was something that could be felt and acted on. A detailed answer was given by the participant when asked about their identification with the values and interestingly the some of the values appeared in the narrative. The participant said:

Participant C1: "I think I'm having courage as well. And from a marketing point of view it's such a competitive landscape at the moment and being given the permission almost to, to be a bit more courageous and to try things a little bit different and try to do things that other universities aren't doing. It has been a real motivation for me. I think a lot of other places that I've worked, you are kind of limited by institutional values that, that are quite old fashioned. Whereas I think what we've got is a kind of a green light really to try and be different and trying to push the boundaries a bit.."

Another participant similarly echoed that the brand values that were formulated after the rebranding process was something she could identify with. It mirrored some of the deeply held personal values that she believed in as reported by that participant here:

Participant C2: "...this aligns to a lot of what I fight for outside of work as well. And so, I can do that through my organization and spend the time here where we're aligning everything in and outside of work".

5.3.4 Employee Engagement

As the participants were managers, the views shared here are about how they were driving brand engagement in the university and amongst their subordinates after the rebranding process was complete.

One of the ways was by acting out the brand values and at the same time expecting the same from the employees. It was expected that the employees would be able to follow through with the same action as was seen in the managers.

Participant C2: "...what I've learned over the last eight months is being really clear of what are the skillsets that enable people to thrive in this environment, not make them feel stressed. And then you've got to communicate that in, in your kind of manual that this is the organization we want to be mirroring... You know, people at the beginning people were saying we're changing all the time. And I was like, but that is the world. We have got to mirror that internally. There are things that will be stable throughout, but we've got to create a culture here that will be continually changing".

5.3.5 Employee Buy-in

In analysing the employee buy-in of the participants the narrative focused more on the what influenced their buy-in. These findings are presented below.

A few factors were identified as responsible for the buy-in among employees. One of the factors was the involvement of employees in the rebranding process. This allowed them to develop a sense of ownership of what was finally formulated as the new brand identity. One of the participants said:

Participant C1: "Yeah, I think it was really about, kind of open communication and the opportunity to, feedback and participate in the discussions."

"...Now that we're starting to roll it out, they (other employees) do feel, I think they feel more ownership of the brand because they had a part in it".

There was also a perception of commitment from the management to include as many employees as possible in the rebranding process as expressed by a participant:

Participant C1: "We were fairly. fairly regular with talking about it with showing people the progress. And I think that that definitely works in our favour because it shows that there was a commitment from the institution for it".

Another factor that played a part in employees embracing the new brand identity was the decision by senior management to keep their heritage and reputation in view when making decisions about the new identity. This decision resonated with employees and led to their buy-in as reported here:

Participant C1: "...whereas what we've done is very openly and very clearly said we want to embrace our heritage. And I think a lot of people naturally got on board with that because it kind of makes a lot of sense."

Another factor that was emphasised by the participants in the discussion was their necessity to ensure that the new brand values and the identity were being lived out. A need to guard what was created and to see that employees that you were responsible for or that you worked with were on-brand. The living out of the brand values needed to start at the top but then its effect was expected to be felt in other faculties and departments as pointed out by a participant:

Participant C1: "...And I think that, um, just maintaining a level of guardianship over it as well. I think that, you know, that sits in several different places, it needs to come obviously from the top, but then across the marketing department and across senior stakeholders across the rest of the institution, um, ensuring that we are fulfilling those values and holding people to account against those values as well. And highlight and if anyone is conflicting against them...."

5.3.6 Case Summary

A summary of the key findings from the participants in Case Study C are presented in Table 5.3. Case C participants emphasised the importance of internal brand communications through various means such as newsletters, emails, websites, and online branding campaigns, in helping them understand the new corporate brand. The leadership played an important role in supporting employees by initiating and facilitating conversations in workshops and other forums about the new corporate brand and its identity. Employees were involved in the corporate rebranding process internally.

Table 5. 3: Summary of Key Arguments and Findings from the Data – Case Study C

Key Findings	Thematic Categories and Associations
Workshops, focus groups and surveys can be effective in collecting input from employees about the new brand	Internal Brand Communication
Internal Brand Communication through newsletters, emails and posts on a webpage are effective means to update employees on the rebranding process and increase brand understanding	
Online branding campaigns are helpful in educating employees about the rebranding process	
An environment that allows employees to act on the brand values helps them to identify with those values	Employee Identification _ Employee Buy-in
The degree of an employee's identification is greater when their personal values are more aligned with the brand values	
Emerging Findings	**Emerging Themes and Associations**
The leadership's role-modelling of the brand values is a positive influence on the perception of employees about the rebranding	Role of Leadership _ Employee Buy-in
The role of leadership especially the vice chancellor in supporting and initiating communication with all employees is perceived positively and influences their buy-in	
Involving employees in developing the new brand identity is perceived as an important part of the corporate rebranding strategy	Employee Involvement _ Employee Buy-in
Involving employees in the corporate rebranding strategy influences their sense of ownership and acceptance of the new brand	

The leadership also acted as role-models of the values of the new corporate brand. The various communications that went out internally about the new corporate brand and the involvement of employees helped them identify with the new corporate brand. This also contributed to their buy-in. In-depth insight was thus gained on the importance of employee involvement, role of leadership, internal brand communication activities, identification and buy-in of the new corporate brand.

5.4 CASE D

This UK university was chosen because unlike the previous university case studies, it had undergone a rebranding of its visual identity perceived as an incremental change. The university structurally was divided into four different micro institutions. Each institution was responsible for a few subject areas and each institution was managed by a senior manager. To improve the impact of their marketing activities, it was decided that these four micro institutions needed to be represented in the university's corporate brand. The university has a rich heritage covering over 100 years and one of the dilemmas faced was to capture the essence of this in the new brand identity. One of the main objectives of the rebranding that took place was to give the new brand a modern look and feel but at the same time retain its heritage. It seemed that in making changes to the visual identity, the values of the university that had been around for years was going to be unchanged. The employees of this university were interviewed two to three years after the rebranding strategy was implemented and launched.

The first aspect noticed of the rebranding that took place in this university was that it was not a significant change from the employees' perspective. It was perceived as a minor modification in terms of what was accomplished visually for the brand as mentioned here:

Participant D3: "…because it didn't involve anything that was a readjustment of the values. So, it was really to me, it seemed like, you know, putting on a new scarf. It wasn't anything more significant than that. It didn't feel as though there was an absolutely major strategic change of strategic direction. It seemed to be incremental".

5.4.1 Corporate Rebranding - Internal Strategy and Process

Most of the participant's interviewed recollected and discussed the implementation phase of the corporate rebranding strategy but only seldom mentioned the process before. The implementation of the new corporate brand's visual identity was projected as a phased transition from the old brand identity to the new one. Employees were urged to start using the new brand guidelines and logo, but the transition to the new was a slow process as said by a participant:

Participant D1: "So we had a bit of a phased release of the artefacts that go with the brand and the controlling of those and making sure that and this was in a bit of a phased approach cause it didn't all happen at once".

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One of the participants also said that the externally targeted marketing literature changed before the internal changes were materialised.

Participant D2: "…some of the signage on campus didn't get changed immediately. So there's a sort of, a bit of a public change and then a changing of it. So as in positioning on the outside world and then what's happening internal, in campus and actually then changing things. So we introduced this sort of new logo on the signage, and sort of student side of it".

5.4.1.1 Employee Involvement

The university attempted to involve employees in the rebranding process however it was not an exercise that was prominent in the minds of employees. The participants said that they were aware that the rebranding process was going on but nothing further. There was a sense that the involvement of employees was more of an exercise in which a few employees participated as mentioned by two of the participants:

Participant D4: "Looking back, I don't think we had that much of communication. No, though I think we were aware this process was going on…I think the University may have said that they are undertaking some rebranding activities…"

Participant D2: "…they had run sessions with staff…and I know that they had conducted various sessions…but I wasn't one of the people that was involved…"

It was pointed out the involvement of employees was limited to a few samples of the employee population.

Participant D2: "…I know that they had run sessions, but I hadn't been… it was samples, samples of people. I wasn't personally involved."

As a result of the limited involvement of employees one participant felt that the decisions were more centrally controlled. This was pointed out by one of the participants:

Participant D1: "I must admit at the time of the, of the rebranding, lots of those sorts of discussions or decisions were probably taken more centrally than properly in departments"

There were not any widespread initiatives taken across the university to actively engage employees in the rebranding process. The initiative to explaining the need and purpose of the rebranding to employees was omitted and as such one of the participants questioned the need for the rebrand as said here:

Participant D4: "Well, as I said earlier, I wasn't quite sure why they did the rebranding…"

5.4.2 Internal Brand Communication

The internal brand communication activities from an employee's perspective were mostly after the rebranding process was concluded. In the post rebranding phase and/or during the implementation of the new brand identity, internal communication was limited and sporadic as noted by a participant:

Interviewer: "And so how was it all communicated? So, coming back to communications, it seemed it was a bit sporadic?"
Participant D3: "I think it was sporadic".

One of the participants added that the reason for the sporadic nature of the communications was the small size of the marketing and communications team and the relatively less resources.

Participant D3: "…Here it seems we've got one central department and they seem to have about three people, you know and are doing the whole university. It must be tricky. So, I think the university doesn't resource it perhaps. …Certainly, another university of a much bigger size…will probably be spending a lot more on marketing than we do…"

The main medium that was used to communicate was the university's online newsletter as mentioned by a participant:

Participant D3: "The things that were communicated were communicated online through the university's newsletter".

There wasn't any communication top down from senior management or the faculty dean using departmental meetings to let employees know about the changes that were decided as expressed here by a participant:

Interviewer: "So, you don't recall having any sort of after the launch meetings with the Dean or anyone in leadership communicating about it?"
Participant D3: "No, no. Definitely not…"

However, there was some evidence of using departmental committee meetings participated by all the employees to communicate these changes. This was usually done by the marketing team as mentioned by this participant:

Participant D1: "No, I mean, what the way these things generally happen is that we would have had somebody from the marketing team come to one of the department committees and

talk to us about, you know, why are we doing it, et cetera. so that if there's any central changes, that's generally where that is communicated. That's where you get the bulk of the staff together. And that's an opportunity to be able to convey sort of messages like that. So, um, but not separate, not separate meetings".

Another approach used to communicate was the use of branding guidelines that were issued to employees to follow. There was some emphasis to the modernity of the new visual identity that was developed when it was issued as noted by a participant here:

Participant D2: "We were given some guidelines, we were given some background as to the idea of being more modern, maintaining the use of images. we were given some templates and on our staff portal site, there's access to sort of branding guidelines".

A few events for employees to know about the new visual identity were organised and branded artefacts and goods were distributed.

Participant D2: "I think they did have some events as well. ...some event to share with the staff and, and you know, kind of handouts and some logos and things like some branded goods as it were...bags and things like that".

5.4.3 Employee Identification

Most of the employees expressed their identification with the values that the university and brand represented. The marketing and communications team in redesigning the brand's visual identity were tasked with capturing the existing values and ethos that were part of the university's heritage and reputation. Employees recognised that retaining these values were important especially by those that had a greater degree of identification with the university as it was mentioned a few times. One participant said:

Participant D1: "...I suppose it was indeed, it was a bit of an evolution thing, but it's also around establishing, trying to establish a new identity, but at the same time preserving some of the old identity which is around the values for the organisation."

The values and ethos of the university was held in high esteem by the participants that identified closely with the university as said here:

Interviewer: "What do you identify with?"

Participant D2: "I think it's the ethos of the university which comes from a heritage of diversity and widening participation, teacher training college for women. So, it's been at the forefront

of education and at the forefront of opening up education to people that maybe weren't immediately able to access education as freely as everybody".

The identification with the university, its purpose of establishment and what employees perceived to be the central, distinctive, and characteristic values of the university were deep rooted. This also led them to acknowledge that the new brand identity was incapable of doing justice to represent the values they deeply hold. It was said:

Interviewer: "…describe how you see yourself and your identification with the brand, or with what the brand represents?"

Participant D1: "It clearly is the fundamental values that sit behind it. …sometimes the things that do annoy me…the marketing and communications team want to keep the brand really clean and tight and therefore if you ask them to make some changes they would say 'but it's actually been interfering with this clear line'. 'We don't want that to happen'. So for me, that's the aesthetics of the brand getting in the way of providing valuable information to the outside world in that there's a bit of a tension there".

The participants felt that they not only identified with its values but also cherished the idea of coming to work at the university. There was a sense of belonging to the university as said by one of the participants:

Participant D3: "Definitely. I think it, it probably does you know, I generally like the university, I like its values. I like coming here every day".

There was also a closer alignment of the employee's personal values with the values of the university and brand as mentioned here:

Participant D2: "I think I personally believe in inclusivity and, in opportunity, equal opportunity. I think it's important. Education is important. So, so I think that a commitment to being part of a university and this university is sort of a nice fit".

5.4.4 Employee Engagement

The discussion here focuses on the participants engagement in their role and the brand. One of the participants said that for her brand engagement is about living out the values that the brand represents internally among the employees. This then allows the employees to deliver the brand promise to students.

Participant D1: "… if we are to deliver to the students then it's important that as a group of academics that we actually work together, but some of those values around sort of inclusion

and supporting other and playing to people's strengths, we have to do that internally within our department. Otherwise we're not going to be able to do that for our students."

When discussing their engagement with the brand, one participant expressed a lack of distinction between the brand and the university but then again reverted to saying that their engagement was more related to the university values. Participants perceived that the university brand was more of an external symbol and did not attribute any significance to it internally.

Interviewer: "…and so in terms of engagement with your current role, how engaged would you say you are in your current role and then also with the corporate brand?"

Participant D1: "Quite difficult to separate out the two, isn't it? …I mean it's…I'm not so sure it is the brand. It's more the institution and what it stands for. And that's just it. I suppose the brand is just an artefact to try and symbolize it to the outside world."

One of the participants that felt engaged to the brand attributed it to the fact they readily accepted the brand's visual identity and as a result became more involved with it in their role.

Interviewer: "Would you say you are very engaged with the university corporate brand or has your engagement in a sense changed or been affected in any way since the rebrand?

Participant D2: "Yes, I think, I'm more aware of this brand than I was of the other one and more involved in using different versions of it. And yeah, I think I, I feel more comfortable with this brand now for sure. Yeah. I seem to have moved quite quickly into accepting it quite readily".

For a few participants it emerged that their engagement with their job role was not affected positively or negatively. It was said:

Interviewer: "So, your engagement with your work and everything you do, has that remained the same? Do you think it's gone up and down since the rebrand or has been sort of steady…?"

Participant D1: "for me personally, I don't think it's, I don't think it's changed".

Another participant who worked in a senior academic position pointed out that their engagement was not related to changes in the brand but to what they wanted to achieve personally in their role which would in turn benefit the university.

Participant D4: "…It's not the brand…I'm an academic, I'm engaged in the work I do. that is why I'm an academic and the reason why I teach is because obviously we want to make a difference and promote the values of the University. And that's what keeps you engaged".

5.4.5 Employee Buy-in

The involvement with the rebranding process was not widespread among employees as mentioned by a participant:

Participant D2: "...I know that they had run sessions, but I hadn't been, you know, it was samples, samples of people. I wasn't personally involved".

The buy-in from employees therefore varied between participants. There were those that were not involved with the rebranding process and did not understand why the university decided to do it. This would have affected their buy-in as said here:

Participant D4: "because we are a relatively new university, I'm not quite sure why they felt they needed to rebrand. There wasn't any explanation as to why and if there were issues with the current branding, or the, university and so on".

But on the other hand, one of the participants quickly accepted the new visual identity:

Participant D2: "...I'm more aware of this brand than I was of the other one, and more involved in using different type, different versions of it. And I think I feel comfortable with this brand now for sure. I seem to have moved quite quickly into accepting it quite readily".

Some of the participants felt slightly disappointed that the brand did not ultimately capture everything the university stood for and its values and identity. There was also a lack of internal communication to communicate how the new brand's visual identity did capture its values.

Participant D1: "So for me, that's the aesthetics of the brand getting in the way of providing valuable information to the outside world in that there's a bit of a tension there".

There were participants that said that they had eventually got used to the new visual identity and accepted it. Although initially there were unpleasant emotions during the transition as said by a participant:

Interviewer: "So, you've bought in?"

Participant D3: "I would say so. I need to, like I say, I would not say it was immediate, yeah, this is wonderful. It took a while, a bit. I felt a bit sad to leave that sort of the heritage…"

Participants got used to the new logo design, colour schemes, fonts etc. that were part of the new brand identity over a period of time. Alongside, the old visual identity, the initial reactions and emotions eventually waned away or remained dormant.

As the participants got more used to it, they eventually accepted it as mentioned here:

Participant D4: "Well, you know, you sort of over time you get used to it and so on. So if you asked me what the previous branding was, I couldn't really recall that well right now because you know, we've, had the current branding for a year and half or whatever and we sort of try and live that. So, I think to an extent, you know, you get over your initial reaction".

The internal corporate rebranding process that includes, internal brand communication and employee involvement was a weak force in this case study institution. The employee's response was neutral as the incremental change in the visual identity of the corporate brand did not affect the employee's existing identification with the ethos and values of the organization or their engagement. The sporadic communication and existing levels of engagement and identification of employees, however, did have a moderate effect on the buy-in of employees to where they accepted the changes and moved on after a period of time.

5.4.6 Case Summary

A summary of the key findings is presented in table 5.4. Case D participants highlighted a different perspective to the corporate rebranding process carried out internally. The changes to the corporate brand were minor however participants pointed to the sporadic communication about the changes to the corporate brand from the beginning. The leadership didn't necessarily play an active role in involving employees in the internal decision making processes. A few employees were hence involved while many learned of the changes once, they were decided. This was mainly through a few emails and announcements from the marketing and branding team.

The internal brand communication helped employees understand the changes and respond either in a neutral or positive manner. A few participants however expressed their concerns about the lack of sufficient information, discussion and a need for the corporate rebrand. They also argued that the corporate rebranding was more of an external exercise with little or no implications to their, roles or work in the university, and their identity. Participants that were engaged in their roles and believed in the university's core historical values went on to buy-in and accept the change while others got used to the change eventually.

