

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

**THE IMPACT OF BRANDING ON CORPORATE IDENTITY. A CASE STUDY OF
MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY.**

BY

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REQUIREMENTS OF A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my Mom Winnie Goreraza.

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I would like to thank the Almighty Jesus Christ, for the gift of life and allowing to me reach this milestone. I would like to thank my parents Mr and Mrs Mutamiri, my beloved sisters Belinda, Crooked Tendai and Davidzo for their sympathy and tireless support during the course of my studies. I also want to thank my supervisor Mr S. Moyo for his patience, ideas and assistance which helped me complete the project. I would like to thank the Department of Public Relations at Midlands State University for assisting me with crucial research information and those who responded to questionnaires. Last but not least, I would like to appreciate the efforts from my close friends for their encouragement and support.

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the impact of branding on corporate identity on a public university. It sought to establish how the public universities can embrace branding as a way to establish a strong corporate identity and the perceived institutional benefits, differentiation, enhance corporate image, improve corporate reputation as well fight competition in the wake of globalisation, marketization of higher education and existing economic challenges. The study was conducted at Midlands State University's newly established Zvishavane Campus. The study draws a comparative analysis of branding from established public Universities in Kenya and South Africa. The methodology used in this research was qualitative with data collection from primary sources through the use of interviews, documentary reviews and questionnaire administration as well as from secondary sources through library research and internet. The results revealed that the newly established public universities has resorted to branding not only to enhance a strong corporate identity as branding is also part of strategic intangible assets for growth and survival in a competitive environment. The issues of reputation, image and personality has thus brought in a new dimension in the Higher Education sector primarily based on attaining a competitive edge, differentiation and enhance perceived identity of the institution which wholly emanate from the brand. The study concluded that the concept of branding and corporate identity in relation to public universities, is somehow a new phenomenon which is different from branding in the commercial sector. The study also revealed dynamics in branding as public universities cannot solely rely on symbols, colours and visual artefacts alone as branding depends on the event, purpose and the message to be communicated. The researcher identified patenting as the major challenge to University branding and recommended that due to the nature of Higher Education Sector branding should be more concerned about creating a who we are for the University which can be equated to the institution's academic reputation as public universities tend to look alike over time and compete less on quality or the price and seek to enhance corporate reputation, strong institutional governance, stakeholder engagement as well as image and personality.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AABS	Association of African Business Schools
ARIPO	African Regional Intellectual Property Organization
HSE	Higher Education Sector
MBA	Masters in Business Administration
MSU	Midlands State University
PCT	Patent Cooperation Treaty
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARUA	Southern African Regional Universities Association
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
ZIMASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio- Economic Transformation
ZIMCHE	Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

This chapter serves as the introduction to the study bringing out what the researcher intends to discuss. This includes the background of the study, the research problem, objectives, significance of the study, limitations and assumptions as well as the theoretical framework. The study seeks to propel a better understanding on the impacts of branding on corporate identity and other benefits associated with branding on public universities such as reputation and differentiation.

Zimbabwean Universities like most in its regional counterparts used to operate as monopolies with virtually little or no competition at all. The idea of marketing Universities was then regarded as an unnecessary cost since the education system was highly segregated with little or no access for the black people during the colonial period. Efforts by colonial government to establish institutions of higher learning in the then Rhodesia can be acknowledged as it contributed to the formation of the first public institution University of Rhodesia in 1952 now known as the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). Upon attaining independence, the new government initiated a massive educational policy and creating more institutions of higher learning in the process. Although public universities outclass private institutions of higher learning, the new environment requires a shift in model from the traditional way to a more competitive business-like mode of operating. Majority of these public universities including Midlands State University were formed in the wake of economic meltdown hence branding and corporate identity cannot just be viewed as a way to enhance successful communication with stakeholders but also a means to gain a competitive edge. This new transformation which can be referred to as “marketization of the academic discourse” reflects a general reconstruction of universities on a market based approach whilst incorporating higher education as a commodity in the system.

1.1 Background of study

According to Kotech and Perold (2010) Zimbabwe’s Higher Education Sector (HSE) comprises of universities, polytechnics and teacher training colleges. In Zimbabwe there is need to acknowledge that higher learning institutions vary considerably in terms of the variety of academic programmes, enrolments process and procedures, student numbers as well as infrastructure and location. With such a notable variation among higher learning institutions there is need for the Midlands State University to create a distinct visual identity as a way to outclass rivals. Melewar and Akel (2005) acknowledged that modern universities

are no longer just regarded as institutions of higher learning but also businesses. This however contradicts with the traditional role of universities where they were regarded as independent institutions for creating and disseminating autonomous knowledge as well as awarding academic qualifications mostly degrees. In light of the shift in model of operation, the new environment requires universities to adopt models and concepts which were previously meant for private sector organisations. The nature of the new Higher Education environment is that now they operate in “markets” which creates competition for universities at both global and local level hence the need to realise the value of a distinctive corporate identity as a strategic resource. According to Melewar and Akel (2005) as with commercial organizations, brand and corporate identity can now be seen as the basis for successful communication with various stakeholders and more importantly a powerful source of differentiation. This help to explain how a successful brand would help to create a unique and unilaterally different image for a public university as the government might seek to create a level playing field for all its state institutions whilst eliminating unnecessary competition in the process.

In light of this new phenomena Zimbabwean public universities should be able to compete with both local private institutions of higher learning and the regional as well as global established universities. According to Butcher et al in Kotecha (2008) as of 2008 Zimbabwe was one of the few SADC countries where public universities still outnumbered private universities (a total of nine public universities against four private universities). According to Dobson (2008) traditionally universities were run by the state whilst primarily financed from the national higher education budget but recently have gained more independency concerning their funding and management. OKM (2009) acknowledged that this had increased the pressures faced by universities but it has also allowed them to clearly profile themselves more in order to compete on international level.

Balmer and Gray (2003) notes that branding a university, like most commercial organization is based upon a strong and distinctive corporate identity managed as a way to communicate the organization’s key characteristics to a variety of stakeholders. This can also be viewed as a way to improve public universities profile and have competitive edge. The new higher education environment makes it critically important for the higher learning institutions to determine what makes them unique. This is particularly due to the fact that establishing a strong corporate identity help to manage stakeholder relationship. The growth of the higher education industry as facilitated by globalisation and successful education policies after

Zimbabwe's independence reflects a massive transformation where public universities don't just need to be more focused comprehensive institutions but rather extremely focused entities clearly distinct from others.

According to Bunzel (2007) there is much greater competition among universities today. In such an environment there is need for the public universities to continually and consistently communicate their brands so that all stakeholders can understand the values and corporate identity of the institution. The need for marketing a university has thus become a global phenomenon. Becker and Palmer (2009) states that the importance of branding a university can vary with size and usually the smaller ones are likely to consider it most. This is particularly facilitated by the need to market themselves and create an improved reputation and identity and gain market share.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There are many factors which contribute to shaping a University brand, which include its academic reputation, athletics, location and distinguished alumni. Globalisation has transformed Higher Education institutions both unconsciously and consciously to ensure they capitalise on their brand identity, especially as related to survival and growth. Corporate identity entails the University should tap the power of the institution's brand and infusing it into all aspects of college life with the aim to create a unique and identifiable experience for prospective students and enhance a strong institutional identity. Although public Universities still has a tendency to look alike and outnumber private institutions, considered as wholly state owned and face almost similar challenges they always seek to execute and achieve their mandates in a unique and different manner. It is from this background that the research seeks to identify the impacts of branding on corporate identity on public University and how they can embrace marketization discourse despite the existing challenges.