Table 5. 4: Summary of Key Findings from the Data – Case Study D

Key Findings	Thematic Category and Associations
When the Internal Brand Communication is sporadic in nature the employees lack clarity in the purpose of the rebranding	Internal Brand Communication (Sporadic) _ Cognitive Buy-in
Intermittent communication through newsletters, departmental meetings, and brand guidelines are helpful in informing employees but have lesser value in influencing buy-in	
Interventions in departmental meetings by the marketing and branding department are helpful in communicating changes	
The existing identification of an employee with the ethos and values of the university is less likely to be affected when the rebranding is incremental	Employee Identification
Employees that already feel engaged to their roles are likely to accept the changes to the corporate brand's incremental change to the visual identity	Employee Engagement _ Cognitive Buy-in
The degree of an employee's engagement with their role is less likely to be affected by rebranding that is incremental	Employee Engagement
Employees tend to eventually accept the minor changes to the brand intellectually over a period of time	Employee Buy-in
Emerging Findings	**Emerging Themes and Associations**
The perception that the corporate rebranding strategy is more centrally controlled is higher when the employees are not very involved in the process.	Employee Involvement _ Employee Buy-in
Employees that are not very involved in the corporate rebranding strategy are less likely to develop buy-in to the new brand	
Employees that already identify with the ethos and values of the university are likely to buy-in to the new brand post rebranding	
The perception that the brand values must be lived in the university influenced the decision to engage with the brand	Employee Engagement

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter presents the within-case analysis of each of the four case studies A, B, C and D. The transcripts of the participants were analysed using key concepts relevant to corporate rebranding strategy identified from the literature and presented in the conceptual framework (figure 3.1). The codes that represent the sub themes however were formed from the analysis of the narratives of the participants. A table that summarises the key findings of the each of the

case under the respective themes is presented at the end of the discussion.

The analysis revealed that there were similarities in what the participants experienced in cases A, B and C. Participants spoke about their involvement in various degrees in the corporate rebranding process especially with reference to building the new corporate brand. For many of the participants, this involvement translated into their acceptance of the changes to the corporate brand both visually and in terms of its goals and values. This facilitated their eventual buy-in of the new corporate brand. The leadership's influence on the corporate rebranding process was also identified in the cases. They facilitated and drove the process while emphasising the involvement of employees as important in the process.

Internal brand communication using newsletters, branding videos, townhalls and other means was a common feature in each of these cases. Communication about the new corporate brand and the corporate rebranding strategy generated among some a positive attitude towards the changes, and for many others a deeper understanding of the new corporate brand. What was communicated was as important as the frequency of the communication that was sent out. Participants also discussed their identification with the new corporate brand and how that was influenced by their knowledge of the new corporate brand and the alignment of their values with that of the corporate brand. The employees that were engaged in their roles expressed their commitment to the university.

However, in case D the story communicated was different. Although the changed to the corporate brand were largely visual, there was not a visible effort by the leadership to involve employees in the corporate rebranding process or keep them informed through regular internal communication activities. As such the employee's response was neutral. Little attention was paid to the rebranding. The employee's identification was still more attached with the historic ethos and heritage of the university. The engagement levels remained, and it did not add to or take away motivation. Employees eventually accepted the change.

The next chapter presents the analysis of the themes across all the cases and explores the relationships between the themes based on theoretical propositions presented in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 6. CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

The analysis presented below compares the findings from each of the four university cases A, B, C and D. Conducting cross-case analysis is an important analytic step in multiple case study research projects as it supports generalisation of the findings and its applicability to other settings (Herriott and Firestone, 1983; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Cross-case analysis also helps in enhancing the depth and explanation of the cases (Glaser, 1967). In the discussion below, the overarching thematic patterns that represents the overwhelming similarities and the subtle differences found in each of the case studies are summarised. These propositions and arguments arising out of these cross-case themes are later compared to the theoretical propositions made in chapter 3. This includes the emerging themes discovered during the course of an iterative data analysis conducted on each of the case study participant's interview transcripts. A final set of propositions are put forward and discussed in the light of literature and a revised theoretical framework is later displayed.

To compose the cross-case discussion, cases A, B and C were grouped together to identify the similarities in themes and to examine the data rigorously (Eisenhardt, 1989). This was then compared with the findings in case study D to identify instances of theoretical replication as in cases A, B and C or the lack thereof. The resulting conclusions were then used to update propositions and complete the framework. This process has helped in capturing the novelty in the data and making a stronger contribution to the theory of corporate rebranding (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014).

In 3 of the 4 UK university cases, changes to the corporate brand included a new visual identity underpinned by renewed brand values and driven by and aligned to a new strategic vision. The brand values and brand promise were presented clearly to the internal and external stakeholders in most of the cases. In case A, the business school's unique brand identity and positioning in the marketplace was clarified with a new name, brand values, vision, and strategy as part of the corporate rebranding strategy. It was intended as a bold move to distinguish itself relative to the parent brand which had a strong reputation built over 100 years. The new name however still had the parent corporate brand's name attached to it but with the clear distinction that it was a business school that had its own identity and positioned to compete with the leading business schools in the world. There were a few factors that positively influenced the buy-in

of employees to the new corporate brand. The similarities and differences found across the three cases A, B and C and a comparison with case D are presented and discussed in this chapter.

6.1 Thematic Word Tree

A thematic word tree (figure 6.1) was created based on the initial findings from the cross-case analysis and comparison of themes. The tree was created using NVivo 12.

The tree describes the key themes, emerging and sub themes that originated from the cross-case analysis. As noted earlier in chapter four section 4.5, two cycles of coding were conducted to produce overarching themes that suitably reflect what was identified in each of the cases. These codes were then again subject to further scrutiny to build a narrative for the cross-case analysis.

The codes on the left side of figure 6.1 show the key themes that were identified from the literature review and data analysis. The themes on the right side however were emergent themes that show the corporate rebranding process internally. Here special consideration was given to the 'Role of Leadership' and the 'involvement' of employees as they highlighted the critical parts of the corporate rebranding process. The rest of the chapter then unpacks each of the themes with a narrative that explains the corporate rebranding process in each of the case studies.

Figure 6. 1: Thematic Word Tree of the Cross-Case Analysis

Keeping informed
Communicate decisions
Shared understanding of vision and values

Outcomes

Internal Branding and Communication

Mediums

Townhalls
Performance reviews
Workshops
Marketing and Branding team presentations
Brand Champions
Website
Vlogs

Employee Identification

My values
Pride
Extra mile
University's success

Employee Engagement

Enjoy working
Career opportunities
Commitment

Corporate Rebranding

Employee Buy-In

Cognitive

Role understanding
Brand understanding

Emotional

Strong relationship
Belief in the values

I help shape it
Very involved
Communication
Leadership

Purpose

Separate identity from parent
Improve student recruitment
Positioning in the HE sector
Create brand awareness among students
Refresh brand image

Corporate Rebranding - Internal Strategy

Involve employees

Gather views and opinions
Employee surveys
Appoint Brand champions

Role of leadership

Not top-down approach
Facilitators
Role Models
Active supporters
Driving the rebranding process

Post Rebranding

accept it now
Too corporate
Sporadic communication
Still buy-in
Defend the brand
Talk about the brand

6.2 Internal Brand Communication

A few different internal communication activities were used to communicate everything about the corporate rebranding strategy and its implementation to employees.

The discussion in this section highlights the internal communication activities about the rebrand that took place at the start and until the end of the rebranding process. For all the universities the rebranding was a phased process. The phases were used to divide the rebranding into deciding the logo and colour schemes, forming the values and brand messages and the launch and implementation. One of the university's had the implementation phase at the end of each of the first two phases. Internal communication was a key factor in all the phases. In university's A, B and C, the involvement of employees was a fundamental part of the rebranding process. As such, there were various forums used for employees to receive and send messages. Various channels of communication were used to communicate about the rebranding to employees. They are discussed below.

Figure 6. 2: Cross-Case Analysis-Internal Brand Communication
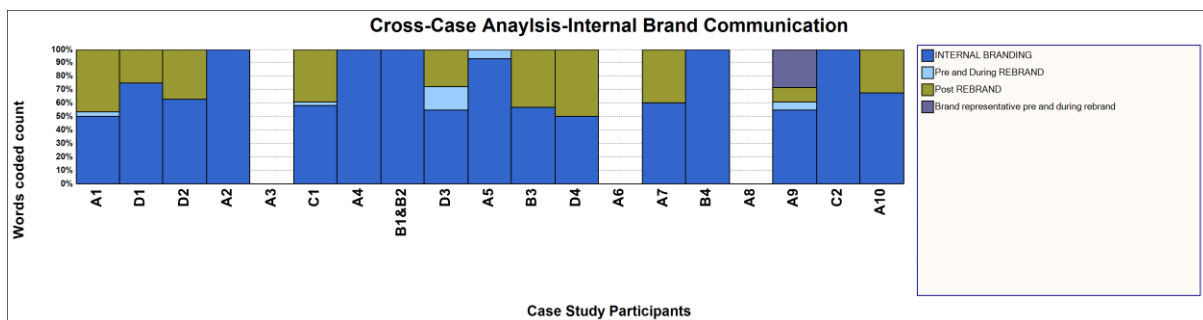
One of the ways used to communicate was through workshops organised by the marketing and branding team along with the senior management to introduce the changes and then use that forum to collect feedback from employees. Departmental meetings, townhalls and internal newsletters were used to disseminate information or decisions made during the rebranding process.

Participant A1: "So we had a series of workshops. I think prior to the new brand and then when the brand was launched…".

Participant A5: "…You'll see it in our newsletters and our reports".

Participant B2: "…our Vice Chancellor regularly does town halls".

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Brand champions or brand representatives played an important role in the rebranding process as a channel of communication between the marketing and communications department or the leadership and employees. They were selected or volunteers were assigned with these responsibilities within faculties and departments. They assisted in the implementation and acted as an entry point (gatekeeper) to a storehouse of brand knowledge able to guide or signpost employees' that had any brand related queries.

Participant B4: "...I got brought in as a brand champion at that point as well. they wanted to pick certain staff members in key faculties in departments to be like a kind of the Gatekeeper of the brand or someone that helps to implement a rebrand".

In university B, brand champions met regularly to be updated with information so they could relay it back to their departments and coordinate any corresponding tasks that needed to be done.

Participant B4: "Attending the brand champion meetings getting the updates and then taking it back to my department and relaying the information that was shared or discussed or any tasks that needed doing"

The brand champions role in the departments became redundant or was done away after the implementation as noted by one such participant:

Interviewer: "are you still the brand representative?"

Participant A9: "...that's sort of gone away."

The vice chancellor (senior management) took an active interest in communicating about the rebrand face to face or online through newsletters and emails.

Participant C2: "The VC started writing a weekly newsletter herself, that started to incorporate updates according to the vision and the brand".

Information from the workshops that took place was also stored digitally on the university's intranet site set up specifically for the rebranding. Employees' that didn't attend could access them later.

Participant C2: "...on our internet site, there was Vision 2028, a permanent place on the web that people could go for information where all the workshops were stored. So, if people missed it, everything was stored, and it was videoed".

6.2.1 Internal Brand Communication and Employee Identification in Corporate Rebranding

The communication about the rebranding to employees developed their understanding of the new brand and the values associated with it. This helped various participants to evaluate these new or renewed values and internalise them. One of the participants mentioned this:

Participant A7: "I feel that you know the vision and mission and values are well aligned…they truly reflect my understanding of the university. If I had to come up with these statements on a new brand, I would struggle to come up with something different. I really think that it was a good process and the outcome was excellent. So, I think…I don't have any disagreement with what was agreed. Secondly, I think some of these values are well aligned with my personal values."

It was clear that participants in the case studies that received an abundance of information about the rebrand and the new corporate brand also showed greater levels of identification with the organisation and brand. Figure 6.3 is the visual representation of the evidence used to determine the association. It displays how almost all the participants discussed on both the themes internal brand communication and employee identification when asked about each concept.

Based on this the following proposition is introduced as an update to the existing proposition P1 a):

> *P1 a) The Internal Brand Communication activities influences the employees brand understanding and their identification with the new corporate brand*

Figure 6. 3: Comparison Diagram Internal Branding and Employee Identification
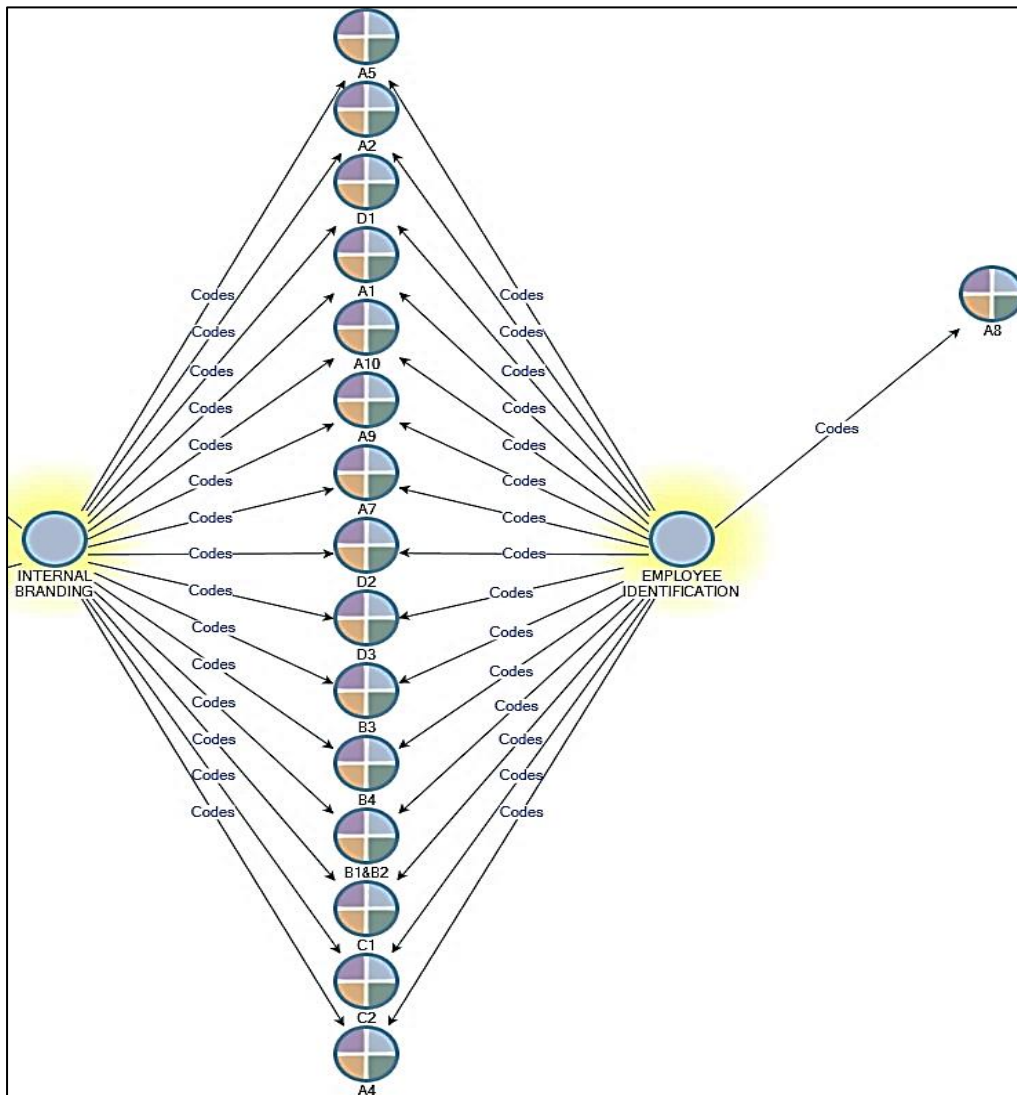
6.2.2 Internal Brand Communication and Employee Engagement in Corporate Rebranding

The Internal Brand Communication through various channels such as meetings (formal and informal), information on the intranet, brand representatives etc. developed the understanding of employees further about the new brand. This helped employees not only internalise but also act on that information and communicate the brand in their roles as reported by a participant:

Participant A1: "…I understand it (brand) more and so that aligns with my own goals more and so I can talk to people about the brand as well."

A few of the participants talked about their understanding and comprehension of the new brand, its values, identity and what it represented. These participants were exposed to a lot more internal brand communication through meetings, newsletters, online brand campaigns and other sources. The participants among them that had job roles with an underlying brand focus such as those working in the careers, academics that did events or those in student experience all appreciated the new brand. They had a greater clarity of the brand meaning, had internalised the brand goals and some even found their work a little bit more enjoyable and simpler. Others would even go as far as defending the brand.

What was clear from the participants that spoke of being highly engaged was that their understanding of the brand was higher. A few selected excerpts from participants in the discussion above is repeated below to establish this point:

Participant A9:" I think it makes my job more enjoyable because there is a more…not necessarily easier but simpler because there's a clear message and there with this clear direction".

Participant B4: "I consider myself to be highly engaged to the point where i would defend the brand outside of my workplace. on social media sometimes. so yeah highly engaged. highly involved."