1.3 Research Objectives

- To assess how Midlands State University presents its corporate brand.
- To analyse the importance of the branding to the University's corporate identity.
- To assess how visuals are used for branding Midlands State University.

1.4 Research Questions

- Which discourses does Midlands State University employ to present its corporate brand?
- How does the University brand create an identity for Midlands State University?
- What is the importance of visuals to the University's corporate brand?

1.5 Justification of study

The study seeks to reflect on the impacts of branding on corporate identity in developing and transformation of public university and how they can gain a competitive edge over rivals at local, regional as well as global stage. It explains how branding can enhance a strong reputation in public universities and how local universities can attain a strong identity despite the existing challenges within the public institutions. Much literature and research had previously focused on the challenges facing local public universities and sadly without much attention on how institutions of higher learning can be differentiated and fight competition in the wake of these challenges. The research findings are of utmost importance to all relevant stakeholders (both internal and external) in the higher learning industries, to the academics and the Midlands State University at large. The research shall also highlight how the brand communicates the University's mission, strategic direction, values and create unique reputation, as well as the attractiveness of the University's services and products to stakeholders (including prospective and current students and staff, graduates, communities, businesses, professions, partners, agents, affiliates and government). It is the hope and faith of the researcher that it will help Midlands State University with an improved use of the University marks, official insignia, logos and other branding assets.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The research was mainly conducted at the Midlands State University Zvishavane Campus and majority of the staff referred to the Public Relations Office. The students in particular those at Zvishavane Campus reflected a lack of understanding on the concept of branding and corporate identity as they were enrolled for Arts and Mining programmes as well as a small number for Social Sciences with little or no knowledge on the concept and research topic. Some of the interviewed students rarely know much about the institution as they enrolled after the multi-campus approach and have never been at the University's main campus. The research instruments used in the research are questionnaires and interviews. The researcher also didn't not enough resources to visit all the University' campuses

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The research was affected by failure to access confidential information, geography (isolated MSU campuses) and the content of the research didn't not consider much from some stakeholder's perceptions since it was focused on the institution (MSU). The parameters to the research doesn't have a time frame and the case study to was mainly conducted at Midlands State University Zvishavane Campus and the researcher could not access all the

campuses. It was thus not possible to distribute questionnaires or interview at all campuses of the University as most of the communication and information can be obtained from the Public Relations office at Gweru Campus.

1.8 Conceptual framework

The study views branding and corporate identity as part of the strategic processes to manage the organization's overall reputation building and value addition to stakeholder perceptions and enhance corporate image as well as differentiation. More importantly, the study recognises the aesthetics of university branding which emanates from the seal, motto, logos and any other visuals which can be included as a way to establish a strong identity.

The brand of a University cannot simply be simply a slogan or name but rather something visible, intangible which can be viewed as an all-embracing tool. This entails that whatever the university does must be an affirmation of its unique brand identity. According to Melewar and Saunders (2000) an organization's corporate identity is composed of four sub-constructs which are communication and visual identity, behaviour, corporate culture and market conditions. The corporate visual identity of an organization emanates from sub-components which includes the name, symbol and/or logo, typography, colour, slogan and additional graphic elements. Colours are very useful in disseminating the meaning and establishes significant associations of the organization within its various interpretations. Rationality through evenness in corporate identity visual elements is a significant feature of university's reputation which develops over time.

According to Stern (2006) the common interpretation of branding on universities rely on branding as a tool to create differentiation among perceived similar practices and products which they offer. The artefacts of universities which draws attention here are the most formal ones comprising of the university's icons namely the seal, logo and colour. Melewar and Ake(2005) acknowledges that these were originally created for authenticating formal documents with the seal as the most formal of all the university's icons. In most universities the seal is naturally designed as the distinctive symbol of the university's brand and identity, commonly combining various expressions (motto and images, organized in a particular arrangement and accentuated with specific colours) whilst arranging them so uniquely as a means to identify the institution and celebrate its singular character, history, mission or any other features.

Racic (2009) suggested that branding campaigns have resulted in the replacement of old or traditional seals rather, mostly owing to resistance from the university constituents with newly designed iconography added to the traditional seal. In most instances, the seal becomes the symbol of the university on official documents, such as diplomas and certificates, while branded iconography is resembled on media advertising, official public announcements and competitions. Clark (1998) labelled branding of the iconography in universities as a move from emblem to logo (branded iconographic style, concerned with recognition and visibility and with the translation of both into value). This means that even in cases where public universities may choose not to redesign their core icon, majority of them end up modernising the style of their visual material with new aesthetics of iconography on websites, tag lines, letterhead graphics and other publicity material.

Drori et al (2010) argued that stylistic features of this branding trend are graphic or visual simplification (which are less figurative or detailed, more abstract), modern style (fewer ornamentals and typographic serifs, more linear simplicity) and universalistic (less expressive identification that discloses details of sector affiliation or mission, business-like and general in approach). The university's identity creates a distinct personality which can determine the image and perceptions of stakeholders making it a valuable asset. It is widely accepted that corporate audiences rely on the reputation of firms coming out of their identities in making investment decisions, career decisions and product choices (Dowling, 1986). Corporate identity may thus be regarded as a distinct strategic resource for building credibility and support amongst a variety of stakeholders as a way to attain competitive advantage for higher learning institutions. Notwithstanding of how an organization adopts to converse its identity, either in a monolithic or branded form, considerable care must be taken to ensure it disseminates unified voice.

1.9 Theoretical framework

The major challenge in establishing the desired corporate identity theoretical framework was that majority of the available methods, theories and models were developed for the purpose of positioning product brands at the expense of corporate brand. The theoretical approach to the discourse of branding and corporate identity in the research was based on theories of visual identity as reflected by the corporate name, symbol and logotype, typography, colour, and slogan. The research was drawn from established corporate identity theories and models propounded concentrating on the primary elements of corporate identity (visual identity).

1.9.1 Lambert's Corporate Identity model

According to Lambert (1989) it is crucial that all aspects of the organisations pay attention to corporate identity. The idea here was that corporate identity should be incorporated in all aspects of the organisation. In his contributions Lambert (1989) suggest two major definitions of corporate identity. Corporate identity can thus be viewed as the manifestations in an organisation which enhance distinctiveness and reflecting who you are, what you do and how you do it. Lambert (1989) described the model as the iceberg of corporate identity.

The model depicts that corporate identity has two levels which are one below the surface and the other one which is above. Lambert (1989) suggests that below the “surface are the written communications, corporate structure and behaviour”. According to Lambert (1989) this is equal to the visual elements, but it may not be visible to the public. The model further suggests that the “elements are the natural forces of the firm that manifest in the visible elements of the corporate identity”. In the model above the surface are the “visual elements which can also be described as the visual style and include the name of the institution, logo as well as corporate colour scheme. Lambert (1989) maintains that this is the only part of the corporate identity which is visible to the stakeholders. Central to the model is the view that the institution’s visual communication, notably the corporate colour scheme, plays a significant role in effective and successful communication with various stakeholders.

1.9.2 The Corporate Identity model by Melewar and Jenkins (2002)

The model brings together the psychological, graphic design, marketing and public relations standards of the corporate identity and as such can be regarded as the unique representation of the different views and schools of corporate identity. The model aims to achieve a balanced combination between different restraints in the area of branding and corporate identity. The model subscribes that corporate identity is composed from the following sub-elements:

- a) Communication and visual identity
- b) Behaviour
- c) Corporate culture
- d) Market conditions

Source: (*Melewar and Jenkins 2002, p 81*)

In this study the researcher concentrated on the communication and visual identity constructs. This is due to the fact that despite all the established forms of formal communication and successful public relations managements by the University, it is difficult or almost impossible to control all reports about the institution. Melewar et al (2006) suggested that despite all deliberate forms of communication, unintentional messages through third party reports and informal communication can still be transmitted and uncontrollable communication necessarily becomes part of corporate identity. Realising the constant threats of information from third parties which may damage the reputation of the university there is need to communicate a strong message through the brand.

Tahtinen (2014) further suggests that corporate communication involve denominations which are management, marketing and organizational communication. The marketing dimension then seeks to ensure that strategic information and identity of the university is represented by the brand. It is thus not a myth since strong emphasis on the role of communication and visual identity presented in the model by Melewar and Jenkins (2002) will result in greater projection of a distinct corporate identity by the university.

1.9.3 Alessandri's model of Corporate Identity(2001)

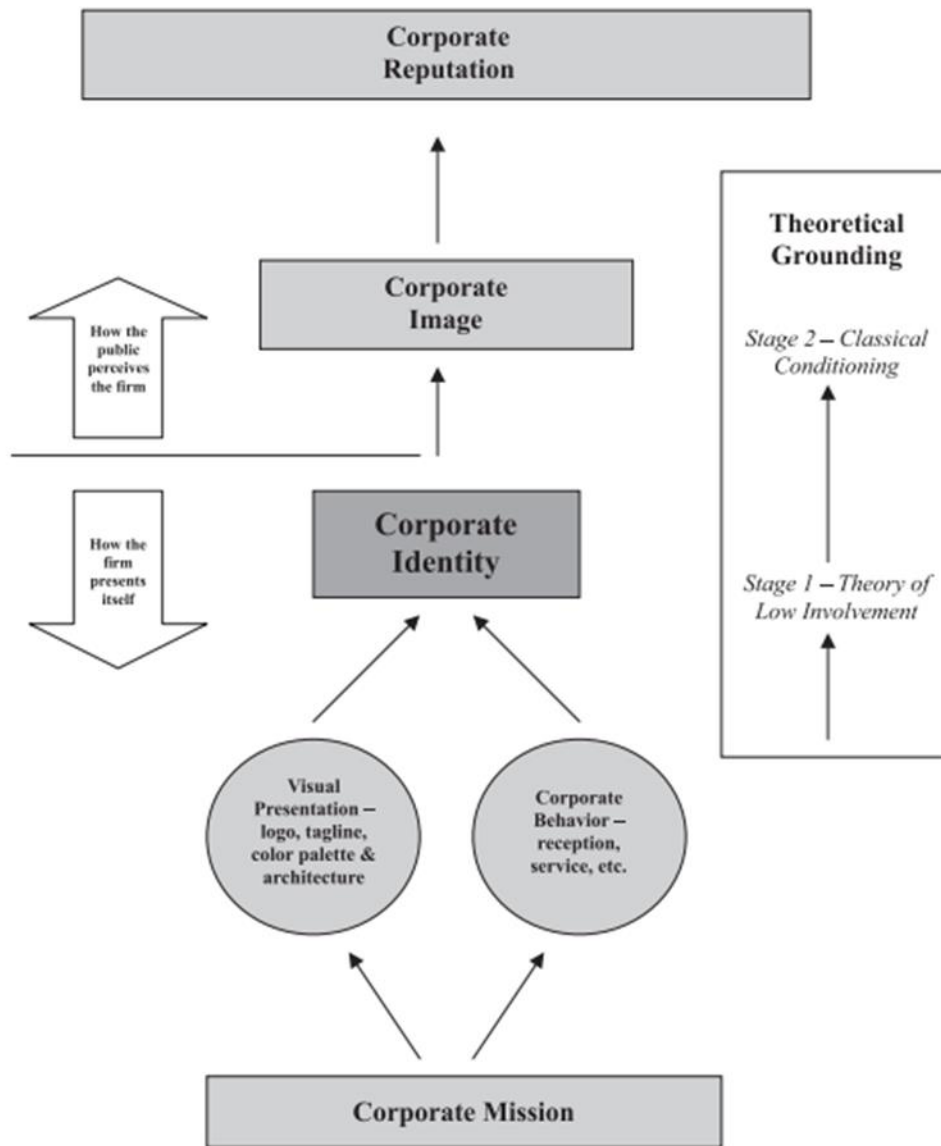
Alessandri (2001) developed a corporate identity model illustrating the relationship between corporate identity, corporate mission, corporate image and corporate reputation. Corporate

mission in this model represent institutional philosophy. The model is based on the assumption that every institution has a philosophy whether “tacit or codified”. This philosophy is personified through the behaviour of the institution, as well as the visual presentation of the organisation. The behaviour and visual presentation together form the corporate identity. Corporate identity emanates from these two complementary parts.

The model depicts that corporate identity has two levels which are one below the surface and the other one which is above. Lambert (1989) suggests that below the “surface are the written communications, corporate structure and behaviour”. According to Lambert (1989) this is equal to the visual elements, but it may not be visible to the public. The model further suggests that the “elements are the natural forces of the firm that manifest in the visible elements of the corporate identity”. In the model above the surface are the “visual elements which can also be described as the visual style and include the name of the institution, logo as well as corporate colour scheme. Lambert (1989) maintains that this is the only part of the corporate identity which is visible to the stakeholders. Central to the model is the view that the institution’s visual communication, notably the corporate colour scheme, plays a significant role in effective and successful communication with various stakeholders.

The corporate identity and the corporate mission which are in the institution’s control completes the lower half of the model. This can be manipulated or altered as per will of the organisation. The upper half of the model presents public perception towards the organisation and that’s where the concept of corporate image is premised. In the model interaction or experience with a corporate identity produce a corporate image in the minds of stakeholders. The model suggests that this distinct image in the minds of the public is important as organisation retain full control of their identities as well as how to present themselves but however they can’t control stakeholder perceptions. Central to the model is the view that corporate reputation can be created overtime through repeated impressions of the corporate image which can be positive or negative. Below is the diagrammatic presentation of the model.

Figure 1.1 Alessandri's Model of Corporate Identity



Source: Alessandri's (2001, p178)

1.9 Summary

This chapter served as an introduction to the phenomena in research, highlighting briefly on what the research seeks to achieve.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter serves to highlight previous contributions from other authors and researches on the impact of branding on corporate identity. Information in this chapter was drawn from various sources and contributions towards the discourse of branding and its impacts corporate identity whilst primarily more focused on visual identity and how it can help differentiate Midlands State University from other public or state owned universities.

2.2 The current state of Zimbabwean Universities

A credible system of expanding higher education led to the increase in the number of universities from one in 1980 to the present 14 (ten State owned and four private) universities. The Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) provides intellectual leadership for the developments of higher learning institutions while the Government provide the policy frameworks. The higher education sector is one of the fastest growing industries in Zimbabwe with more universities both private and state on the horizon. With respect to the considerable difficulties faced by universities in Zimbabwe in the last decade, Kotecha (2010) recognised numerous factors which are unique in context and that the ultimate resolution to the difficulties facing higher education in Zimbabwe lies primarily between the Zimbabwean universities themselves and the government. However, as highlighted above, despite facing combined challenges which can be may be regarded as “extreme” universities in Zimbabwe cannot be certainly unique nor completely isolated situation as many of regional universities face ‘survival’ challenges in one way or the other. This consolidate the fact that governance, revitalising and planning of higher education remains a national responsibility through the Ministry of Higher Education.