The diagram below visually depicts the evidence used in the analysis:

Figure 6. 4: Internal Brand Communication and Employee Engagement
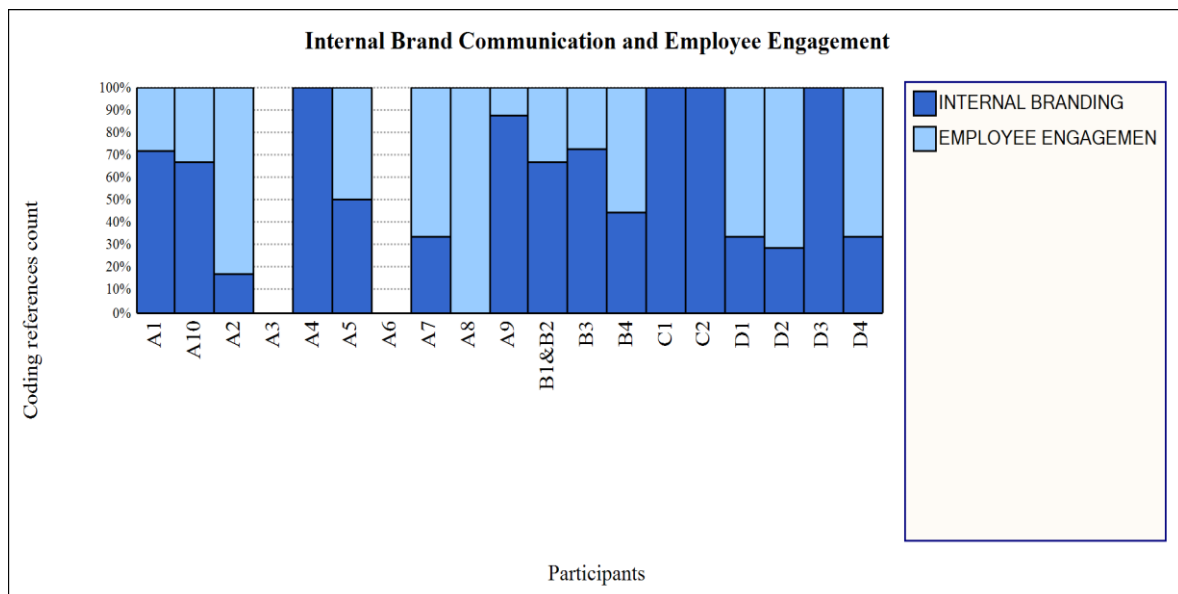
The analysis above and the prior discussion reveals that Internal Brand Communication activities can act as a catalyst to employee's engaging within their role and the new brand. It may not critically affect individual levels of engagement, but it certainly triggers it.

Based on the above, the existing proposition P1 b) is updated as follows:

P1 b) The Internal Brand Communication activities about the new corporate brand influences the employees brand understanding and raises their engagement levels within their role

6.2.3 Internal Brand Communication and Employee Buy-in in Corporate Rebranding

The Internal Brand Communication activities increased the awareness and understanding employees had of the new brand. The streaming of information from departments such as marketing helped increase an employee's awareness of the new corporate brand's identity. This helped them relate it to their roles in a better way as mentioned here:

Participant A1: "What changed was that there was more collaboration and cohesion between the marketing teams and the other teams, especially recruitment so that we became aware of what the kind of I guess I'm more aware of what the brand identity was what the vision of the school was and we were informed what the new brand was about so that we could talk about that to prospective students."

Participant C1: "…There weren't any hiatuses of information. We were fairly regular with talking about it with showing people the progress. And I think that that definitely works in our favour because it shows that there was a commitment from the institution for it".

Based on the above the researcher posits the following proposition:

P1 c) The Internal Brand Communication activities influences the employees brand understanding and their cognitive buy-in of the new corporate brand

The internal communication about the rebranding was minimal in university D relative to the others. Participants mentioned that they were aware of a few presentations from the marketing and communications team within department meetings.

Participant D1: "...there were presentations about the brand, there were briefing documents..."

Two reasons for this as perceived by one participant was the continuous turnover of senior management in their school and the allocation of a low priority for this type of communication.

Participant D1: "...not because the comms team didn't want that to happen, but because the Business School basically has had so many changes of senior staff".

6.2.3.1 Internal Brand Communication (Post Rebranding)

This communication refers to any brand related messages and updates from the marketing and communications team and/or leadership within the university after the implementation of the rebrand and launch of the new brand identity.

A common occurrence in all the universities was the infrequent communications after the completion of the internal corporate rebranding process of the strategy.

Interviewer: "Since the launch, has there been constant communication from the marketing and communications team to, to yourself or to your department about the brand?"

Participant A10: "I would say, not actively. If I'm honest, there hasn't been any active communication".

The communications after the implementation within departments for university's were sporadic in nature as reported by a participant here:

Participant D3: "...but the filtering through that was much slower and like you say, more sporadic process".

Participant A9: "Now they'll sporadically do a presentation. So, we have someone come to a team meeting last year. so just, just saying, you know, just make sure this is how you're presenting stuff. This is why we're doing what we're doing".

Participant A7: "I think there was if I remember well there was a certain emphasis to kind of you know feedback on the new brand and the impact of the new brand in the first probably 3 to 6 months".

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The brand champions role in the departments diminished or was done away with as noted by one such participant:

Interviewer: "are you still the brand representative?"

Participant A9: "...that's sort of gone away".

In short across all the universities the intensity of active communication about the brand identity diminished and it was sent out as and when necessary.

6.3 Employee Identification

The identification with the corporate brand and the university was evident in the participants narrative and it was described in a few different ways. There was a sense of belonging when participants discussed their identification. Participants expressed their pride in working for their respective university's when asked about their identification with the brand as quoted here:

Participant A8: "I do feel a sense of pride when something good happens or something is achieved as a collective. I certainly feel that".

Participant A1: "so generally I think that this is a great business school to work for because it is part of University A".

Figure 6. 5: Employee Identification - Explore Diagram showing Sub-Themes and Relationships
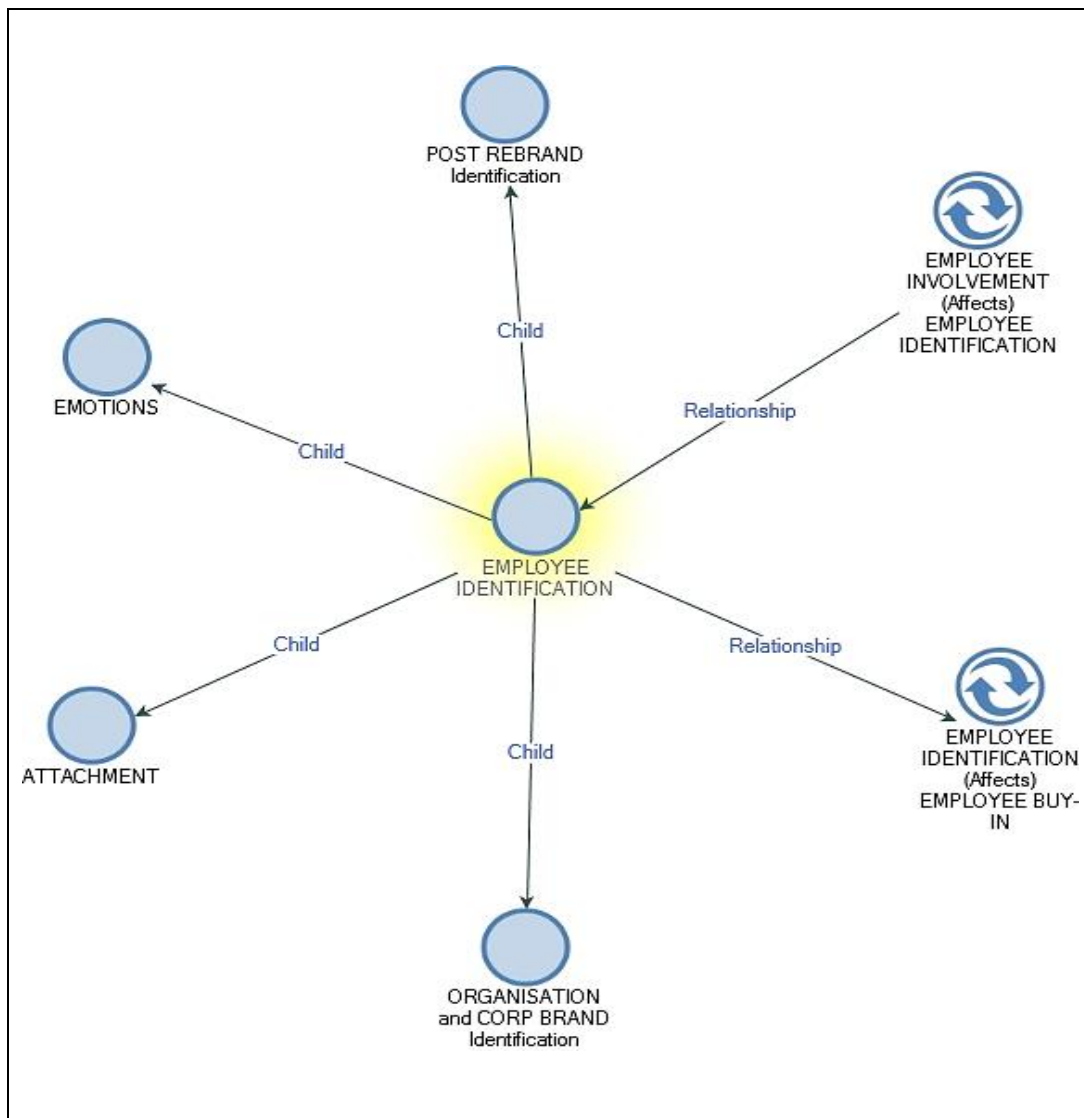
In figure 6.5, an explore diagram created using NVivo displays the various sub thematic code categories to employee identification and the relationships with two other themes: employee buy-in and employee involvement. The relationships were derived from the various codes that described the way employees across all the four cases identified with the organisation and corporate brand and what influenced their buy-in. The analysis of the coded content for the theme employee identification and its sub themes across all the cases is represented in figure 6.6 below. The excerpts from the participants and the relationships are discussed in sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2.

Figure 6. 6: Cross-Case Analysis – Employee Identification
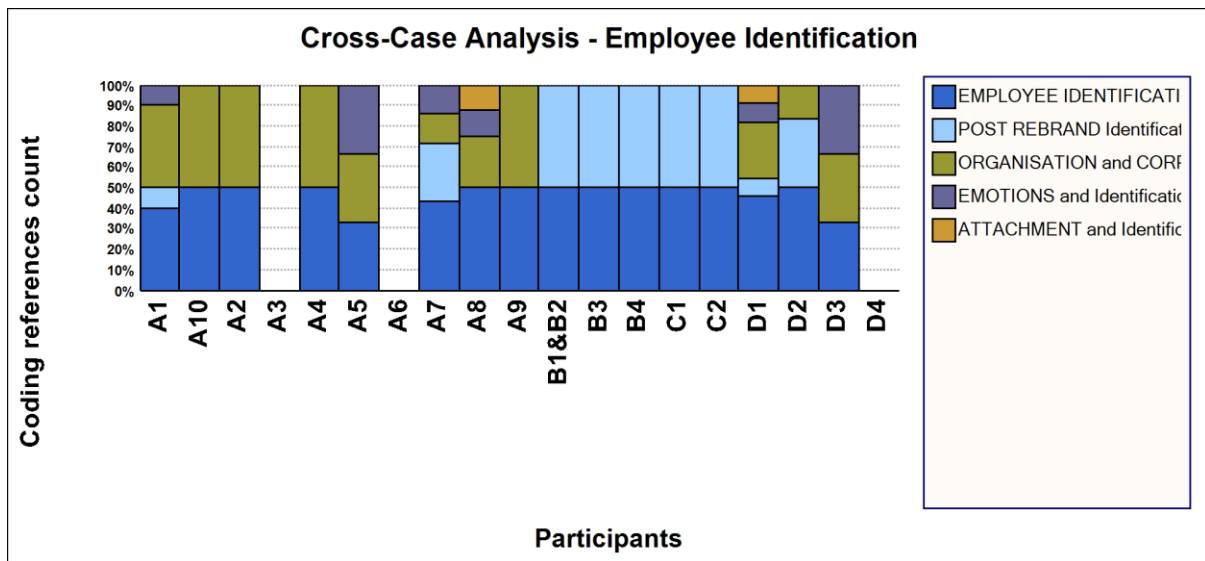
6.3.1 Employee Identification and Employee Involvement in Corporate Rebranding

The involvement of employees in the corporate rebranding process internally had a positive influence on their response to the corporate rebranding strategy. However, it was noted that the involvement of employees in the various internal brand building activities such as focus groups and discussions varied, as it was a voluntary option. There were those that were more involved whilst others were either less or not at all involved. When analysing the comments of those that were more involved in the process, it was clear that their degree of identification with the university and the brand's values were also higher. This is depicted in figure 6.7 in the next page. (The light blue lines show involvement and the darker shows identification).

Figure 6. 7: Employee Identification and Employee Involvement
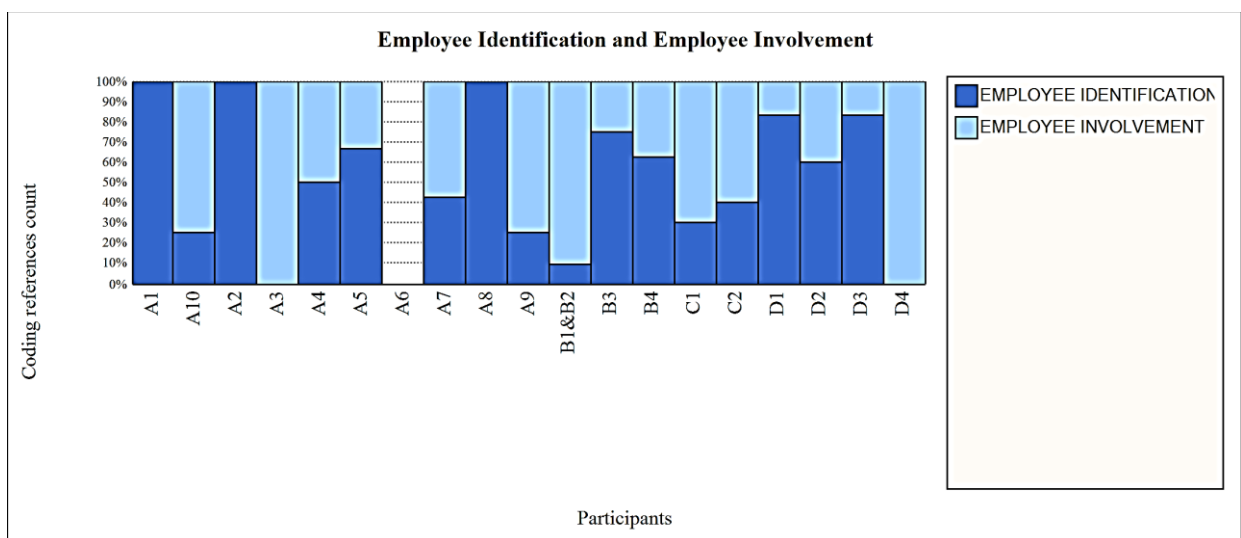
Based on the above analysis the following proposition is made:

Emerging Proposition:

P1 e-iii) Employees that are actively involved in the corporate rebranding strategy are more likely to identify with the new corporate brand values and identity than employees that are less or not involved

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6.3.2 Employee Identification and Employee Buy-in Post Rebranding

Analysing the transcripts of participants across all the cases it was possible to identify a link between the two themes employee involvement and employee buy-in as displayed in figure 6.5. For many participants there was an alignment of their internal values with the brand values which was expressed when discussing their identification.

Participant C1: "I think all three brand values I can identify with and I think that passion, for me I've really been able to kind of make a difference with the passion I have got for what I do here, there's scope for me to, to kind of get involved with projects and to really kind of put myself forward because of the type of institution that we are".

One of the participants described her passion for what she does outside of the university but then went on to say she reduced some of that outside work because she could express herself with what the university brand was trying to achieve. They were interlinked as said by the participant:

Participant C2: "So, I had been a big advocate for diversity and inclusion for my entire life… And I've cut out some of my volunteering outside of work because I've thrown everything into this job, because this aligns to a lot of what I fight for outside of work as well. And so, I can do that through my organization and spend the time here…"

There were also participants that related their identification with the university corporate brand in the way that they defended the brand on social media and internally to other colleagues. But one participant added that they would not let that overlap with their personal space. This probably showed the participants intention to keep work outside her private space.

Participant B4: "it's very much my workplace it's something I am passionate about and I will you know advocate the university all night long if I could. But it definitely does not encroach my personal bounds".

There were also participants that expressed a sense of partial identification with the brand as it did not capture all the values that they perceived a university business school brand should be focused on. One participant said:

Participant A10: "So I think the brand has the business element of it and the school element of it. But I personally, I feel the brand is more business than school...in all honesty I don't think the brand ties in as much with my personal values as, uh, I would have liked it to. And not to say that it doesn't at all, but just that I am, my focus would be purely on students".

Another participant added this:

Participant B3: "...I know it sounds like a cop-out but I just the thing that kind of gets me is that corporateness that comes from the values and the way they are".

A similar view was expressed by another participant in case D and she felt she spoke on behalf of a few others. This view was that there was a tension between what the brand represented to the outside and what employees felt like it represented inside the university. The marketing and communications team had already crafted the brand identity and in this university (D) employee involvement was limited relative to the others.

Participant D1: "They (marketing and communications) want to keep the brand really clean and tight. if you ask them to make some changes, then it's actually seen as interfering with this clear line. They don't want that to happen. So for me, that's the aesthetics of the brand getting in the way of providing valuable information to the outside world in that there's a bit of a tension there".

Based on the above findings, the initial proposition P2 about an employee's identification with the new corporate brand and their buy-in to it is supported and stated as follows:

P2 a) Employees that identify strongly with the new corporate brand are also likely to have a sound understanding of the corporate brand's values and identity thereby exhibiting a greater degree of cognitive buy-in post-rebranding

The second proposition identifies the emotional level of buy-in to post rebranding:

> *P2 b) Employees that identify strongly with the new corporate brand are also likely to have their values internally aligned with that of the corporate brand and be committed to fulfilling its goals thus displaying an emotional level of buy-in post-rebranding*

A summary of the effects of employee identification as a response to the corporate rebranding strategy on employee buy-in is presented in table 6.1.

Table 6. 1: Case Ordered Effects Matrix – Employee Identification

	Employee Response		Effect on Outcome (Employee Buy-in) for each Case
	A, B and C	D	
Employee Identification	Pride in working for the university	Brand can't fully capture the ethos and values of the university	Strong influence (A, B, C) Weak Influence (D)
	Internal alignment with brand values	Identified more with the university ethos and values	
	The university's success is important to me	Little or No involvement	

6.4 Employee Engagement

The cross-case findings presented here cover the participants engagement with their role and the new brand. In terms of engagement with the brand it was possible to see how the knowledge and understanding of the new corporate brand enabled participants to align themselves with it and speak about the corporate brand to other colleagues. The chart displayed in figure 6.8 represents the coded content across all the case participants coded for employee engagement and the two sub-themes work engagement and corporate brand engagement.

The coded content for each of the participants were then analysed to create narratives and is discussed in the next page.

Figure 6. 8: Cross-Case Analysis – Employee Engagement
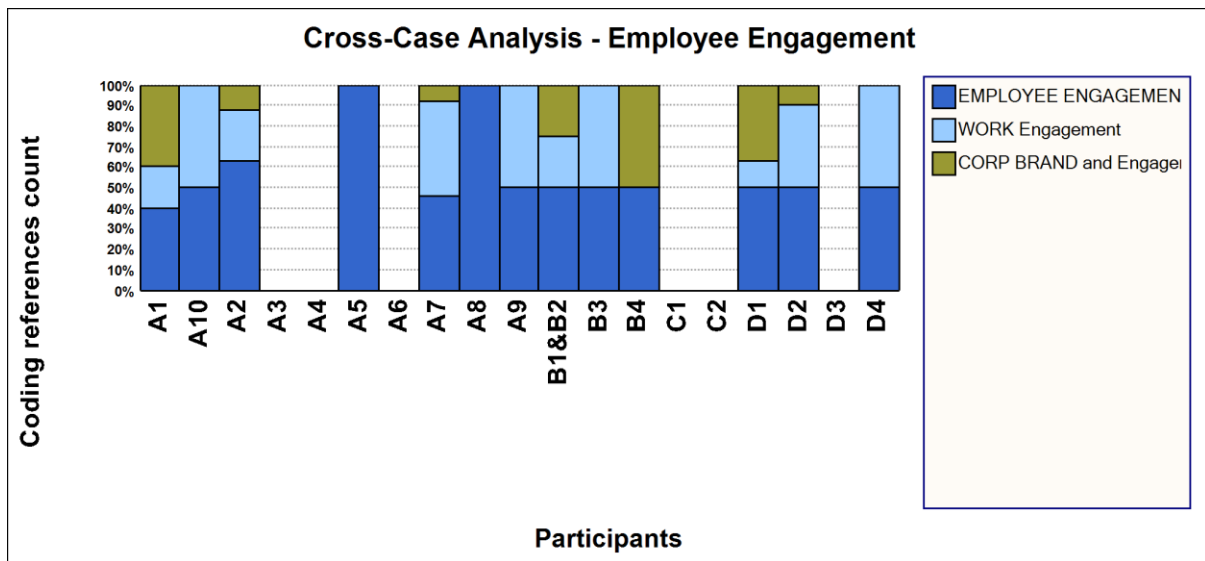
The engagement levels among employees varied. There were evidences of stronger engagement with the participants work because they understood the new corporate brand. One of the participant's reported how their personal goals were more aligned with the corporate brand goals having understood what the corporate brand is trying to achieve after the rebrand:

Participant A1: "but then I understand it more and so that aligns with my own goals more and so I can talk to people about the brand as well."

The rebranding has had more impact on those participants who needed to interact with the new corporate brand as part of their role compared to those that did not. One participant mentioned they were able to act out the brand values in their roles:

Participant A10: "...our brand is meant to reflect innovation. And in my role, I have the freedom to innovate processes, to innovate things and present it to implement changes at a level that will impact students and student experience on a wide scale. And so that is actively encouraged."

The role that participants performed daily was made more pleasant and enjoyable as the internal brand communication had brought clarity to the brand identity and its relationship with the corporate strategy was more evident. The corporate rebranding process brought more emphasis to the corporate brand among employees and it became a part of their conversations for a while. This generated positive feelings and attitudes towards the new corporate brand and the employee's role in the organisation. Employees began to understand how their tasks were linked to achieving the strategic objectives. A few participants said this:

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Participant A9: "I think it makes my job more enjoyable because there is a more…not necessarily easier but simpler because there is a clear message and there with this clear direction".

Participant A2: "I feel much more engaged now that our team objectives are directly linked to the School strategy and objectives – I can see how my efforts input into the wider scheme of things and why we do what we do".

Additionally, participants in the cases who had a brand-oriented role and performed tasks with an underlying brand focus in it said they were a lot more engaged because it was part of their job to represent the brand. This motivated employees to be actively engaged in their jobs. One participant mentioned she was highly engaged and would even defend the brand outside the workplace:

Participant B4: "I consider myself to be highly engaged to the point where i would defend the brand outside of my workplace. on social media sometimes. so yeah highly engaged. highly involved".

In exploring the attitude of participants and engagement with the new corporate brand, a sense of greater awareness of the brand in their daily work was noted. Reflecting on the new corporate brand in an employee's role became easier and comfortable according to this participant:

Interviewer: "Would you say you are, very engaged with the university corporate brand or has your engagement changed or been affected in any way since the rebranding?"

Participant D2: "Yeah, I think, I'm more aware of this new brand than I was of the other one and more involved in using different versions of it. And yeah, I think I feel more comfortable with this brand now for sure. Yeah. I seem to have moved quite quickly into accepting it quite readily".

However as noted previously the engagement levels did vary across employees in the cases. One participant reported that the corporate rebranding strategy and the internal processes did enhance understanding of the new corporate brand, but it did not actually affect his engagement with the role.

Interviewer: "Was there any impact or changes to your engagement because of the rebranding?

Participant A1: "So I would say it's less personal engagement and its more understanding what the brand was about".

In university D, the corporate rebranding strategy was perceived as a small change and therefore it didn't have any impact on the engagement according to one participant:

Participant D4: "...I have always been engaged. The rebranding doesn't sort of make a huge amount of difference. It's just sort of a more of an administrative change from my perspective".

A few participants across the cases who were academics as noted previously perceived corporate rebranding and the changes to the corporate brand as more of a marketing exercise to convince external stakeholders.

Interviewer: "So in terms of engagement with your current role, how engaged would you say you are in your current role and then also with the corporate brand?"

Participant D1: "Quite a difficult to separate out the two, isn't it? I'm not so sure it is the brand. It's more the institution and what it stands for. And that's just it. I suppose the corporate brand is just an artefact to try and symbolize it to the outside world".

6.4.1 Employee Engagement and Employee Buy-in Post Rebranding

The type of role employees had in the organisation contributed to their own buy-in to the new corporate brand. One type of role created during the process was that of a brand champion. The explore diagram in figure 6.9 displays the thematic codes for an employee's engagement because of their role and its relationship with employee buy-in. The text for these codes were analysed to create the discussion below on the influence of employee engagement on employee buy-in.

Figure 6. 9: Explore Diagram – Employee Role with Sub Themes and Employee Buy-in Relationship
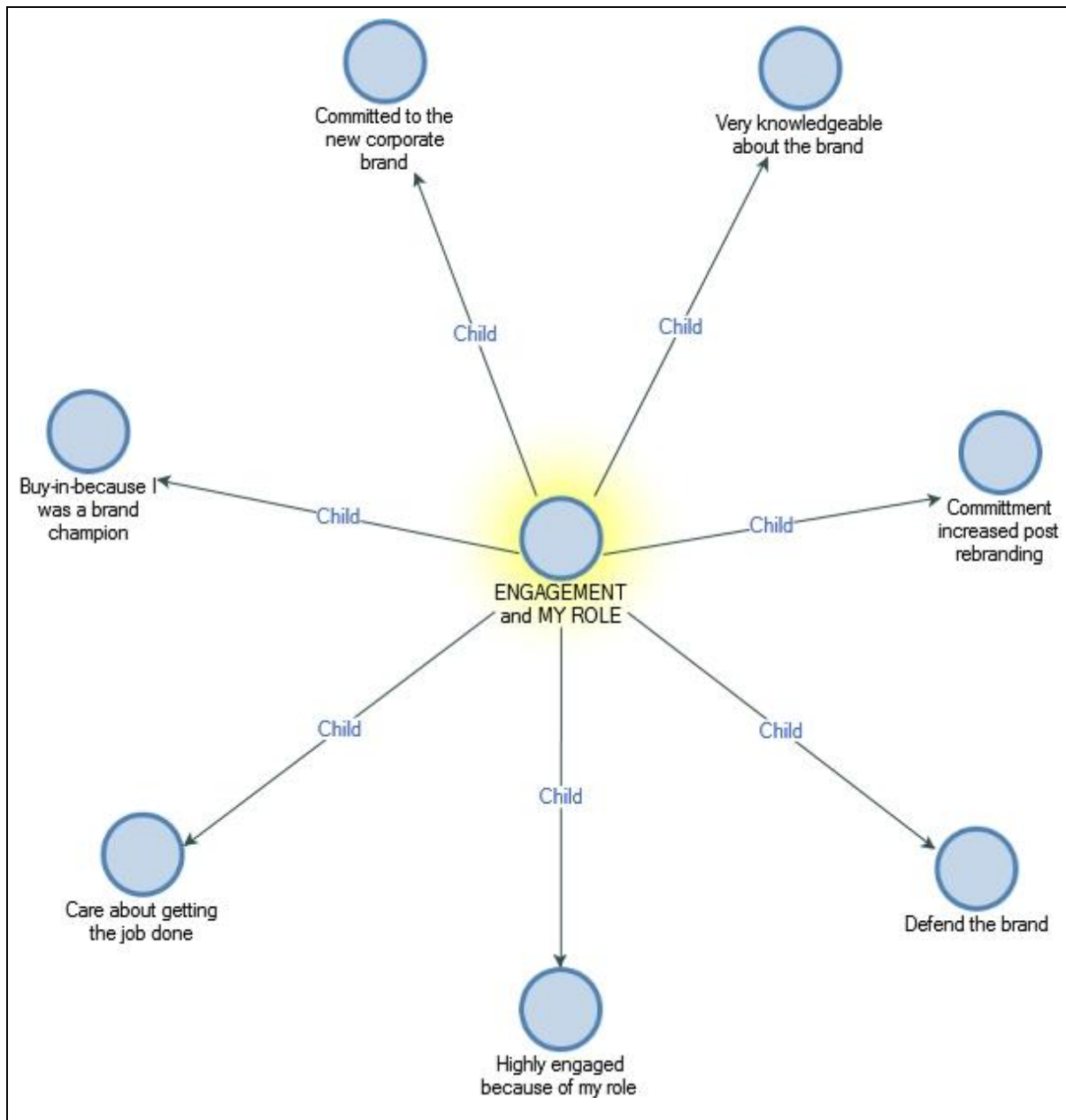
The decision to set apart a brand representative was a common thread in university's A and B. An employee would either be chosen by a department or would volunteer to be a brand representative for their team. This individual was expected to have a thorough understanding of the brand and would become the main go-to person for any questions or queries about the brand. They also acted as guardians of the brand and the one who would assist employees when using the brand for any external communications. That employee would also have constant communication with the marketing and communications team in the university. A few excerpts

from participants evidences the role of brand champions:

Participant B1: "So, we (marketing and communications) would always go through the brand champs as the route in and then they will disseminate the information. It's a really good way because we don't know the faculties as well as they do".

Participant B4: "I felt because I got brought in as a brand champion at that point as well. they wanted to pick certain staff members in key faculties in departments to be like a kind of the Gatekeeper of the brand or someone that helps to implement a rebrand".

Participant A9: "...I was the Brand Representative within Careers... ...these were not the brand police…. It was making sure people understood why we're making changes, and just keeping people up to date with the changes. So, there was sort of the formal communication, but then they actually said within each team we will have someone who's a bit, bit more informal just in sort of a network that can just keep an eye on things, feedback back when changes came".

A brand representatives role helped the employee's buy-in to the corporate rebranding strategy and changes to the corporate brand. This was supported by the brand knowledge they had gained that could be applied in their role and their responsibility in the implementation of the changes to the new brand. One participant said this:

Participant B3: "Based on my role it's my job to find out when people are making mistakes within the brand help them, advice them, correct them, when they are doing stuff to make sure that everything is on-brand. That's why I'm focusing on curation like logo use, proofing things for people and giving feedback I would say I'm really engaged and a little bit of a fountain of knowledge regarding the brand.

Interviewer: "and what do you think contributed to you to your buying-in to the identity of the brand as it is today?"

Participant B3: "I think being brought in as the brand champion definitely. Like the constant updates being informed like made you feel like you are part of it. It wasn't just you were consulted, and it was decided. it was like well we have decided but, now we need your help to change the identity of the brand all over the campus…"

Similarly, other participants that were not necessarily selected as brand champion but because they represented the brand in various events as part of their role were more aligned with the brand and understood it better.

Participant A4: "But then also you know I became a brand ambassador so I kind of you know I've been communicating the brand of the university as I said before in different types of context. I think again that help me to kind of understand and align with the brand."

Interviewer: "But were you officially named the brand ambassador?"

Participant A4: "No. When we kind of you know when we do International Events or alumni events, we always basically communicate the brand."

With the job role of employees being a factor, it is proposed:

Updated Proposition:

P3 a): Employees with front-end or brand-centric roles and highly engaged after the corporate rebranding strategy has been internally communicated are more likely to exhibit a greater degree of cognitive buy-in post rebranding

P3 b): Employees with front-end or brand-centric roles and highly engaged after the corporate rebranding strategy has been internally communicated are more likely to be committed and have an emotional buy-in to the new corporate brand post rebranding

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A summary of the effects that employee engagement as a response to the corporate rebranding strategy has on employee buy-in is summarised in a case ordered effects matrix table 6.2 in the next page.

Table 6. 2: Case-Ordered Effects Matrix: Employee Engagement

	Employee Response		Effects on Employee Buy-in for each Case
	A, B, C	D	
Employee Engagement	Clarity and better understanding of the brand	Didn't really affect my engagement	Moderately strong (A, B, C) No Effect (D)
	Highly engaged because of my role (brand-focus)	New look so more aware of the new	
	I would defend the brand	Brought some energy and newness	
	I can do my job better	Did not affect my engagement	
	Employee Engagement-Role Type: Brand champions as intermediaries to communicate	No evidence	
	Brand understanding was higher	No evidence	

6.5 Employee Buy-in

The three main elements identified in the internal corporate rebranding process across the cases A, B and C that positively influenced an employee's buy-in were, the involvement of employees, internal brand communication and the role of leadership in facilitating the process. In case D however, the involvement of employees was limited, and the internal communications was not continuous throughout the rebranding period. Each of these elements are also factors that contributed to influencing employees and the corporate rebranding outcome positively. The effect of internal brand communications on employee buy-in is discussed in section 6.1.3. Their role of leadership and employee involvement as factors affecting the employees buy-in are discussed below.

6.5.1 Employee Buy-in and Employee Involvement in Corporate Rebranding

In cases A, B and C, involving employees was considered significant in the rebranding process and was strongly driven by senior management. In case D however, the initiative and proactiveness from senior management to involve every employee and department was absent. Consultations with employees were held at various stages of the corporate rebranding process up until the launch to collect their opinions and feedback on the changes that were being made to the corporate brand. Figure 6.10 depicts the cross-case analysis of the coding references for

employee involvement and employee buy-in that was used in identifying the relationship between the concepts. The diagram shows the presence of codes that reflect employee involvement and employee buy-in in most of the case study participants.

Participants commented about their involvement in the corporate rebranding process in various ways. The level of involvement also varied among the participants.

Participant A7: "And I remember that they had a number of consultations that started if I remember well with the kind of definitions for the vision and mission statements. So basically, what will they stand for? I think there was also a consultation to sort of discuss the strategic objectives of the business school because I think in parallel with the rebranding, we also developed new strategic objectives for the Business School".

Participant B1: "We developed the brand narrative and the proposition, the messages through a consultation process with employees".

The consultation process was driven by the senior management and it was designed to be a very democratic and collaborative process. The internal rebranding process was thus collaborative, in that there was a sincere attempt to engage all the employees in the process of making decisions about the brand's identity.

Participant A7: "We were not kind of pushed ideas from starting. Basically, every single time we had a meeting we knew the outcome of the meeting was a number of scenarios and things to discuss so I think it was collaborative as a process".

Figure 6. 10: Cross-Case Analysis –Employee Involvement and Employee Buy-in
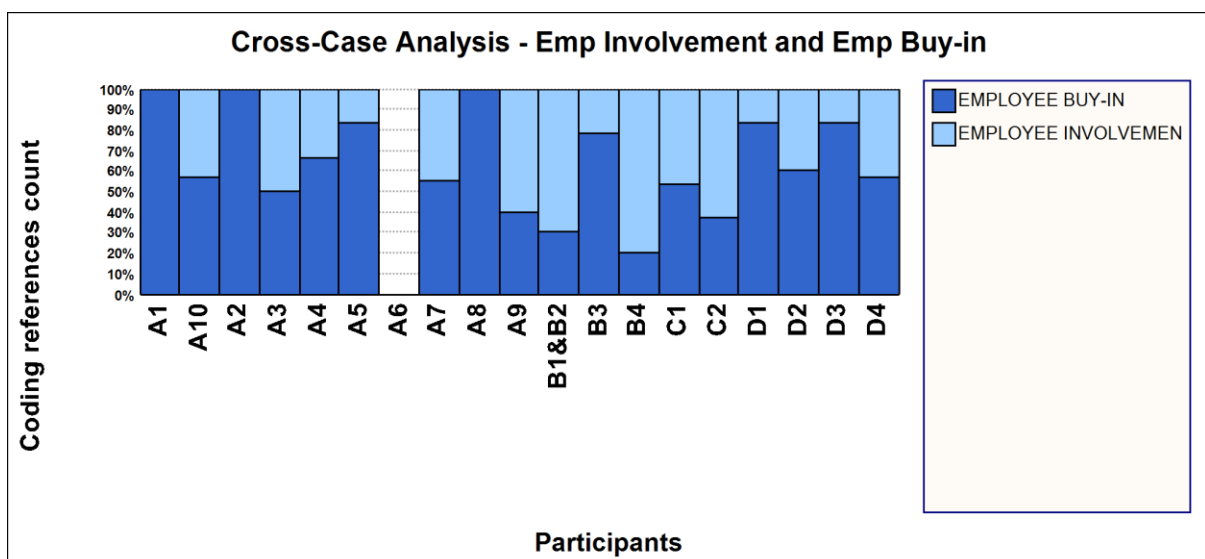
Feedback about the changes were collected primarily through surveys, town halls, workshops, and departmental meetings. However, involvement in the consultation process was voluntary and some employees such as academics and a few departments were not as involved as others.