There is need to realise that during their establishment, these institutions developed their niche foci according to the gaps that existed in the economy (Kotecha in SARUA Report, 2010). Notable differences among the nine state universities can be seen in the wide range of disciplines which includes humanities, social sciences, business studies, architecture, arts, information technology and computer science, natural resources, health and pure sciences and engineering as well as agriculture programmes which are offered.

The sizes of these institutions vary considerably in terms of the variety of academic programmes they offer and enrolment of students as well as infrastructure and physical location. SARUA Report (2010) acknowledged that while some of the universities operates from rented or borrowed premises, others on half-built campuses, the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) operates from a fully developed, but rapidly ageing and deteriorating campus. The Midlands State University (MSU) and other five universities (Bindura University of Science Education, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Great Zimbabwe University, Harare Institute of Technology and Lupane State University) were formed after the year 2000 in the wake of economic recession and are relatively new (Butcher et al. in Kotecha 2008). As is evident from the analysis above, Zimbabwe's higher education sector is relatively well as compared to higher education in the other SADC member states with South Africa as solely above Zimbabwe. However, needs analysis for the higher education sector should embrace the notion of branding and corporate identity as a way of differentiation.

2.3 Corporate identity

According to Argenti (2000) corporate identity can be viewed as the fundamental concern of reality and what an institution really is. van Riel and Balmer (1997) maintain that identity reflects corporate ethos, values, aims as well as presenting individuality which helps an organization differentiate. Balmer and Gray (2003) view corporate identity as emanating from subcultures, structure, performance strategy and communication. Melewar et al. (2006) is of the view that central to corporate identity are the traits which include strategy, company philosophy, business scope, history, the type of products and services offered, forms of both internal and external communication as well as corporate personality. However, divergent views still do exist over what actually determines the uniqueness of an organisation.

Balmer and Greyser (2002) suggest, there are five different kinds of identities presented by any organisation. Actual identity includes the current characteristics of an institution and refers to issue like the organizational structure, product range and ownership. Secondly there is communicated identity which is the most clearly revealed via controlled forms of corporate communication. Conceived identity refers to the perceptions held organisational stakeholders. Desired identity and ideal identity are therefore related to the ideal placing of an organization, which is the future visions and prospects apprehended by strategic by the top management and strategic planners. In the study corporate identity is defined as the strategically planned

public presentation, established and managed as a way to get incredible corporate reputation over time as takes the communicated identity dimension.

Balmer, (1998) acknowledged that ‘corporate identity emerged during the second half of the twentieth century emerged out of an initial predominant emphasis on external corporate image as a constituent of reputation’ The notion of corporate identity was long established as a way to reflect what can be described as visual called visual identification today. In this case it draws reference to the logo and other forms of symbolism that can be used by an organization (Baker and Balmer 1997). Hatch and Schultz (2003) purports that organizational and corporate identity have attracted increasing interest among scholars and practitioners during the past decades and Balmer (2008) pin point that identity is currently at the forefront of corporate marketing and management literature. There is a general consensus from theories and practitioners of corporate identity that every organization has an identity.

Corporate identity thus articulates corporate ethos, values and aims as well as presenting a sense of individuality which can help to differentiate organizations within their competitive environment. The success of higher tertiary institutions in third world countries such as Zimbabwe can thus be based on establishing as strong corporate identity as a way of differentiation. Cornelissen et al. (2007) acknowledges that discussion on identity however should incorporates perspectives from multiple disciplinary domains and literature which involve corporate communications, management, marketing, organizational behaviour, social and organizational psychology, human resources and strategy. Balmer (2008) further suggests that identity can viewed as a “portmanteau expression with a variety of meanings”. In this case the parameters of corporate identity are set clear by the fact that as a multi-disciplinary phenomena corporate identity establishes shared values and connections with organizational identity. Olins (1978) notes that “evolution of the field of corporate identity has led to consultants focusing more on internal communications within organisations whilst fostering corporate identities which reflects embodied values of the organisations in question and the corporate personality”.

The interest on identity in general sense can be historically traced in organisations from a quite diverse and multi-disciplinary perceptions. When considering corporate communication and marketing of public universities, the major emphasis is premised on institutional positioning and the need to promote itself to others as well as integrating visual identity, corporate public relations and the management of communication messages (Van Riel and

Balmer 1997). The emergence of different and diverse approaches to corporate identity has thus created a series of overlapping structures in organisations and there arise greater need for integration. From this perspective, Cornelissen et al (2007) defined corporate identity as the organization's strategically planned, purposeful presentation of itself in order to gain a positive corporate image. It is from this definition where corporate identity can be established and controlled within the internal structures of an organisation (corporate management) whilst manifesting as a positive influence to stakeholders (visual identity).

According to Melewar and Akel (2005) globalisation of business has finally been embraced by the higher education sector in which education is seen as a service that could be marketed worldwide. The creation of a "marketization" discourse in the higher education means that institutions of higher learning now has to compete at both local and international level hence the development and adoption of marketing standards. The major challenge here is how public Universities such as Midlands State University can create a consumer/stakeholder oriented approach to the provision of higher education with more or greater emphasis on corporate image and identity.

2.3.1 Clarifying the concept

The issue of divergent views and controversy within the literature concerning what is actually meant by corporate identity is more reality than a myth. Cees (1997) is of the view that "corporate identity unlike traditional brand marketing initiatives is concerned with all of an organization's stakeholders and the multi-faceted way in which an organization communicates". However, in the research corporate identity specifically referred one of three main developments in the area which constitute corporate identity on three major domains which include graphic design, an integrated corporate communication as well as a multidisciplinary approach based on organizational behaviour. van Riel and Blamer (1997) acknowledged that each of the three approaches had followed a separate line of development and would appear that the literature on each of the three domains has started to reach maturity. Balmer and Gray (2003) notes that corporate identity is a "necessary concept whereas a corporate brand is contingent" in the wake of organisational differentiation. What constitutes this ultimate difference is the fact that corporate identity is applicable to all organisations whereas not all organisations may have plans or have plans or may need/require corporate brand.

Corporate identity form a graphic design paradigm have been hugely influential in two regards, by articulating the basic tenets of corporate identity formation and management as

well as successfully keeping the subject on the agenda of senior managers in organisations (ibid). This is supported by Olins (1978) who classified visual identity as a three mode dimension incorporating (monolithic, endorsed and branded) perspectives which if observed by organizations can reflect an organization's strategy, branding and communications policies. In this case central to corporate identity in universities is the new role assigned to symbolism where it can communicate corporate strategy.

Bernstein (1986) argued that there should be consistency in formal corporate communication. This means that for corporate identity to be successfully institutionalised university graphic designers and marketing teams should realise the efficacy of consistency in visual and marketing communications as the primary goal of corporate identity. Contributions by Birkight and Stadler (1980) to the understanding of corporate identity gradually broadened the concept which can be now considered as indicators to the way in which an organization's identity is revealed through behaviour, communications as well as through symbolism to both internal and external audiences.