Participant A10: "I have worked with the marketing team to ask for transparent and black and white logos which they'd have to then go and create, that's it. But I didn't have the opportunity to say that this is what this brand would look like or present my feedback for how it would look like on a global scale".

There were also a few focus groups with management and the selected brand champion within a faculty or department to collect information and offer feedback to other employees.

Participant B2: "So, brand champions... we've recently decided to run photography workshops across the whole organization because there is so much photography that's happening across the university. And we want people to be able to get it right because we've got a very set style. And so, we went out to our brand champs and said, you know, this is opened up to staff and we've had an influx of information".

For those employees that were involved, a sense of ownership to the new corporate brand identity was developed. Employees felt like they were a part of the outcome and this eventually led to the buy-in of the rebranded identity. The brand champions in addition had a role to communicate about the new corporate brand and therefore had a deeper involvement with the brand.

Participant C2: "Now that we're starting to roll it out, I think they feel more ownership of the brand because they had a part in it".

Participant A5: "But yes, I feel I've got buy in because I help shape it".

Participant B4: "So yeah just being a constant part and seeing the progress you know and maybe now as well like in the job as well that I mean I still feel like I'm overseeing the brand...Yeah definitely having been more involved in it I think really helps my buy-in".

Hence the proposition:

> **Emerging Proposition:**
>
> *P1 e-i) The active involvement of employees in the corporate rebranding process by giving their views and opinions to develop the new corporate brand strongly influences their buy-in of the corporate brand*

In two of the universities (cases A and B) participants expressed their agreement to the need to rebranding the brand identity. This agreement meant that they involved themselves in the corporate rebranding process and it contributed to their initial buy-in. Any resistance to the corporate rebranding strategy and the changes that followed appeared minimal from the employees that were actively involved. A few of the participants comments are below:

Participant B3: "It was a positive one I think it was something that needed to happen. And coming out of the other side it was a good thing to have happened".

Participant B4: "The previous brand had a long history of being a polytechnic as well so it was time to kind of just say you know we're trying to make an impact and I think that it was long needed and especially with the recent achievements we've had…to have that wider impact".

On the other hand, there were those that did not buy-in, and those participants didn't completely agree to the rebranding and were not involved in the process. They commented that they did not see anything wrong with the current brand's visual identity and that if changes were being made then it should include the name and the brand values.

Participant D4: "…I think if you're going to make the rebranding changes, they should be much more significant. They should be much, they could have taken to, um, uh, to differentiate themselves or the University, uh, from other universities much more significantly".

Based on the above findings the following proposition is made:

> **Emerging Proposition:**
>
> *P1 e-ii) The active involvement of employees in the corporate rebranding process positively influences their agreement and acceptance of the changes to the corporate brand and the strategy*

6.5.2 Employee Buy-in and the Role of Leadership in Corporate Rebranding

The leadership in each of the cases (A, B, C and D) represented the dean of the faculty, managers within the marketing and communications department and the vice chancellor of the university. They constituted the senior management in each of the case studies. Their contribution to the corporate rebranding strategy was discussed by the participants and are detailed below. An explore diagram showing the main theme role of leadership, its sub themes, and the relationship with employee buy-in is displayed in figure 6.11. The role of leadership ie: senior management in the corporate rebranding process internally was identified as a new influence when exploring the transcripts of a few participants in the middle and lower management levels.

Another factor that influenced buy-in was that employees felt there was some truth in what was communicated about the brand. It was said that the messages about the brand and what it stood for were being implemented and acted upon especially by senior management within the Business School. This was a positive influence and created a sense of belief in the brand which contributed to buy-in.

Participant A4: "The only thing I would say is that having worked in another top business school, the mission tends to blur into one in terms of like impacting Society and be the best in business. A previous business school I have worked for has a very similar mission. But I certainly feel it more here. I feel like its and I'm not saying that just because I work here but I feel like there is more of a drive to act on some of those things we are talking about".

The living out of the brand values needed to start at the top but then its effect was expected to be felt in other faculties and departments as pointed out by a participant:

Participant C1: "...And I think that, just maintaining a level of guardianship over it as well. I think that, you know, that sits in several different places, it needs to come obviously from the top, but then across the marketing department and across senior stakeholders across the rest of the institution, um, ensuring that we are fulfilling those values and holding people to account against those values as well. And highlight and if anyone is conflicting against them...."

Figure 6. 11: Explore Diagram – Role of Leadership and Employee Buy-in
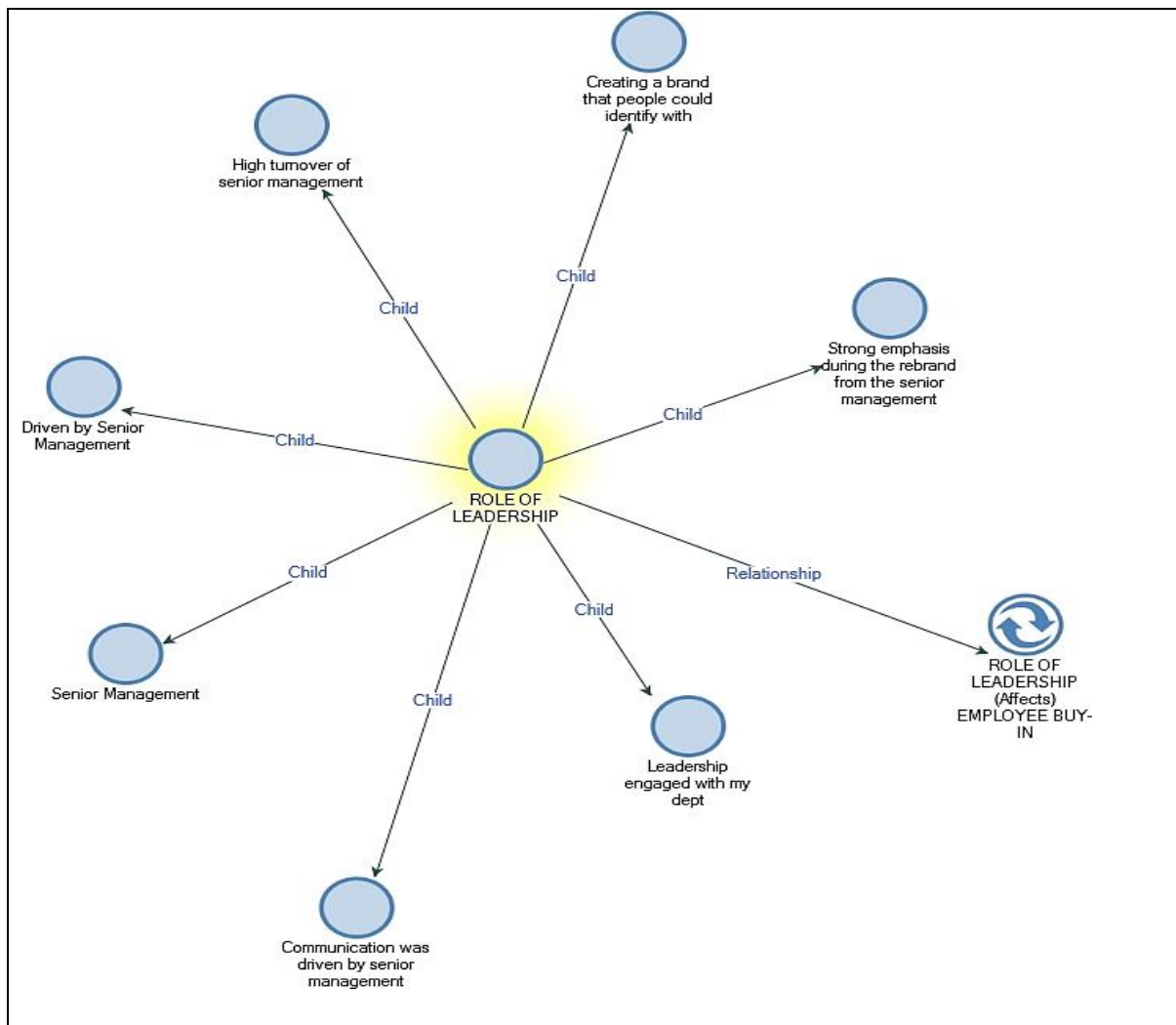
This approach from management to be a role model and act out the brand values was a message to employees of what was expected from them during and after the corporate rebranding process was completed internally.

A senior manager from case C reported this:

Participant C1: "...what I've learned over the last eight months is being really clear of what are the skillsets that enable people to thrive in this environment, not make them feel stressed. And then you've got to communicate that in, in your kind of manual that this is the organization we want to be mirroring... You know, people at the beginning people were saying we're changing all the time. And I was like, but that is the world. We've got to mirror that internally. There are things that will be stable throughout, but we've got to create a culture here that will be continually changing".

It is therefore proposed that:

> **Emerging Proposition:**
>
> *P1 f-i) The active role of leadership in facilitating the development of the new corporate brand internally and in modelling the new corporate brand values has a positive influence on an employee's belief in what the corporate brand represents enabling their buy-in*

In universities A, B and C's rebranding, participants expressed their delight due to the clear and expressed support from their senior management such as the vice chancellor of the university and dean of the business school.

Participant A4: "...I feel like there is more of a drive to act on some of those things we are talking about. And more sort of passionate senior leadership buy-in into what that means and how to make it happen".

The support from senior management was felt by employees in a few ways. One of the ways this came across was in the discussions and messages from the dean or the vice chancellor in various department meetings, townhalls and online newsletters.

Participant A9: "...there were a lot of workshops with junior through to, to senior management involved in those, just around what messaging we're trying to get in each region in each thing."

Participant B2: "Our Vice Chancellor regularly does town halls. So, the ones that were within the critical points within the rebrand programme, we did, we focused town halls on those, he was absolutely amazing really, great job, really good job".

Participant C1: "It's all been driven by the Vice Chancellor and the vision that came in when, when she (Vice Chancellor) joined us".

Senior management were responsible in driving other department managers in ensuring they were involving as many employees and other stakeholders as possible in the workshops and consultation exercises.

Participant B2: "So, we were regularly challenged about how many people we've spoken to, have we spoken to enough students, have we spoken to enough community? It's absolutely

driven from him and I think that made such a difference to the program because he was really passionate about what we're doing and how we're doing it".

It is therefore proposed that:

> **Emerging Proposition:**
>
> *P1 f-ii) The leadership's buy-in and visible support in driving the corporate rebranding strategy internally to employees has a positive influence on their response to the changes to the corporate brand*

An extension to the existing framework is also proposed in the form of two possible reasons for strengthening the relationship between Internal Brand Communication activities about the new corporate brand and the Employee's Buy-in.

Table 6.3 provides an overview of the effects of employee involvement and the role of leadership on an employee's buy-in. The table highlights that the involvement of employees in the corporate rebrand creates affects the employee's acceptance of the new corporate brand and their agreement with the changes made to it. This effect was significantly observed in case's A, B and C but was almost non-existent in case D. Further, the role of the university's leadership in the corporate rebranding process internally, developed the employee's belief in the new corporate brand values and produced a positive mindset in them. The presence and role of the leadership was experienced more in case's A, B and C than in D. Hence employee buy-in had a moderate to strong influence from the involvement of employees and the role of leadership in cases A, B and C than in D.

Table 6. 3: Case-Ordered Effects Matrix: Employee Involvement and Role of Leadership

Factors	Cases A, B and C	Case D	Effect on Employee Buy-in for each Case
Employee Involvement			
Significance	Significant and important part of the process	Not very significant	
Support	Yes, active support from leadership	Not evident	
Channels	Quite a few workshops, consultation meetings and surveys spread in different phases within the process	A few presentations from the marketing team	
Level of Involvement	Voluntary but a high participation rate from many employees	Little or no involvement	
Effect	Acceptance of the brand, agreement with the changes, strong buy-in	Disagreement with the purpose and need for rebranding, casual acceptance over time, not too bothered	Strong (A, B, C) Weak or No Impact (D)
Role of Leadership			
Role Models	Managers acted out the brand values	Participants felt brand values should be lived	
Support and Drive	Supported the rebranding process, actively communicated with employees, and was involved	No clear evidence	
Effect	Employees believed in the brand values, employees felt involved in the process, positive about the changes to the brand	Perception that everything was centrally controlled	Moderately Strong (A, B, C) Not visible, Low impact (D)

6.6 Internal Brand Communication, Employee Identification and Employee Buy-in

For an employee to identify with the organisation and brand they work for they need to have a sound knowledge of the brand promise, values, and identity. The Internal Brand Communication activities in cases A, B and C were persistently sending messages about the rebrand to employees. The participants that embraced the communication sent by the management and the marketing and communications team were those that also mentioned that they identified with the new brand.

The employee's identification with the organisation and the existing corporate brand was affected because of the corporate rebranding. But the internal communication activities were seen to influence this identification assisted by their involvement in the corporate rebranding process and brand understanding. Those that emerged with a closer alignment to the new and revised brand values identified stronger than others. They would also have responded with a higher degree of buy-in. A participant said this:

Interviewer: "Could you give a few reasons why you think that you have bought in over these last few years?"

Participant A7: "First of all I feel that the vision and mission and values are well aligned…they truly reflect my understanding of university A. If I had to come up with these statements on a new brand for university A, I would struggle to come up with something different. I really think you know that it was a good process and the outcome was excellent. So I think I don't have any disagreement with what was agreed. Secondly, as I said before some of these values are well aligned with my personal values and so I think that's another reason and the third reason is the current brand not only does internally reflect the vision it basically reflects who we are today this means you know when I look around university A, I see very entrepreneurial people starting from, students to admin staff to colleagues so, basically they're not preaching who we are not they are like that".

The above quote from the participant emphasises a few distinct reasons to why the employee bought-in to the new corporate brand that helps one look deeper into the state of buy-in post rebranding. The participant explains that his understanding of the university's identity was firstly coherent with what is communicated by the vision and mission statements. This emphasises the role of internal communication in his understanding and the congruency in that communication.

Secondly, the participant's internal values were aligned with that of the university's values. The corporate brand represents the university. This emphasises identification with the values that the corporate brand and the organisation represent. Thirdly, the participant perceived a noticeable coherence in the behaviour of other employees with that of the values of the brand and the university. In other words, there was evidence of employees living the brand. Based on this it is possible to argue that this participant's identification was somehow related to why the employee bought-in and continued in that attitude post rebranding. The researcher thus confirms an earlier proposition made in chapter 3 section 3.2.6 noting employee identification

as a possible enhancer to the buy-in formed because of the internal brand communication activities of the new corporate brand:

> *P4): The lasting impact that internal brand communication activities have on an employee's buy-in is likely to be enhanced by how closely they identify with the new corporate brand after the corporate rebranding strategy has been internally communicated*

6.7 Internal Brand Communication, Employee Engagement and Employee Buy-in

The engagement of employees, especially front-end, in their role was seen to be influenced by the understanding they developed of the new corporate brand. Although the internal corporate rebranding process and the changes to the corporate brand did not affect the employee's motivation generally, it did positively influence their commitment to the university. One of the participants stated this when asked about their buy-in:

Participant A1: "I think that's the reason why I also stayed working here so long because you know, it's all part of what I do and I think understanding what the brand and the school is all about and being able to communicate that has led me to successes in what I do".

The participant in the above quote has clearly drawn attention to her commitment to working for the university and the understanding of the brand. This has also impacted the participant's perception of success in the university. Based on the above reasoning, the researcher suggests and further confirms the following proposition noting employee engagement as a moderator:

> *P5): The lasting impact that internal brand communication activities have on an employee's buy-in is likely to be enhanced by the higher engagement level of employees after the corporate rebranding strategy has been internally communicated.*

6.8 Updated Propositions and Effects Matrix

Based on the discussions in the cross-case analysis the existing propositions put forward in chapter 3 have been checked against the findings cross-case. A few propositions needed to be revised and updated. Emerging propositions from the within-case analysis were cross checked

with what was analysed in the cross-case analysis. The similarities and differences were analysed and synthesised to form compelling arguments. The emerging propositions were also then introduced and added to the list. The framework was then updated with the additional factors that affected the rebranding outcome. The list of updated and emerging propositions along with thematic associations between key themes represented is presented in table 6.4.

These propositions are then followed with a case-ordered effects matrix presented in table 6.5. The matrix represents the effects of the final propositions based on table 6.4 on each of the cases A, B, C and D. The thematic and theoretical associations between key themes are used to represent the propositions. The effects on each case are expressed based on the strength of the presence of confirming evidence for each proposition and thematic association. What is revealing is the diminishing instance of evidence of relationship between certain themes in case D. This has helped the researcher to generalise the findings and evidence theoretical replication (Yin, 2014). It was possible to see how the general findings based on cases A, B and C stood against the findings when key internal factors were absent as in case D. This has further strengthened the associations presented in the theoretical framework and its novelty overall in Figure 6.12.