2.4 Visual identity

Visual identity can be defined as the brand's appearances which can visually influence stakeholder's perception (Thomas 2015). According to Lamson (2016) the organisational logo is regarded as the "central and most identified visual element" which can help stakeholders realise, discover and potentially share the brand forward. This reflects the fact that continuity must be established for the visual identity and it is formed through family resemblance of different components. For a public university, like any other institution the logo is solely the major proponent for visual identity. Boyle (1996) asserts that a brand's visual identity helps overcome intangibility in terms of consumers being able to differentiate between brands. Furthermore, van den Bosch et al. (2005) notes that a brand name and logo can be regarded as "visual cues and important drivers of brand awareness". de Chernatony (2006) observes that for service brands, physical cues such as the logo, clothes employees wear and premises can help to distinguish organizations.

Visual identity has mostly been recognised as important in business (Bromley, 2001) as it represents overall attempts by the institution to communicate with its broader stakeholder. According to van den Bosch et al (2006) "visual identity includes various constituent parts, including the logo, colour and typeface, company name and tagline". There is need to pay considerable attention to the various elements of visual identity as it can help to assist public

universities through effective communication and standardisation as a way to convey clear message to all stakeholders.

Olins (1998) states that visual identity, as part of the organisation information dimension embodies a distinguishing part of brand identity. Visual brand identity which can also be described as corporate design can be referred to as the set of graphic components which altogether provide for the identification and representation of a brand (Clifton et al., 2009). In this case a clear as well as consistent visual identity is important for establishing a desirable and strong image. For public universities visual identity resembles the prospects of visual impressions as associated with the name of the institution. The focus on visual identity cannot thus be simply premised on the logo but rather consistently applied system which serves as the external visual representation while it also marks utilization of the symbol or logo. In accordance with public universities in third world countries it becomes necessary that all elements of the university project present a clear image and fully coordinated identification initiatives.

2.4.1 Elements of Visual Identity

According to Clifton et al (2009) elements of visual identity includes logotypes, colour symbols and typefaces. Visual identity (VI) can thus be regarded as tangible asset that can be used as a way to represent the university. Melewar and Saunders (1998) argued that “corporate visual identity includes the corporate name, logotype and/or symbol, typography and colour”. There is a general consensus among scholars that corporate name, slogan, stationery, printed materials (which involves brochures and leaflets), the official website, vehicles, buildings, corporate clothing as well as architectural infrastructure represents visual identity. Previous definitions for visual identity didn’t incorporate the slogan however, Youssef and Magne, (2008) asserts that the slogan can also be considered as a part of the graphic element making it a component of visual identity.

Joannes (2008) is of the view that where visual identity is represented by the logo, it mostly results in constant communication between brand image and positioning of the organisation. Universities although they cannot be regarded as product organisations they can also benefit from the constant interaction as a way to improve enrolment and attracting high calibre staff. This is also in line with Heilbrunn (2006) who argues that “the goal of visual identity’s and its usefulness is premised on the interaction with classic communication concept”. The major idea here is to say that consistent use of logo, colour and any of the elements of visual identity by MSU should reinforce strong positive image for the institution. There is need for

considerable care in the communication and development of corporate logos and symbols stakeholder and ensure recognition as well as associations.

2.4.2 The University Logo

The logo design is a creative work which allows an organisation to be viewed through symbol which possess a visual and graphic message (Adir et al, 2012). The logo thus can be viewed as a symbol, a graphic or visual sign which communicates the structure of an organisation and makes a distinction between two or more organisations. According to Adir et al(2012) the logo is a signature of an organisation which may bear a new conception, a certain life style and is a bridge between the organisation and stakeholders. The logo conveys the University through deliberate graphic representation. Henderson and Cote (1998) regards the logo as “one of the most obvious representations of visual identity and brand identity used by institutions”. In the case of public universities, it is thus possible to compare similar visual elements. Adir et al (2012) suggests that creating a logo doesn’t just happen but a rather a consequence of very specified analyses taking into account geometric shapes, colours, various signs and symbols with the goal to establish a harmonious mixture driven “to catch” or inspire as well as be part of stakeholder mind and perceptions. There is need to acknowledge that for some of Midlands State University stakeholders it may be difficult to keep in memory if it becomes overly complicated hence disseminating the wrong message. The design constitutes should be relevant or something which connect with higher education markets as a way to impress stakeholders.

Keller (2003) notes that “visual aspects of a brand are a crucial element in enhancing brand equity, particularly relating to awareness”. According to Adir et al (2012) the functions of a logo are determined to assure the graphic, visual and feeling communication as well as disseminating or translation of the message to the public. The power of the logo thus should be in the ability to guarantee quality and the value of products (ibid). Henderson et al. (2010) observed “that logos influence corporate image, by creating brand awareness, brand selection and organisational evaluations while indicating quality. In the strict sense the logo has a “rational and feeling” function.

Adir et al (2012) notes that the colour is a very important constitutive element which has a role to play in balancing the balance graphic. In essence the “colour has to be carefully selected” as a way to avoid disrupting stakeholder perceptions. Adir et al (2012) notes that in

the universe of logo design there is usually monochrome logos, two colours logos, three or four colours while the most “essential thing” is to create a good integrated graphic structure of the logo. The idea here is to avoid too many colours which may not do well with stakeholder perceptions. It is thus critical and important that the University logo should bear or possess the same characteristics and shape at all sizes. Below is a suggestive induction of the shape in a logo design table by Adir et al (2012).

Figure 2. 1 Adir et al’s Suggestive Induction of the shape in Logo Design (2012)

Geometric shape	Suggestive induction
circle	perfection, balance
square	stability, power
rectangle	duration, progress
ellipse	continue searching
triangle	harmony, urge towards
spiral	advancement, detaching
sphere	perfection, finality
pyramid	integration, convergence
cube	stability, integrity

Source: Adir et al 2012, (pp 654).

2.5 Corporate brand

Melewar et al (2006) defined corporate branding as the “efforts made by an organization to create a favourable image and brand based on the corporate identity”. In differentiating corporate brand from the corporate branding system, Balmer (2008) defined corporate brand as the attributes of corporate identity which can be known by stakeholders or a target image that an institution can communicate. However, for the sake of this research there is need to differentiate brand from reputation. Alessandri (2001) defined corporate reputation as “the sum of the individual images of an organization”. The study thus tackles branding and corporate identity from an analytical perspective while considering discourse as part of the key concept. However, in the “marketization” dimension of public universities, their role can also be defined on promotional perspective. In general, for them to thrive there is need to market and initiate a strong corporate brand which serves both strategic goals of the institution and stakeholder interests whilst attaining a competitive edge.

de Chernatony (2002) notes that corporate-level brands are complex and well applicable to non-commercial entities. The idea for corporate branding might not be well regarded in some

certain areas of the public sector, but with universities the case is certainly different (Balmer and Gray, 2003). Bulotaite (2003) is of the view that universities can be regarded as complex organizations and corporate branding can “simplify the complexity” whilst promoting loyalty and attraction of the organization. There is considerable emphasis on the significance of a distinct identity and corporate branding help in maintaining the intangibility and inseparability of higher education services particularly as a way of differentiation. This is supported by Jevons (2006) who maintains that “for the benefit of existing and potential students and staff, universities should develop meaningfully differentiated brands as a way to communicate their strengths”.

2.6 Corporate reputation

There is a lack of consensus on the definition of corporate reputation definition. Gotsi and Wilson (2001) developed a more instructive definition where corporate reputation is viewed as the overall stakeholder evaluation of an organisation over time. The evaluation in this definition is based on stakeholder’s individual experiences with the organisation, forms of communication as well as symbolism which reflects differentiation from rivals. There is also lack of consensus on the nexus between financial performance and organisational reputation. Walker (2010) view corporate reputation as the “relatively stable, issue specific aggregate perceptual representation of the organisation’s past actions and future prospects compared against benchmarks”

According to Cravens and Oliver (2006) corporate reputation is “much more than corporate image or corporate identity as it involves a temporal dimension that the latter do not consider”. Firestein (2006) describes corporate reputation as the “strongest determinant of any organisation’s sustainability”. Strategies and methods of achieving corporate reputation in public universities may not be static but once gravely injured reputation cannot be easily recovered. Helm (2007) observed that there is no consensus which has been achieved in regard to the “core meaning and how to build blocks of corporate reputation” despite the notable consensus on the positive effects which stem from good reputation.

Fombrun, et al (2000) maintains that “reputation is rooted in the aggregated perceptions of the organisation’s stakeholders”. For public universities like Midlands State University good reputation helps to attract constructive stakeholder engagement while for the private sector it results in survival and profitability. Caminiti, (1992) view corporate reputation as an “effective mechanism to maintain competitive advantage and can aid in building customer retention and satisfaction”. Although it primarily sounds more like related to private sector,

reputation in public universities is of critical importance since it involves media publicity with students also regarded as “customers”. When developing a corporate brand and identity, universities should recognise that some stakeholders are more valuable/important than others.

2. 7 Branding

Brands in the public universities possess characteristics of both corporate and product branding. Pinar et al. (2011) suggest, that “a university might be seen as primarily concerned with the provision educational products and services and students primarily as customers whose experience is in the core of the branding”. According to Argenti (2000) branding a university doesn’t only rely upon the student orientation but rather consider brand management of the whole institution. Argenti (2000) and Whisman (2009), suggests that “the marketing mentality in universities, focuses merely on short-term marketing of specific constituencies, and may fail to recognise the overall reputation as well as adopting corporate-level branding strategies”.

Pearson (1996) defined a brand as the combination of features (what the product is), customer benefits (what needs and wants the product meets) and values (what associations the customer has with the product). A brand is then created when marketing adds value to a product and differentiates it from other products with similar features and benefits (Pearson in Simoes and Dibb 2001). Hatch and Schultz (2003) acknowledges that the difference between corporate and product branding is emphasised by what they described as the “shift in managerial responsibility”. Product brands typically remains centred on middle management marketing function, while for corporate brands it becomes more of a strategic perspective usually based in the office of the executive. Another notable difference between corporate and product branding is that generally there is a shift from the product to the corporation.

According to Bennett et al (2007) universities should have strong brand values as a way to increase market share in the higher education sector. There are a number of several proponents which constitute brand values of universities which includes image, names, informative brochures, websites, stickers, slogans and the logo among others. Turley and Moore (1995) provided two categories of brand names for universities which are either based on geographic name or person-based names. However, the two mostly rely on the brand naming strategy adopted by the institution and the area of operation. Turley and Moore (1995) maintains that category of the geographical brand names for universities where they are to be named after cities or regions. In Zimbabwe most tertiary institutions such as

Midlands State University fall within this category where it was named after its midlands location.

Furthermore, Ind (1997) maintains that “branding as a concept can be directly applied at the corporate level”. In this view corporate brand becomes more than just the outward presentation of an organization through its logo, name and visual presentation but rather form the core of values which defines it. de Chernatony (1999) suggests that corporate branding constitutes the strategic direction for institutional activities, establishes consistency through the connection between communication, positioning and behaviour as well as working style of the staff.

According to Pinar et al (2011) student learning experience can be regarded as the rationale for all value creation initiatives in university branding while students are viewed as the most significant constituency of a university. Furthermore, student life, community and sporting activities are auxiliaries to the value creation initiatives which also include branding. Each of the above mentioned activities play a role towards student’s overall university understanding and brand opinion (ibid). This is supported by Hatch and Schultz (2003) who argue that emphasis on, corporate branding significantly concerns the sense of belonging. Balmer and Liao (2007), stipulates that the awarding of a degree necessarily provide “students with a life-long membership to a university” as well as a sense of “identification with the corporate identity and brand”. The suggestion is that Midlands State University’s identification by former students is also self-definition of the university even if after the student’s graduation they still recognise the brand on their certificates.

2.7.1 The rationale for branding

Stensaker and Norgard (2001), suggested that universities as organizations may respond to economic, societal and cultural demands by two different ways of adaptation. The initial option implies the need to react for reasons of survival and legitimacy, for a public university this means a move or shift towards standardization within the higher education sector. However, there is also a general consensus among scholars that institutions of higher education may increasingly become similar with time. In light of this, Stensaker and Norgard (2001) opted for another choice whereby universities seek a strategic niche in order to effectively fight for students as well as expand financial sustenance and relations society at large. Levine (1997) notes that with regard to the latter option universities will be considered as mature stage businesses which can make “themselves more specialized and unique in response to the external pressures”. In this case only innovation may be regarded as a

necessity or a condition for survival of public universities as it implies a strategic change to the strengthening of branding as the solution or survival strategy.

The major rationale for branding other than the perceived natural benefits is the need to suit the universities new role in the wake of marketisation. Fairclough (1993) notes in most countries public universities are now required to raise an increasing proportion of their funds from private sources. In essence more competition among public universities now do exists and there is need to attract the best staff and students within all faculties. Midlands State University cannot be regarded just as marketers of educational services at both international and national level but also as thriving for a differentiation and distinct profile. Branding helps to create this distinct profile for the university while attracting funding from various stakeholders in the process.

Corporate brands unlike product brands are premised on the idea to live the past and the future as well. Olins (1989) indicates that corporate brands stimulate associations with heritage and form strategic visions of what is to come. There is notable controversy on the aspect of time when building a corporate brand. Olins(1989) in Hatch and Schultz (2003) notes that as “symbols of the heritage and the vision of the leaders for the future, the corporate brands have a much broader temporal base than do product brands over a certain period of time”. For universities like Midlands State University there need to create a distinct differentiation for now and the foreseeable future.

Hatch and Schultz (2003) maintains that in the study of marketing, branding and corporate identity, there is a general consensus that corporate brands can improve organisational visibility, reputation and recognition in a manner which can are not be achieved by productbrand thinking. They further claim that corporate brands don’t only contribute to customerbased images only but also to the reputation maintained stakeholders which include customers, investors, employees as well as regulators and local customers and special interest groups. In this case branding can help establish a relationship between Midlands State University and its stakeholders.

However, there is need to acknowledge that one of the main reasons why public universities cannot be regarded purely as business is that funding from the government contribute to a significant part of universities income. According to Curtis et al. (2009) “many university administrators have avoided seeing themselves as marketers or brand managers”. Nevertheless, many public institutions like universities have made notable shift on the mode

of operation towards a market oriented mode of operation. Despite this opposing view Melewar and Akel (2005) notes that “the shift is premised on building a more unique corporate identity and the brand has become crucial in universities and other higher education institutions”.

There is need to realise as part of the shift from traditional role of universities, branding has become a strategic managerial issue for universities. According to Osman (2008) the massive number of universities contending for the same students and the marketization of higher education are justifiable reasons for branding.