Table 6. 4: Cross Case Propositions

Proposition No	Existing Propositions	Updated Propositions
P1 a)	In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities about the new corporate brand will shape an employee's perception and foster their identification with the corporate brand	In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities about the new corporate brand will shape an employee's perception and brand understanding and foster their identification with the new corporate brand
P1 b)	In corporate rebranding an employee's understanding of the new corporate brand through internal brand communication activities is likely to help employees be more engaged in their roles	In corporate rebranding an employee's brand understanding of the new corporate brand through internal brand communication activities is likely to help employees be more engaged in their roles
P1 c)	In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities will be instrumental in shaping an employee's perception of the new corporate brand and strengthening their understanding of it leading to their cognitive buy-in	
P1 d)	In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities will be an important influence in strengthening an employee's commitment to the new corporate brand leading to their emotional buy-in	In corporate rebranding the internal brand communication activities will be an important influence in strengthening an employee's brand understanding and their commitment to the new corporate brand leading to their emotional buy-in
		Emerging Propositions
P1 e-i)		The active involvement of employees in the corporate rebranding strategy by giving their views and opinions to develop the new corporate brand strongly influences their buy-in of the corporate brand
P1 e-ii)		The active involvement of employees in the corporate rebranding process positively influences their agreement and acceptance of the changes to the corporate brand and the strategy
P1 e-iii)		Employees that are actively involved in the corporate rebranding process are more likely to identify with the new corporate brand values and identity than employees that are less or not involved
P1 f-i)		The active role of leadership in facilitating the development of the new corporate brand internally and in modelling the new corporate brand values has a positive influence on an employee's belief in what the corporate brand represents thus enabling their buy-in to the corporate brand
P1 f-ii)		The leadership's buy-in and visible support in driving the corporate rebranding strategy internally to employees has a positive influence on their response to the changes to the corporate brand

P2 a)	Employees that have a stronger identification with the new corporate brand are also likely to have a sound understanding of the corporate brand's values and identity thereby exhibiting a greater degree of cognitive buy-in post-rebranding	
P2 b)	Employees that have a stronger identification with the new corporate brand are also likely to have their values internally aligned with that of the corporate brand and be committed to fulfil its goals thus displaying an emotional level of buy-in post-rebranding	
P3 a)	P3 a) Employees who have received internal communication and engaged in their roles are likely to exhibit a greater degree of cognitive buy-in to the new corporate brand post-rebranding	Employees with front-end or brand-centric roles and highly engaged after the corporate rebranding strategy has been internally communicated are more likely to exhibit a greater degree of cognitive buy-in post rebranding
P3 b)	Employees who have received internal communication and are engaged and committed to their jobs are likely to have an emotional buy-in to the new corporate brand post-rebranding	Employees with front-end or brand-centric roles and highly engaged after the corporate rebranding strategy has been internally communicated are more likely to be committed and have an emotional buy-in to the new corporate brand post rebranding
P4	The impact that internal brand communication activities have on an employee's buy-in is likely to be enhanced by how closely they identify with the new corporate brand	
P5	The impact that internal brand communication activities have on an employee's buy-in is likely to be enhanced by the higher engagement levels of employees	

Table 6. 5: Theoretical Propositions and Outcomes: A Cross-Case Ordered Effects Matrix

Proposition No	Theoretical Association	CASE A	CASE B	CASE C	CASE D	Cross-Case Outcomes
P1 a)	Internal Brand Communication _ Employee Engagement	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P1 b)	Internal Brand Communication _ Employee Identification	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P1 c)	Internal Brand Communication _Cognitive Buy-in	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P1 d)	Internal Brand Communication _ Emotional Buy-in	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P1 e-i)	Employee Involvement _ Employee Buy-in	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P1 e-ii)		✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P1 e-iii)	Employee Involvement _ Employee Identification	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P1 f-i)	Role of Leadership _ Employee Buy-in	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P1 f-ii)	Role of Leadership _ Employee Buy-in	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported

P2 a)	Employee Identification _ Employee Buy-in	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P2 b)		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P3 a)	Employee Engagement _ Employee Buy-in	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P3 b)		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Supported D – Not Supported
P4	Internal Brand Communication _ Employee Identification _Employee Buy-in	✓✓	✓✓	✗	✗	A – Supported B – Supported C – Not Supported D – Not Supported
P5	Internal Brand Communication _ Employee Engagement _Employee Buy-in	✓✓	✗	✗	✗	A – Supported B – Not Supported C – Not Supported D – Not Supported

✓✓✓ Strong presence; ✓✓ Moderately Strong presence; ✓ Weak presence; ✓✗ Very Weak presence; ✗ No presence and little or no evidence

6.9 Revised Framework on Corporate Rebranding and Discussion

The proposed theoretical framework as highlighted in chapter 3 (Figure 3.1) displays the internal brand communication within the internal strategy that affects the response of employees and the resulting outcome impacted by the internal brand communication and the employee response. Based on the cross-case findings that includes existing and emerging themes, a revised framework is proposed. This framework displays the initially proposed and emerging themes in the internal rebranding strategic process discovered during the analysis that, affect the buy-in of employees' and strengthen it post rebranding. It also represents the role that the cognitive, emotional, and psychological characteristics of the employee in the form of engagement (Kahn, 1990) and employee identification (Mael and Ashforth, 1992) has on employee buy-in. The revised theoretical framework thus answers the research questions and extends the understanding of the 'how' to structure the rebranding strategic process internally to generate the intended outcome in corporate rebranding.

The revised framework was developed based on the final list of propositions and thematic associations discovered during the cross-case analysis process. This represents an extension to the scholarly discussion on corporate rebranding but from an internal perspective. Extant literature has focused a lot more on the effects to external stakeholders such as customers and shareholders (Kaikati and Kaikati, 2003; Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007; Zhao, Calantone and Voorhees, 2018, etc…). This research however has been able to examine the internal processes carried out as a part of the corporate rebranding strategy from an employees' perspective.

In the process, internal factors that contributed to the employees understanding of the corporate rebranding decision and changes to the corporate brand are identified. The employee's response to the new corporate brand is further explained by the degree that they identify with the corporate brand and the engagement in relation to their role and the brand. Finally, the effects of the internal rebranding process and the employee's response on the internal rebranding outcome in the form of employee buy-in is examined. The research has also attempted to examine if the degree of identification and engagement levels of employees could enhance the effect that internal brand communication activities have on the employee's buy-in.

This novel and insightful framework in figure 6.12 extends the current scholarly discussion on corporate rebranding and brings clarity to how employees could accept the changes to the new corporate brand and respond positively to the corporate rebranding strategy if, carried out in the way described through the framework.

Each of the emerging factors in the internal process of corporate rebranding i.e. employee involvement and the role of leadership, warrants a discussion. Employee involvement in this study refers to the inclusion of employees in the design and development of the new corporate brand. Various scholars (Lomax and Mador, 2006; Miller and Merrilees, 2013; Chad, 2016) and practitioners (Grounds and Harkness, 1998), have emphasised the salience of involving employees in the corporate rebranding strategy. Adopting a more consultative or collaborative approach to engage employees in the corporate rebranding process also helps in building support for the new corporate brand (Golant, 2012; Miller and Merrilees, 2013). In this study, the involvement allowed employees to provide their views and opinions to the decisions that were made about the new corporate brand. Employees that were actively involved in building the new corporate brand and who contributed to the decision making had positive feelings about the corporate rebranding strategy (Furst and Cable, 2008).

The corporate rebranding strategy involves minor or major changes to the corporate brand and its elements (Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007) is an organisation wide change. Scholars have hence used change management perspectives to research about the implementation of the corporate rebranding strategy in organisations (Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010; Chad, 2015) to overcome typical change management issues such as employee resistance to the change. It is interesting to note that the degree of involvement that employees have in the change process produces a positive attitude in employees thus reducing the resistance to change (Morgan and Zeffane, 2003). In cases A and B, the analysis showed that employees developed a better understanding of the brand than those that were less or not actively involved in the process. Actively involvement helped employees communicate about the new corporate brand confidently to others, be clear in its application to their work roles and develop a sense of ownership for the revised and new corporate brand.

In this study, the role of leadership was also seen to facilitate positive perceptions of the corporate rebranding strategy and the changes to the corporate brand that followed among employees. In the internal brand building process such as in the formation of a new corporate brand in corporate rebranding, the leadership plays an important part (Vallaster and de Chernatony, 2006). Their role in developing the brand vision, facilitating the corporate rebranding strategy and driving it and communicating with employees are shown in literature (Vallaster and de Chernatony, 2005; Miller and Merrilees, 2013). Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005, 2006) in their study contend that leaders represented by the managers play an important role in facilitating a change to the employees brand supportive behaviour. Leaders are expected

to be seen and active in communicating the corporate brand and modelling the values through non-verbal cues and social interactions with employees (Vallaster and de Chernatony, 2006). They were not expected to manipulate employees into living the brand but instead be an example of the brand values in their own behaviour and commitment to the brand (de Chernatony and Segal-Horn, 2003).

Two specific functions were performed by leadership in this study, one of which was to be role models of the espoused corporate brand values and the second was to be visibly supporting and driving the internal processes in the corporate rebranding strategy. Various participants mentioned that the leadership consisting of the university's senior management, facilitated the internal processes by being involved in meetings, and communicating updates regularly through townhalls, newsletters and online. A few managers at one of the cases alluded to how they were keen on living the brand values so that employees would follow suit. Employees equally acknowledged the importance of the presence of leadership behind and in front of the process. A few participants added that this brought clarity about the brand identity and its place in the strategic plans and in their roles. A good coordination between employees and a strong leadership are important contributors to achieving the objectives of the corporate rebranding strategy (Kaikati, 2003; Merrilees and Miller, 2008).

The importance and influence of leaders in an organisation's change management initiative is also well established in literature (eg: Gill, 2002; Kavanagh and Ashkanasy, 2006). As implementing change is a part of corporate rebranding, the role of leadership in facilitating this change is an important factor in its success. The organisation's leadership however can also make the process challenging and a hindrance to achieving successful rebranding outcomes. For example, a top-down approach to the corporate rebranding strategy internally where senior management decides the new brand values and communicates them downward hinders the success of the corporate rebranding strategy (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014) .

Developing a sound understanding of the corporate brand by leaders is an enabler of the success of the corporate rebranding strategy (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014). This is built on, thorough market research to gather knowledge of competitors for positioning and, the knowledge of what stakeholders such as customers and employees perceive about the organisation (Rhee and Han, 2006; Bradbury and Catley, 2007). The knowledge helps in the formulation of corporate brand attributes and values that are attuned to the marketplace and stakeholders (Schultz and Hatch, 2003).

In this study the internal communication of the new corporate brand was an important influence on the employees understanding of the corporate brand. Internal brand communication activities through various channels such as newsletters, townhalls and websites, and training programmes are an important means to promote a shared understanding of the corporate brand identity, and encourage employees and managers to support and buy-in to the new corporate brand (Daly and Moloney, 2004; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). Also, if employees develop an understanding of the new corporate brand and assume responsibilities in the corporate rebranding process, then behavioural support begins to emerge (Merrilees and Miller, 2008; Schultz and Hatch, 2003).

Employees in this study commented on the influence of the internal brand communication on their buy-in of the new corporate brand. Previous studies have shown how internal brand communication activities contribute to positive and brand supportive behaviour (King and Grace, 2008; Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson, 2009). Employees in this study that received internal brand communications demonstrated sound knowledge of the new corporate brand and a positive attitude towards the brand.

However the internal communication must be consistent post rebranding so all employees continue to increase in their understanding of the new corporate brand (Lomax and Mador, 2006; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011). In one study on non-profit organisations, it was found that, employees and volunteers who were emotionally attached to the organisation expressed strong dissatisfaction to the decision to rebrand as they had to modify or change their perceptions of the identity that existed (Lee, 2013) which could affect its success. Hence the organisation should continue with their internal brand communication activities.

The revised framework in figure 6.12 shows the influence of internal brand communication on the employees' identification of the new corporate brand. Extant studies of front-line employees in the service sector showed that the communication of brand-related information increased the employee's identification and the internalisation of corporate brand values (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011; Baker *et al.*, 2014). The front-end employees in roles related to careers and student recruitment in the case study organisations in this study responded positively by internalising the revised brand values that were communicated and grew in their identification with the new corporate brand.

Employees that had a stronger degree of identification in this study also expressed a positive attitude towards the changes to the corporate brand and eventually bought-in to the new

corporate brand. This coincides with the literature that shows that an employee's identification with the corporate brand and the organisation impacts on their brand supportive behaviour (Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson, 2009; Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos, 2014; Buil, Martínez and Matute, 2016).

This study also established a relationship between the engagement of employees in their roles and their buy-in to the new corporate brand. extant literature on employee engagement has shown how engaged employees are more productive, satisfied at work, and highly committed to the organisation (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Saks, 2006). They are also expected to be in higher quality relationships with management when their contribution and commitment is reciprocated with favourable support from the organisation (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Engaged employees are therefore likely to have a more positive attitude towards the organisation. In this study the internal brand communications enhanced the employees brand understanding and helped them relate the new corporate brand and its goals to their own roles. Such employees reported that they had bought-in to the changes to the corporate brand. A few others also reported that their engagement and commitment was not affected as much by the corporate rebranding strategy.

As seen in figure 6.12 employee buy-in was affected by the employee's identification with the corporate brand and their engagement in their roles especially front-end roles. A higher degree of employee identification and a higher level of engagement supported by the employee's expert level brand understanding was seen to be an indicator to achieving a stronger degree of buy-in to the new corporate brand post rebranding. Therefore, in the light of some emerging evidence from participants it is argued that a lower degree of identification or the lack thereof because of sparse or minimalistic internal brand communications, the effect that the brand communications have on an employee's buy-in is also weakened. Additionally, if the employee's engagement in their roles is not as high as it should be because of sparse internal brand communications then that also reduces the effect that the brand communication can have on employee buy-in.

Finally, the revised conceptual framework in figure 6.12 is seen to be as a facilitator to gaining success in the corporate rebranding strategy by gaining support, acceptance and more importantly buy-in from its employees.

Figure 6. 12: Revised Theoretical Framework on Corporate Rebranding (created by the author from primary data)
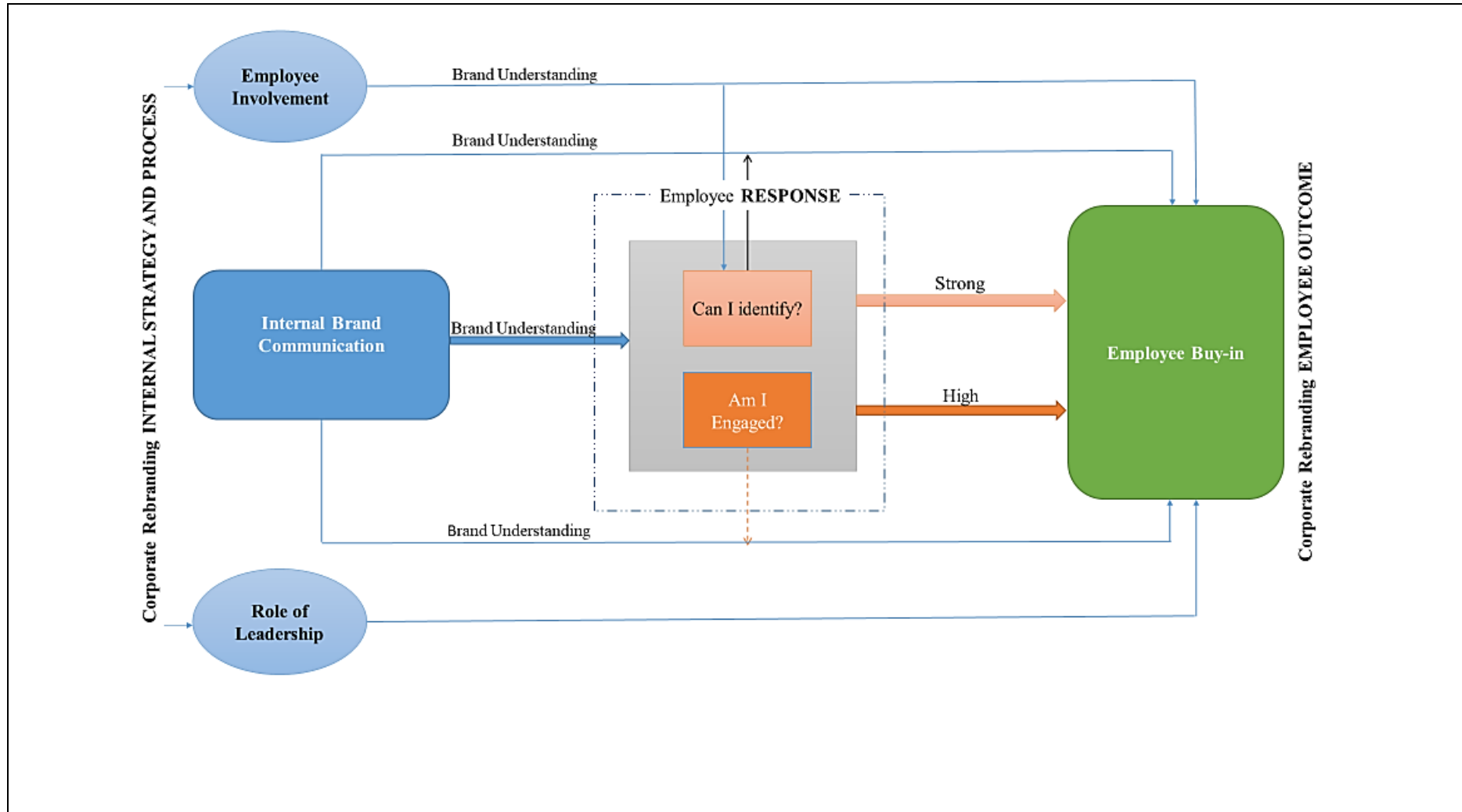
6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a clear discussion on the findings that emerged from a thorough cross-case analysis of cases A, B, C and D. The propositions initially identified in chapter 3 were matched with the findings across all the cases. This produced a list of updated and revised propositions that also included emerging propositions identified in chapter 5 through the within-case analysis. This final list of propositions represented key thematic associations between concepts that were also important to revising the theoretical framework initially proposed.

One of the new themes that emerged was the involvement of employees in the internal rebranding process and its relationship with employee identification and buy-in. Another important theme was the role of leadership in being role models of the brand values and in supporting and driving the rebranding process. This theme also had a relationship with the buy-in of employees. The effect of these key theoretical associations was then examined on the internal rebranding outcome, post rebranding employee buy-in. There was strong evidence of the presence of most of the thematic associations proposed and identified in cases A, B and C. Associations such as internal brand communication and employee buy-in, employee involvement and buy-in, internal brand communication and employee identification among others has strong justification from the data and were therefore supported in the cases A, B and C.