2.8 The role of Corporate Communication

van Riel (1995) defined corporate communication as the “corporate function designed to complement all consciously used forms of internal and external communication to create favourable relationships with the stakeholders”. According to Cornelissen (2011) corporate communication can be defined as the management function aimed at developing a framework effective coordination of both external and internal communication with the overall goal of maintaining and establishing positive reputation with stakeholder and all interest groups. A closer look on the definitions reveal the idea of establishing a strong positive relationship with stakeholders which can also benefit MSU as an institution. Corporate identity studies by Jenkins and Melewar (2002) established a strong relationship between corporate communication and visual.

Apart from concentrating on “specialized” disciplines and separate stakeholder groups, corporate communication function emphasises on the organization as a whole. Cornelissen (2011) viewed an integrated approach when managing communication as very crucial. Melewar et al. (2006) suggests that in addition to deliberate forms (formal communication) within an organisation, the “unintentional messages” (informal communication) through third party reports and informal communication when transmitted are uncontrollable and becomes part of the corporate identity. van Riel (1995) brought forward a difference between marketing and organisational. Marketing communication include the forms of communication which are used to “support sales of particular goods or services” whereas organizational communication can be “divided into a variety of activities which includes investor relations, media relations public, social responsibility and community relations among others” (Melewar et al. 2006.).

Furthermore, Baker and Balmer (1997) in their study on visual identity in university organizations “suggest that visual identity has a significant role in communication to both internal and external stakeholders”. van Riel and Balmer (1997) maintains that symbols can be used to bring forward the central idea of an organization as a way to attain positive stakeholder perceptions. Midlands State University’s if able to attain consistent visual identity will communicate the strength, size as well as its reputation to external stakeholders. Baker and Balmer (1997) notes that internally, communication is a “central source of identification to the institution for the employees”. This means that organisational communication seeks to achieve organisational architecture for building confidence, influence and perceived identity. In general sense distinctive and well communicated visual identity can be regarded as a significant anchor which enables stakeholders with an associate experience on specific brand and strong positive perception on organisational reputation in the long run.

2.8.1 Brand Communication

Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, (2006) defined corporate communication as the ways in which the organisation interacts with its various stakeholders. van Riel (1995) asserts corporate communication is “an instrument of management by which all consciously used forms of both internal and external communication are harmonised effectively and efficiently as possible as a way to create positive basis for relationships with stakeholders”. In the private sector brand and marketing managers rely on the marketing communication to enhance product sales and services. Fournier, (1998) notes that “corporate brands are birthed in organisations and their value is only realised when they are assimilated by stakeholders”. According to Bick (2003) “the brand image of an organisation represents the current and immediate reflection which stakeholders possess towards an organisation”. In public universities the brand image enhances communication with both internal and external stakeholders. Brand management can thus be viewed as a double-sided procedure which include influencing and managing expression of the brand, understanding as well as responds from stakeholders.

2.9 Benefits of a strong corporate identity

Corporate identity management involves the transmission of organisational goals and what it represents to both internal and external stakeholders by strategically executed visual identity planning, corporate values, behaviour and communication. When effectively managed corporate identity lead to credible corporate image and favourable corporate reputation in the long run.

Melewar et al. (2006) argue, that one of reasons why there is growing interest in corporate identity is the “major changes in the economic environment which require new tools for organizations to face them”. According to Tahtinen (2014) corporate identity is an “essential source of differentiation strategy which may lead to a sustainable competitive advantage over time”. This makes corporate identity a potential strategic resource for the Midlands State University. Melewar and Akeel (2005) argued that by “creating a distinct image and standing apart from its rivals may help an organization win competitive edge over its competitors”. However, there is need to acknowledge that the search for differentiation today appears to be more premised on re-branding activities. Issues of ownership, legislation and government interference in public universities makes it more impossible for universities Zimbabwe to take this initiative due to cost and other economic challenges.

Furthermore, a strong corporate identity bears the potential to “inspires stakeholder commitment” making it more possible for the university to create a distinct identity. This is supported by Melewar et al (2006) who defined identity as a valuable for variety of both internal and external stakeholders to whom organisational characteristics are communicated. Kotecha and Perold in SARUA Report (2010) notes that a comparative analysis of partnership programmes in Zimbabwean public universities reveals that Midlands State University “seems to have a well-developed partnership programme”. The notable benefits include access to library resources materials through partnership arrangements with INASP (International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications) as well as Book Aid International which creates significant access to books and electronic journals (ibid).

Cornelissen (2011) suggest that a clear corporate identity “breeds employee motivation” as organisational personnel are likely to be more motivated if they become able to identify that their organisation priorities a strong image at the same time possessing a good reputation. The role of university staff in delivering the brand values to various stakeholders is viewed by Whisman (2009) as crucial with several studies emphasising on the significance of internal branding and employees’ engagement as part of the branding process.

According to Balmer (2008) a clear “corporate identity provides a central platform upon which corporate communications policies are developed and corporate images are formed”. There is general consensus among scholars of corporate identity that it contributes to the development of all aspects of an organisation both internally and externally.

In addition to having a “strong corporate identity” an institution can ensure consistent forms of communication to stakeholders (Melewar and Akel 2005). Tahtinen (2014) notes that a well-defined corporate identity creates a source of commitment in external audiences as well as providing consistent signals and communication which contribute to the creation and development of a clear image of the organization institution.

Argenti (2000), views the value of a strong brand to an individual university is that it will be able to attract the best recruits and faculty and have fewer crises. Bulotaite (2003) believes that “university brands actually have the potential to create stronger feelings than most brands”. The key to such notable success is achieved by creation of unique communicative identity (ibid). According Wolverton (2006) “differentiation of a university organization has to do with how universities identify themselves and the audiences they choose to serve”.

2.10 The nexus between corporate brand and corporate identity

The major a question on the relationship of branding and corporate is whether branding of a university generates competitive advantage or not. According to Melewar and Akel (2005) apart from being a differentiation tool, branding can also be viewed as a tool for standardization. Levine (1997) suggests, “higher education has evolved from its growth stage to a mature stage industry accompanied by stable or declining resources and universities are therefore forced to shift from full-service department stores to more specialized boutiques”. Resultantly, the universities should be able to establish selections on their offerings and position themselves in a “more focused and unique way” (ibid). Melewar et al. (2006) suggest that an “organization’s physical location is a significant part of corporate identity”. Suitable location is therefore essential for effective institutions who wants to project a desirable image and positively identification from stakeholders.

The concept of branding and corporate identity apparently have connections as both can be regarded as part of strategic sources of commitment and differentiation from stakeholders. Branding and corporate identity can both be viewed as multidisciplinary and diverse by nature therefore needs to constantly managed. There is also widespread acknowledgement that corporate branding should well be founded in and coherent with corporate identity at all level within the organisation. The concepts can also be successfully referred to “as overlapping or even interchangeable” (Balmer and Gray, 2003).

Balmer and Greyser (2002) maintains that corporate identity can be drawn from a mix of organisational traits and the essence of corporate branding is to be found as they put it

forward, “from the values which are associated with the brand and which represent an informal contract between the institutional brand and its various stakeholders”. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) suggests that the brand is can be “derived from an organization’s identity” as well as in the minds of stakeholder. The brand can also be viewed as the representation of stakeholder perceptions and “feelings about a product, service or organization” (ibid). This is supported by Balmer (2008) who “regards corporate brand as a distinctive identity type which, unlike corporate identity, may have a life of its own as it can be bought, sold or borrowed”. This reflects a closer relationship between corporate branding and identity at all levels within an organisation. In the study, corporate identity was regarded as the purposeful presentation of an organisation as a way to attain differentiation (visual identity) and positive reputation.