In case D however these associations were not supported with strong evidence from the data. There was a greater evidence of theoretical replication in cases A, B and C relative to case D (Yin, 2014). This allowed the researcher to find strong support for the propositions and therefore the framework. The theory put forward on corporate rebranding from an internal employees' perspective was hence established. The next chapter will discuss the contributions made from this research to corporate rebranding theory, implications and recommendations for managers and explore areas of further research in this topic area.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION, CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

7.1 Conclusion

The findings helped answer the research questions and supported extant literature on corporate rebranding. With the help of qualitative data this study was able to explain the corporate rebranding process and analyse the rebranding outcome expected from an employee by the organisation. The corporate rebranding process consisted of a few phases that included formulating a revised brand vision and brand value statements for the new corporate brand. The organisation then communicated the new vision and brand values internally though various channels so that employees could buy-in and be committed to it (Merrilees & Miller, 2008). Although internal brand communication activities were initially considered the main component of the corporate rebranding process, an additional two elements were further uncovered. Employee involvement and the role of leadership emerged as important parts of the process and in achieving buy-in.

The study also purposed to identify internal factors that affected the employee buy-in post rebranding. In addition to employees being actively involved in the corporate rebranding process and the role of leadership in being role models and supporters of the process, the significant role of employee identification and engagement levels also emerged. A unique discovery was how these two factors contributed to strengthening the post rebranding buy-in of employees that came about because of the internal corporate rebranding process. The identification of employees with the new corporate brand and the organisation were seen to act as a catalyst to their buying-in to the new corporate brand. Employees whose internal values aligned with the brand values and had a stronger identification were found to be more likely to buy-in to the new corporate brand. Similarly, the study also shows how employees with moderate to high engagement levels within their roles, especially front-end roles such as that of student recruitment or careers coordinator, were also more likely to buy-in.

Finally, the employees buy-in also persisted at the time of the study which was approximately 2-3 years from the launch and implementation of the new corporate brand. The post rebranding buy-in was therefore attained by the interplay of the factors mentioned above and throughout the findings in chapters 5 and 6.

7.2 Answering the Research Questions and Objectives

The corporate rebranding process primarily consists of the new corporate brand building phase and the communication phase. Literature and existing corporate rebranding theory focus mainly on the communication phase and then the implementation and outcome of the corporate rebranding strategy internally. In this study however, the author was also able to look further into the brand building phase.

The tasks in the new corporate brand building phase has to do with writing or revising the corporate brand vision, brand values and the design of the brand's visual identity elements. The corporate brand vision and values are mainly discussed and set by the leadership and senior management according to literature. However, in three of the four cases in this study employees were also involved in this phase. This was an interesting addition to the process, and it triggered a set of positive responses from employees towards the corporate rebranding strategy. Again, new, and interesting insights were received with respect to the role of leadership in the brand building and communication phases.

Employees were involved in the corporate brand building phase to provide their views and perspectives on the design of the visual identity elements of the new corporate brand such as logo, colour schemes and tag lines. Additionally, employees were also asked for feedback on the designs that were implemented, or other decisions taken about defining the identity of the new corporate brand. The involvement of middle management employees also extended into the development of the vision and values of the new corporate brand. Although all employees were invited to be involved, only a selection of employees took part in the brand building phase. Employee involvement was mostly from employees with administrative, student facing, management and marketing and branding roles in the universities.

Academics generally were the least involved. One explanation received for this lack of involvement was the apparent differences between the academics' research output and the university's intended research direction. According to them, the university's intention was a lot more external and market focused with an objective to improve rankings and attract more students. This created a tension which resulted in their disconnection with the corporate rebranding strategy. This of course was not a major issue for employees in non-academic roles and their active involvement in the brand building phase added a strong influence on their strength of buy-in of the new corporate brand. The benefits of employee involvement in decision making (Cotton *et al.*, 1988) and in organisational change management (Morgan and

Zeffane, 2003) is not new but, its role in influencing the employees response to corporate rebranding especially in gaining their buy-in of the new corporate brand has novelty in it.

The role of leadership or senior management was important in the brand building phase but interestingly it also extended into the communication phase. This phase included internal brand communications send from the leadership and the marketing and branding team to employees. Quite a few of the employees interviewed spoke about and testified to their leadership's, active facilitation of the communication phase and self-modelling of the new corporate brand values. The employees' motivation to involve themselves and accept the new corporate brand was hence influenced by the role of leadership in the communication phase of corporate rebranding (Vallaster and de Chernatony, 2006; Sujchaphong, Nguyen and Melewar, 2015). Thus, the effects of employee involvement and the role of leadership as facilitators and role-models in influencing the employees' response are novel findings and an important contribution to corporate rebranding theory.

In the communication phase, the branding and corporate communications team ensured employees were well informed of the new corporate brand's identity and even trained to use it in their own communications. Various channels such as websites, social media campaigns, newsletters, and townhalls were used by the marketing communications and the leadership team to reach out to employees. Employees that received the communications showed greater brand knowledge and understanding and this contributed to their buy-in of the new corporate brand. Thus, an in-depth analysis and evaluation of the corporate rebranding process and its influence on the buy-in of employees answered the first research question.

The second focus of the study was determining the strength of buy-in post rebranding that would let employees live the brand (Ind, 2003). It was found that the identification of employees played a key role in employees having a stronger degree of buy-in. The qualitative data analysis revealed that employees who were involved in the brand building phase and received internal communications, developed a higher level of identification with the new corporate brand. This in turn influenced their attitude towards the corporate rebranding strategy and the changes to the brand. There was a sense of oneness in that their values and goals seemed to be closely aligned with the vision and values of the corporate brand. There was also less resistance from these employees, and they developed a stronger degree of buy-in. This was affirmed by employees in the interviews a few years after the corporate rebranding had taken place. In the case of a few employees, it was found that the lapse of time after the corporate

rebranding strategy was implemented evoked an eventual passive acceptance of the new corporate brand employees.

With three of the case study institutions, the researcher uncovered employees' views of the engagement levels in their respective roles. Literature on change management notes that when changes are introduced in an organisation it affects the employee's motivation and commitment in their roles (Morrell, Loan-Clarke and Wilkinson, 2004). Corporate rebranding is a type of strategic change in an organisation that affects the corporate brand (Hankinson, Lomax and Hand, 2007; Chad, 2016). When asked about their engagement, there were a few employees that said their commitment to the new corporate brand was independent of the corporate rebranding strategy and that their engagement was not affected much. However, there were also a group of employees who said that their commitment in their roles towards the corporate brand and the university goals were strengthened after the corporate rebranding. This was explained as due to an enhanced understanding and knowledge of the corporate brand and its application to their work. Another explanation was, that their roles in the university were centred on relating their communication with the values and vision of the corporate brand. In other words, their roles were brand-centric and/or external stakeholder facing. This increased their engagement levels and resulted in a greater degree of buy-in.

Thus, it was clear that the employee's identification and engagement were important to consider by managers when implementing the corporate rebranding strategy, and in its internal processes. With the help of consistent internal brand communication activities and active involvement in the corporate rebranding process, employee identification with the new corporate brand can be influenced, contributing to a stronger degree of employee buy-in. Employee engagement is also affected by internal brand communications albeit moderated by the type of role. It enhanced brand knowledge which enabled employees to be more effective in their roles. This influenced employee buy-in and for some employees their buy-in was strengthened because they had brand-centred roles.

7.3 Contribution

This study investigated the phenomenon of corporate rebranding from an employee's perspective in higher education. Previous corporate rebranding studies have focused on external stakeholders and in other sectors, which makes this study unique. This study was conducted approximately 2-3 years after the implementation of the new corporate brand and

its launch in most of the cases. This is an interdisciplinary study as it has used constructs from disciplines outside marketing such as human resources and organisational behaviour which promotes its uniqueness among other corporate rebranding studies. The contributions made to extending the current knowledge of corporate rebranding and to assisting managers in implementing the strategy is discussed below.

7.3.1 Theoretical Contribution

The research contributes by extending the existing knowledge of corporate rebranding theory. A few studies have examined internal aspects of corporate rebranding such as the role of culture (Gotsi, Andriopoulos and Wilson, 2008), employee identity and identification (Stuart, 2012; Gilstrap and Smith, 2016) and a few studies such as Miller and Merrilees (2013) and Chad (2016) have identified what influences buy-in when the rebranding took place. However, none have explored and explained what contributed to employee buy-in post rebranding.

Five aspects of the corporate rebranding process and the employee's response were identified for this study. They are, internal brand communication, employee involvement, role of leadership, employee identification and employee engagement. The interaction of these five aspects in contributing to post rebranding buy-in as seen in the theoretical framework (figure 6.12) is an important contribution to extending the knowledge of corporate rebranding. Two new themes emerged from the data namely, employee involvement and employee identification. Significant contributions have been made to extending our understanding of the attributes of the corporate rebranding process that can potentially achieve buy-in from employees.

The internal brand communication activities contributed to employee buy-in, but it was found that communication alone was insufficient for post rebranding employee buy-in. A positive perception of the corporate rebranding strategy formed through an employee's involvement in the corporate rebranding process and the internal brand communication activities collectively influenced an employee's agreement and acceptance of the corporate rebranding strategy. This positive perception and understanding of the new corporate brand also enabled an employee's identification with the new corporate brand. Similarly, the employee's engagement levels went up in their respective roles.

Two new themes were uncovered in this study namely, employee involvement and the role of leadership. They are important parts of the corporate rebranding process as seen in the case studies. An employee's active involvement in the corporate rebranding process had positive

effects on the employees buy-in. Employees that were involved by expressing their views, opinions, and feedback of the design and attributes of the new corporate brand also expressed a sense of ownership to what was finalised. This helped in the employees buy-in and for many participants this buy-in persisted post rebranding. The data also revealed that the participants that were actively involved also identified with the new corporate brand. Thus, employee involvement also affects an employee's identification with the new corporate brand in corporate rebranding.

The leadership of the organisation had an important role to play in the corporate rebranding process. The main role was that of the facilitator of the process starting with the decision to involve employees. Employee buy-in was more prevalent in participants that belonged to organisations where the corporate rebranding – internal strategy was collaborative and decision making was more bottom-up than top down. Employees were motivated to participate in the corporate rebranding process. The secondary role of the leadership was that of being a role-model. Being a role-model in this study meant that the leader (manager) acted out and observed the values within the organisation. This evoked a sense of trust in the corporate brand and its values. The role of leadership in the corporate rebranding process as facilitator and role-model is an important contribution to the knowledge of corporate rebranding.

An employee's identification with the new corporate brand was important in strengthening their buy-in. A heightened degree of identification and internal alignment of an employee's values with the corporate brand values was evidently salient in strengthening their buy-in of the new corporate brand. Similarly, when the employee engagement levels went up especially of front-end employees that used the brand, it had a positive effect on their buy-in post rebranding. This also contributed to sustaining the employees post rebranding buy-in.

Further examination of the data also shed light on the fact that some employees lacked identification and only had a casual buy-in from employees despite the communication directed at them. For example, the effect of internal brand communication activities on the employees buy-in only resulted in a cognitive acceptance of the new corporate brand. However, when employees had a stronger degree of identification with the corporate brand that was developed because of their brand understanding, they developed a deeper emotional connection with the new corporate brand and considered its success personal. Employee engagement levels varied among the participants. Employees that were highly engaged in their roles showed a greater understanding of the new corporate brand and had stronger buy-in. They were committed to

their tasks and valued the organisation's success. The effects of employee identification and employee engagement on employee buy-in is a novel finding as far as the researcher is aware.

Another contribution is proposing an extension to the existing multi-phase process of corporate rebranding that covered developing brand vision, achieving stakeholder buy-in and rebrand implementation (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). As this study investigated employee buy-in post rebranding its significance from an employee's perspective is now evident. Hence it is argued that an additional phase be added at the end of the multi-phase process identified by Merrilees and Miller (2008), namely post rebranding employee buy-in.

7.3.2 Policy Contribution

Findings of this study are specific to the internal perspective of corporate rebranding strategy, but principles uncovered here can be used to inform policy in organisations implementing corporate rebranding or in the event of organisational change. The policy should lead to the development of a system of implementing corporate rebranding. This system should consist of an input, a process, and an output. This system is elaborated below.

The input to this system is the contribution of employees, middle and senior management. An organisation that has decided to modify or make radical changes to their corporate brand with the intent of repositioning itself in the marketplace should first include the employee voice. The employee's views, opinions and feedback are important in the design and development of the new corporate brand and its identity. Employees of all departments must be included. Contributions from the management are important but should be balanced with constructive feedback from their subordinates.

The process in this system is the way in which the views, opinions and feedback of employees are transformed into decisions that frame the new corporate brand. The process also includes the communication of the new corporate brand to the employees. Internal communication of the new corporate brand and the changes to the existing corporate brand should be consistently done from the start to the completion of the process. The communication should not only be one way but also cyclical where the receiver also sends messages back in the form of what works and what does not. This can then be further used to make final improvements before the launch.

The output in this system includes the launch of the new corporate brand and the buy-in of employees. The lesson learned from this study is that internal communication should not stop at the end of the launch of the new corporate brand but that it should continue for as long as is

necessary. This helps sustain the buy-in and inspires employees to live the brand. This in turn benefits the organisations external stakeholders. A win-win situation as far as the organisation is concerned.

7.4 Managerial Implications

The study contributes to a manager's (both senior and junior) understanding of how to carry out the corporate rebranding process internally and know what factors contribute to an expected outcome internally in the form employee buy-in post rebranding. It is important to note that managers should not take a short-term view by only looking at the immediate results of implementing the corporate rebranding strategy. Instead, the manager should focus on an ongoing evaluation of the cognitive understanding of and emotional attachment to the new corporate brand after the implementation and launch of the new corporate brand. In other words, managers need to be concerned about an employee's post rebranding buy-in to the new corporate brand.

The implication to managers can be explained by applying the framework (Fig 6.12) correctly in the event of corporate rebranding. The framework contains three main elements: corporate rebranding-internal strategy and process that includes internal brand communication, employee response and corporate rebranding-internal outcome. An insight to how the framework should be applied is discussed here.

7.4.1 Corporate Rebranding – Internal Strategy and Process

The process must be bottom-up instead of the other way. There are two important considerations when designing the internal strategy and corporate rebranding process. Firstly, there must be a conscious decision from senior management to involve employees in providing input to designing and building the new corporate brand. In addition to the logo and colour schemes this also includes the strap line or slogan and key messages, brand values and what they think the corporate brand stands for in their experience and perception. Questions like 'who are we?' are typical in this approach.

Secondly, the role of senior management and leadership should be explicit in the corporate rebranding process. Senior leadership should be thinking about being role models by living the corporate brand values decided upon during the corporate rebranding process. This helps employees see credibility in the whole process and it influences their buy-in. Leaders should also show their active support and be involved in facilitating the process. There should be

constant updates from senior leadership sent out in the form of newsletters, updates on a web portal, participating in department meetings and allocating time for brand-talk etc.

Another important aspect of the internal corporate rebranding process is, utilising various communication channels as part of the internal brand communication activities to broadcast information and capture employee thoughts, feelings, and aspirations about the corporate brand. A few effective channels identified in this study were workshops, department meetings and surveys to capture employee views. Newsletters and updates on the intranet were helpful in providing updates especially when they were coming from senior management. An especially useful medium to transfer brand knowledge and values to employees across the organisation is the use of brand champions. It is important that a consistent and continuous stream of communication be maintained throughout the process.

The active involvement of employees and the role of leadership in the internal corporate rebranding process help dislodge employee resistance to the changes being implemented. This was an important finding in this study and will be helpful to managers to develop a positive attitude and response to the changes to the new corporate brand.

7.4.2 Employee Response

A positive response to the rebranding is what managers would want ideally from employees they manage. If the above internal rebranding process is managed as explained, then it is quite likely that employees will begin to respond positively. The internal brand communication activities and channels used should help build an understanding of the new corporate brand. As knowledge of the new corporate brand increases, employees will begin to identify with the espoused brand values. Some employees will begin to internalise these values to where they may find that it aligns with their personal values. This builds a stronger level of identification in the employee. Here it is important to review the communication activities so that information transmitted through brand representatives or other means helps build understanding of the values.

Employees who have a front-end role will be looking forward to understanding how the new corporate brand and its values applies to their roles. Managers at this point should be holding meetings or discussions both formal and informal to communicate key brand messages. They should also be trying to role play these brand values for employees to observe. This builds credibility for the brand values and employees begin to apply it to their own roles. This causes

employees to be more engaged in the process and build the knowledge of the application of the new corporate brand in their roles.

7.4.3 Employee Buy-in Post Rebranding

It is quite likely that there will be an initial buy-in from employees if they were involved in the internal corporate rebranding process. This study shows that internal brand communication activities, the employee's involvement and the role of leadership as described above positively affects the buy-in of employees. Managers should also be now focused on building on this initial acceptance and buy-in to sustaining the buy-in post rebranding. An important way to sustain employee buy-in and strengthen it is by building on the commitment (engagement) and sense of belonging (identification) that employees have towards the new corporate brand.

Managers should consider evaluating an employee's engagement with the corporate brand and their understanding of it through bi-annual or annual performance reviews, especially during the initial period. They can also acknowledge employees that, closely identify with the corporate brand and are highly engaged, and then designate them as brand champions. Brand champions can then be influential and help other employees buy-in to the new corporate brand and model the right behaviour.

An important response from participants about the leadership was about their collaborative approach to include employees in revising the brand. A similar collaborative approach is recommended, as it will help management to collate valuable feedback thereby reducing the level of resistance to changes to the corporate brand. Finally, managers must take responsibility to see that the internal brand communication be continued so that the buy-in can be sustained in the long term.

7.5 Recommendations

A few recommendations in approaching the corporate rebranding strategy in the education and other sectors is mentioned below:

- Internal brand communication should not be sporadic during the rebranding process.
- Internal brand communication should continue post rebranding so that employee buy-in is sustained.
- There must be a focus on developing an internal brand orientated approach within the organisation to systematically accustom employees to the nuances of the brand and its

values. There must be an emphasis on the corporate brand not just being a symbol for external stakeholders but something that should be embraced internally.

- o Employee actions can affect the corporate brand negatively in the eyes of students. This is true for academics, other front-end employees, and managers.

- Create a small group of employees representing all departments and faculties that have regular interactions with management, receiving updates on any developments to the corporate brand. On-going feedback and interaction between management and this steering group is essential.

- Internal stakeholders within all departments and all levels must be encouraged to participate and involve themselves in the corporate rebranding process. The steering group maybe tasked with the responsibility of speaking to employees within their respective departments and communicating information about activities such as meetings, workshops, forums etc.

- o Academics were the least represented group in most of the employee involvement exercises in the case study universities. Attention must be paid to identify ways to engage with academics and debate ways to incorporate a branding focus in teaching and learning activities.

- There must be a yearly review of the activities of the corporate brand steering group to get feedback on the engagement with the brand at the operational levels.

7.6 Limitations and Future Research

This multiple case study research is aimed at the higher education sector covering 4 universities that underwent corporate rebranding. Although qualitative case studies are sampled differently to quantitative studies, one possible limitation is that participant population within each of the cases were convenience and volunteer sampled and so was limited to whoever volunteered for this study. They were however required to fulfil criteria such as having been in the organisation a few years before the corporate rebranding took place. This limited the representation to a few select departments in the university.

Although there were a few academics in the sample, quite a few others turned down the interview request. This again would have helped in having a better selection of participants that represented the university brand to students. Interestingly academics that did participate in the interview especially from case D, was not influenced much by the rebranding and the process. Future research should consider interviewing academic faculty who are research and teaching

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focused to understand their perception of adopting a corporate brand for the university and to identify barriers to accepting it internally.

Understandably, the participants interviewed were found to have the greatest effect on the university's stakeholders such as the students, industry, and the community. However, this maybe a limitation as participants from non-student facing departments were not included. This study was a cross-sectional study to understand what influenced post rebranding buy-in from employees however a longitudinal study would help in understanding processes within universities that sustained the buy-in more than 5 years. This especially includes the benefits of on-going internal brand communication on sustaining the buy-in from employees to the new corporate brand.

Further research needs to be conducted that include primary, secondary, and further education institutions, and colleges in the education sector. Another limitation was the inability to access data from private sector organisations in other sectors and industries such as telecommunication. There could be further research to investigate if the theoretical propositions can be tested quantitatively to establish the relationships between the various constructs in the higher education and other sectors. Also, among private organisations, research should be considered to apply this study's findings to the dynamics of a corporate acquisition from an internal perspective where a stronger brand acquires a weaker brand resulting in the rebranding of the latter.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

<u>Semi-structured Interview Guide</u>

Aim: The purpose of my research is to investigate the impact of employee engagement and the organisational identity of employees on their buy-in to changes in the corporate brand. Specifically, the study is focused on corporate rebranding where changes to, the logo, name, symbol or other brand attributes such as the brand values, are made to symbolise a strategic change or improve the brand image and reputation among stakeholders. Much of this change is communicated through internal branding activities such as workshops, training programs, town hall meetings and other similar programs and hence will be an important part of the study. This study will therefore also examine how internal branding facilitates the changes to the corporate brand.

Thank you for voluntarily taking the time to participate in this research study being conducted as part of my doctoral studies at Newcastle University, London. This interview will be very helpful to understand how employees have responded to changes in the corporate brand (name, logo, brand values etc.) and to recognise how the organisation's internal branding activities has facilitated the process of adapting to the changes.

Please note the following about this interview:

- The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes;
- You are free to withdraw from this process at any point during the interview or request that the recording be stopped;
- The data collected will be considered confidential and not be disseminated to any external sources;
- The data will be stored safely and securely (password protected where applicable) and will only be viewed or used by the researcher and his supervisors;
- The details of the participant will remain anonymous and not disclosed unless I am permitted to in agreement with you;

The results of this study maybe published in research articles and other formal research outputs.

By agreeing to participate in this interview you acknowledge the above information pertaining to the interview.

Participant Details
Title:
Position:

Name of the Company:

Duration of employment:

Interviewer:

Date:

Thank you again for your participation.

A.1 Interview Questions

1. Describe your role in the organisation?

2. What triggered the need for changes to the corporate brand?

   Or In your view, give at least three reasons for the rebranding that took place?

3. What were the key changes to the corporate brand?

4. Can you please name the ways the changes to the corporate brand were internally communicated?

   4.1. Which one of these impacted you the most? And why?

   4.2. How did you communicate these changes to your subordinates?

5. What aspects about the change were communicated via internal branding activities?

6. How has internal branding activities since the changes were implemented helped you?

7. How would you describe your involvement with;

   7.1. your role?

   7.2. and the corporate brand?

8. Since rebranding, has the extent/degree of your involvement with the role and brand changed in any way?

   8.1. If yes, in what way?

   8.2. If no, why?

   8.3. Has internal branding contributed to this in any way?

9. How would you have described the corporate brand before the changes were implemented?

10. What aspect of the corporate brand identity (name, visual identity, values) do you relate to the most? Why?

11. Since rebranding has your relationship with the corporate brand identity changed in any way? If yes/no, why?

12. Do you feel like you understand what the corporate brand stands for since rebranding? (*cognitive buy-in*)

    12.1.   If yes, why?

    12.2.   If no, why?

13. What is your perception of the corporate brand identity since its rebranding?

14. Would you recommend your friends/family to work here?

15. Has your understanding of the corporate brand and its identity been enhanced in any way by the internal branding/communication activities

16. Do you feel able and equipped to meet the future goals of the organisation? If yes/no, why?

17. Looking back, what do you think the organisation should have done before announcing the changes? What makes you say this?

18. Looking back, what do you think the organisation should have done while implementing the changes? What makes you say this?

A.2 Interview Questions for Managers

1. Describe the recent changes to the corporate brand? timeline if possible.
2. Can you describe the corporate/faculty brand's current identity (vision, values, what is the school/brand all about, who are we)?
3. What were the various stages of implementing the rebranding process?
4. How were the changes to the corporate brand communicated internally?
5. Can you describe a few responses internally from staff when going through the rebranding process?
6. How did you facilitate employees to buy-in to the changes?
7. Do you identify with the corporate brand? Do you identify with the organisation? Why do you think so?
8. In your view how important is identification of employees to their buy-in? why?
9. In your view, how important is employee engagement to their buy-in? why?

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL DATA SOURCES REVIEWED FOR EACH CASE STUDY

Case Study A

- Marketing materials such as brochures and leaflets
- Website
- Masters thesis written on the corporate rebranding of the university business school
- Observations of the business school interiors, use of logo and symbols of the visual identity
- Conversation with the director of corporate communications
- Conversation with the senior academic that was in the team that led the corporate rebranding

Case Study B

- Internal brand guidelines prepared for employees and faculty use
- Website
- Strategic plan

Case Study C

- Multimedia presentations on the corporate brand and corporate rebranding strategy
- Website
- Brand marketing videos
- Strategic Vision document

Case Study D

- Powerpoint presentation to employees of the corporate rebranding strategy by the marketing and branding team
- Brand logo and visual identity before and after rebranding
- Website

APPENDIX C: CODING FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

Name	Files	References
CORPORATE REBRANDING- STRATEGY and PROCESS	17	188
Employee Reactions and Perceptions	8	21
A Minor change	3	5
A Minor change	3	4
A positive change	1	2
Adapted to the logo quickly	1	1
Clarity to my job	1	1
Excited	1	1
Focused Communication	1	1
More Corporate Feel	3	5
Branding made it look corporate (image building)	1	1
Made the university look corporate	1	2
More Commercial than Educational	1	1
Branding made it look corporate (image building)	1	1
Made the university look corporate	1	2
Rebranding gave it a corporate commercial feel	1	1
Rebranding gave it a corporate commercial feel	1	1
Nervous about the students view	1	1

Name	Files	References
Personal Motivation not affected much	1	1
Shocked	2	3
Initially shocked at the rebrand	1	2
Shocked initially but quickly adjusted	1	1
Rebranding Process	16	93
Creating sub-brands from the main VI to represent other functions	2	2
Creating sub-brands with sub-logos	1	3
Creating sub-brands with sub-logos and positioning	1	1
Employee Involvement	16	67
Rationale	8	23
Consultations in every area of the Rebrand	8	17
Employees should be involved in the changes	1	1
Involving Emp was fundamental to the rebrand	2	3
Involvement was a choice	8	13
Less involved	4	7
Not involved personally in giving input before the rebrand	2	2
Type of Involvement	6	18
Asked their views	1	1
Focus group with management	1	1
Passive Updates	2	4

Name			Files	References
	Surveys to choose logo		2	2
	Through Consultation		2	4
		Bottom to top process of consultation	1	1
		Consultation-not everyone participated voluntarily	1	1
		Consulted with employees about VI	1	2
	Through Town Halls		1	1
	With Brand champions		1	5
		Appointed Brand champions to give insight	1	1
		Brand champions were effective mediators	1	3
	Collaborative process		4	7
	Driven by Senior Management		1	2
	Vision formation-collaboratively with stakeholders		1	1
Forming a distinct identity			1	2
NVP-Modified the vision			1	1
Phased Process			7	8
Rebrand Implementation was slow			1	2
Rebranding was an institutional event			1	2
Regular communication throughout the process			1	2
Retain parts of its existing identity			1	1

Name	Files	References
Used good practice	1	1
What went Wrong	3	6
Change must be reflected internally	1	1
Decisions more centralised with less emp involvement	2	4
Redoing the marketing was challenging	1	1
Why REBRAND	12	68
Be distinct	2	3
Brand refresh	2	2
Build a reputation based on heritage	1	1
Clarify the Branding	1	1
Communicating the visual identity externally	3	4
Competitive marketplace	2	2
Logo didn't reflect our history	1	1
Logo didn't reflect our story	1	1
Logo-More Modern and make a bigger statement	5	10
Logo-Symbolic of the New but Old brand values	3	9
Name Change-local but linked to the reputed sponsor	1	1
Name change-signified the new approach	1	1
Not enough marketing	1	1
Not sure why	1	2

Name	Files	References
Outdated Brand	1	1
Outdated Visual Identity	1	1
rebranding- aligning the vision and the brand	2	6
Reputation for the name was low	1	1
school was underperforming	1	1
Service staff and reputational issue	1	1
sponsorship by a performing school	1	1
Stakeholders didn't have pride in the logo	1	1
Taking the brand national and international	1	1
To create a brand identity that represented the university	1	1
Unifying Brand CHECK THIS	5	10
EMPLOYEE BUY-IN	19	91
Cognitive BUY-IN	7	17
Involvement and BUY-IN	15	37
EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT	11	20
Rationale	1	2
Consultations in every area of the Rebrand	8	17
Employees should be involved in the changes	1	1
Involving Emp was fundamental to the rebrand	2	3
Involvement was a choice	8	13

Name	Files	References
Less involved	4	7
Not involved personally in giving input before the rebrand	2	2
Type of Involvement	0	0
Asked their views	1	1
Focus group with management	1	1
Passive Updates	2	4
Surveys to choose logo	2	2
Through Consultation	2	4
Bottom to top process of consultation	1	1
Consultation-not everyone participated voluntarily	1	1
Consulted with employees about VI	1	2
Through Town Halls	1	1
With Brand champions	1	5
Appointed Brand champions to give insight	1	1
Brand champions were effective mediators	1	3
Driven by Senior Management	1	2
POSITIVE RESULTS	7	16
Emp took ownership	5	5
Consulted with others	2	2
I helped shape the CB	1	1

Name	Files	References
Got insights into Emp	1	2
Involvement led to Buy-in	4	8
Showed Org was committed to include emp	1	1
Constant updates made me feel a part of it	1	1
Reasons to BUY-IN or NOT	11	27
A positive change	1	1
About Internal Communication	3	5
Agreed to the Visual Identity Changes	1	1
Bought-in eventually	1	1
Bought-in to one of the CB value	1	1
Buy-in after a while	1	1
Buy-in-because I was a brand champion	1	1
Communication is imp to buy-in	1	1
Didn't agree with the need to rebrand	1	1
Effective communication	1	1
FACTOR- We embraced our heritage	1	1
FACTOR-Professional approach	1	1
I believe in the B School	1	1
I need to buy-in	1	1
Like the university and its values	1	1
No Buy-in to the rebranding	1	1
People Act on the values here	2	2

Name	Files	References
Readily accepted the new brand visual identity	1	1
Rebrand was a minor change	1	1
The existing values was aligned with the new brand VI	1	1
The identity made sense	1	1
You get used to it	1	1
Stronger BUY-IN	5	10
Keep us updated of the org branding activities	1	1
Maintaining guardianship over the brand	1	1
more involvement would be even better	1	1
NVP-Heart-sense of belonging	1	4
People Act on the values here	2	2
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	14	51
Corp Brand and Engagement	8	19
Accepted the brand and involved	1	1
Brand is a symbol for the outside	1	1
Brand Knowledge helps me in my job	2	2
ENGAGEMENT and MY ROLE	3	10
Buy-in-because I was a brand champion	1	1
Care about getting the job done	1	1
Committed to the new corporate brand	1	1
Commitment increased post rebranding	1	1

Name	Files	References
Defend the brand	1	2
Highly engaged because of my role	1	2
Very knowledgeable about the brand	1	2
I Talk about the Brand with students	1	1
Imp to do what we say on the brand internally	2	3
Work Engagement	10	24
Brand Knowledge helps me in my job	2	2
Committed and engaged	1	2
Disengaged with the corporate side	1	1
Engaged with my role not the brand	1	1
Engaged with the role and brand	3	5
Engagement with my role wasn't affected	2	3
Going the extra mile	1	1
Highly engaged	1	2
More engaged-Seeing the bigger picture	1	1
New brand VI energised me a little bit	1	3
New brand VI gave a more contemporary feel to my work	1	1
Reb didn't affect motivation	1	1
Rebranding has brought clarity to my job	1	1
EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION	16	63
Attachment and Identification	2	2
My teams and departments success is imp	2	2

Name	Files	References
Emotion and Identification	6	13
Love the university	4	9
Already partially ready to buy-in to the VI rebrand	1	1
Brand likeability and identification	1	2
Emotional identification	1	1
Happy to work here because Bschool is part of Imperial	1	1
I like the Brand and its values	1	1
Liked the heritage and the values	1	2
PRIDE	4	4
Pride in working	4	4
Organisation and Corp Brand Identification	11	24
Brand focus and academic focus don't entirely match	1	2
I want to Identify with the Organisation	1	1
Identified with the brand values	3	3
Love the university	4	9
Already partially ready to buy-in to the VI rebrand	1	1
Brand likeability and identification	1	2
Emotional identification	1	1
Happy to work here because Bschool is part of Imperial	1	1
I like the Brand and its values	1	1

Name	Files	References
Liked the heritage and the values	1	2
Partial Identification	2	2
Positive identification	2	4
Proactively talk about the brand	1	1
POST Rebrand Identification	9	24
Brand Identity-Post Rebrand Thoughts from Portsmouth	2	5
Brand identity-happy that its community focused	1	2
Brand identity-used to be honest	1	1
Rebranding-new identity with the old values	1	1
Rebranding-not happy it made the CB corporate	1	1
Identification- My values aligned with brand values	3	4
Identification- work doesn't influence who I am	1	3
Identification-doesn't believe in aggressive marketing	1	1
Identification-i can live the values	1	2
Identification-proud to work here	2	3
Identification-university values aligned to mine	2	3
Identified with the university ethos	1	1
May increase with being honest	1	1

Name	Files	References
May increase with ongoing communication	1	1
EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT	16	67
1. Rationale	8	23
Consultations in every area of the Rebrand	8	17
Employees should be involved in the changes	1	1
Involving Emp was fundamental to the rebrand	2	3
2. Involvement was a choice	8	13
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3. Type of Involvement	6	18
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With Brand champions	1	5

Name	Files	References
Appointed Brand champions to give insight	1	1
Brand champions were effective mediators	1	3
Collaborative process	4	7
Driven by Senior Management	1	2
Vision formation-collaboratively with stakeholders	1	1
INTERNAL BRANDING	17	74
Employee Perceptions of IBC	7	12
Brand Knowledge needs clarity	1	1
going the xtra mile is more personal than Brand influence	1	1
Important to buy-in	1	1
Internal Comms team is very small	1	1
Internal Communication Declined Post Reb	2	3
Internal Communication was minimal	4	4
Understood the Senior Mgmt point of view	1	1
Internal Brand Communication (IBC) Activities	16	42
BRAND Based Communication	12	23
Brand artefacts	2	2
Brand based activities	2	3
Brand champions	2	4
Brand guidelines were issued	1	1

Name	Files	References
Brand representative pre and during rebrand	1	2
Brand representatives role	1	1
branded clothing for front-end staff	1	1
Branding videos to explain the brand	1	3
Having a Brand makes it easier to communicate	1	1
IC-Brand values were buzzwords	1	1
IC-Comm about the brand identity in meetings	1	1
Interior Decor	1	1
Intranet for Brand Communications	3	3
Brand Building Activities	5	5
Turnover of senior management and lack of communication	1	1
Workshops	4	4
Newsletters	4	5
Biweekly newsletters	1	1
Newsletters	1	1
Vice Chancellor newsletter	1	1
Others	2	2
Town halls	1	1
Updates via emails as necessary	1	1
Staff Meetings	6	7

Name	Files	References
Horizontal comm between managers on brand usage and meaning	1	1
NVP-Consultation-Annual Meetings	1	1
NVP-Meeting with managers	1	1
Post REBRAND Communication	10	20
Brand guidelines were issued	2	2
Communication about the brand guidelines	1	1
Branding videos to explain the brand	1	3
Horizontal comm between managers on brand usage and meaning	1	1
INT COMM Declined	2	3
Internal Comm	6	11
Communicated about the logo chosen	1	1
Communication and implementation was slow	1	1
Internal Communication was minimal	4	4
No regular structured communication	1	2
Updates via emails as necessary	1	1
ROLE OF LEADERSHIP	4	9
Communication was driven by senior management	1	1
Creating a brand that people could identify with	1	1
Driven by Senior Management	1	2
High turnover of senior management	1	1

Name	Files	References
Leadership engaged with my dept	1	1
Senior Management	1	2
Communication was driven by senior management	1	1
Creating a brand that people could identify with	1	1
Strong emphasis during the rebrand from the senior management	1	1