2.11 Limitations of branding in higher education

Bunzel (2007) and Curtis et al (2009) suggests that “the increasing use of business models and terminology in the education context have become an acknowledged and part of universities operations”. This commercialization of education like any other public goods has attracted its own share of criticism from diverse perspectives. According to Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007) “there have been fundamental concerns when viewing business world morally contradicting to education”. Bunzel (2007) states that the “objectives of branding in higher education sector are still be unclear and the questions whether university branding is even worth the time and cost spent on the branding activities”. This is particularly due to the fact that branding initiatives emanates from commercial knowledge with considerably limited efforts towards the adjustment of branding theory and make it higher education specific.

Furthermore, higher education institutions view corporate branding as a way of differentiation and survival. However, Levine (1997) suggests that “a vast number of universities in the industry, majority of them are fundamentally alike”. Michelsen (2004) reveals that “even though each university has its own history and culture, they still look very much similar to one another in terms of their functions, governance and degree system. In Zimbabwe all the state universities are owned by the government controlled by ZIMCHE and falls under the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology. Although they have a certain degree of autonomy majority of are more concerned with offering degrees, student welfare, infrastructure development and growth.

2.12 Summary

The objective of this chapter was to highlight previous contributions and scholarly review on the impact of branding and corporate identity on public tertiary institutions of higher education.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the concept of branding and corporate identity in relation to universities. It also highlights the attributes that differentiate commercial and university branding as well as the perceived goals of corporate identity. Brand architecture frameworks, concepts and a comparative analysis as well as how sustainable corporate reputation can earn support and trust for non-profit organisations such as public universities constitute part of the discussion.

3.1 Conceptualising branding and corporate identity

The study of branding and corporate identity has seen corporate identity image being strategically interpreted. As a way to avoid misinterpretation the following definitions and descriptions were used in the research to illustrate the basic concepts and components.

3.2.1 Branding

Kotler et al (2008) viewed branding as the major enduring asset of an organisation, outlasting the organisation's specific products and facilities. Branding thus can be a notable promise inferred for or communicated to the various stakeholders which represents organisational identity. Upon choosing a brand the university should have to focus on specific visual elements as promotional basis. Kotler et al (2008) suggests that an "efficient name can give a push-start to the brand". The name should possess certain attributes and six qualities which means it should be easy to pronounce, recognise and remember, able to suggest something about the product or institution, easily translated and distinctive as well as extendable, easy to translate and the university being able to register it for legal protection (ibid).

3.2.2 Brand identity

Aaker (1996) defined brand identity as the unique set of “brand associations that the brand strategist aspires” to maintain, disseminate or create. These associations are primarily the indicators of what the brand is aimed at or promise for the stakeholders. Brand identity thus should assist in establishing “a relationship between the brand and the customer (stakeholder) by creating a valuable proposition which involves emotional, functional, or self-expressive benefits. (ibid). In a simpler way brand identity represents the way the university brand wants to be perceived by the stakeholders. The identity should be simple and flexible enough to meet the market dynamics. Olins (1998) suggests that “brand identity can be defined by four main characteristics. The first element being the product or service, (which implies what the institution produces or offers) and the second characteristic is the environment, (implies the place where the organisation offers its services and products). The third dimension is associated with the information and communication (usually what the organisation does). Lastly one of the major characteristic is the behaviour (usually how the employees and students behave and interact with each other and external stakeholders). For universities to have a successful brand identity there is need to live such characteristics and counter rivals.

3.2.3 Brand visual identity

Visual brand identity or corporate design can be defined as “the graphic components which puts together and provide a system for identification and representation of a brand. (Clifton et al, 2009). The basic components of a brand’s visual identity usually comprise “distinctive versions of the logotypes, symbols, colours and typefaces” (ibid). Traditional definitions didn’t consider organisational “slogan”. Bassani et al (2008) maintains that “the slogan can also be considered as part of the graphic elements thus a visual identity component”. In summary brand visual identity is the sum of all knowledge which the stakeholder possesses about a brand from their experience, services and advertising.

3.2.3 Corporate identity

According to van Riel and Balmer (1997) corporate identity refers to “an organization’s unique characteristics which are rooted in the behaviour of members of the organization”. In this case corporate identity is more than just the creation of logos. It addresses the question of what we are for an institution. This involves the business structure, ethos, market performance, history and reputation as well as relationship with stakeholders. van Riel and Balmer (1997) view corporate identity as “holistic and it expresses the corporate ethos, values and aims while presenting a sense of individuality which can help to differentiate the

institution within its competitive environment”. This make corporate identity a purposefully created phenomena within organisations.

There is need to differentiate organisational identity from corporate identity as the terms may not really bear the same meaning. Hatch and Schultz (1997) define “organizational identity as a collective shared understanding of the organization’s distinctive values and characteristics” Organisational identity which can also be viewed as corporate personality thus addresses the question of who we are for the organisation. It has a mix of dominant and even ascendant subcultures within the transcending organisation. For example, professional, cultural and industrial identity of an institution.

3.2.4 Visual identity

Heilbrunn (2006) explains visual identity’s “purpose and the importance of its interaction based on the classic communication concept”. Joannes (2008) suggest that visual identity, “is represented intensely by the logo and have constant interaction with the brand image as a way to improve the relationship between the brand and its customers, the offer and the positioning of the organisation”. Visual identity or visual identification system of an organisation is aimed revealing or showcasing organization’s symbol and its identification system. This involves communicating of visuals (and in some instances verbal) cues which brings clarity of the organisational identity to the stakeholders. Visual identity mix is premised primarily on the identification strategy of an institution.

3.3 A comparative analysis of Branding and Corporate Identity in Universities

A new era of globalization of the higher education sector demands the need for universities to market themselves at both local and international level with stiff competition at all levels. There is need to attract high quality, students and staff not just at locally but at the international stage as well. According to Becher and Trowler (2001) acknowledges that the “fundamental shifts in the last twenty years have seen increased competition in the global higher education market” with universities resorting to marketing initiatives such as branding. However, Gronroos (1990) notes that the role of corporate identity “in service industries poses a greater challenge as compared to the manufacturing industry primarily because of the four unique service characteristics which include intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity and perishability that distinguish services from goods”. In higher education institutions, branding involves advertising the corporate colours and image as well as packaging and public relations.

There is need to recognise that university branding differs and vary size, age and location of the institution. The South African higher education institutions had “traditionally, been unprogressive in terms of marketing themselves to prospective students” (Law, 2002). The major reason for this was that like many other African colonial experiences the institutions operated in a “protected and racially regulated” market accompanied by reliable funding from the apartheid government. Hay and van Gensen (2008) attributed this to the lack of competition which meant that the universities were never before “truly exposed to competitive” environment as survival wasn’t just guaranteed but rather a privilege. Transformation of the South African higher education system brought a new era of “market orientation” where the “customer is at the heart service delivery” (ibid). However, Beneke (2011) observes that institutions which doesn’t benefit from “government funding/subsides” are the major contenders or on the forefront of a market oriented phenomena as a survival strategy. This poses a direct or “serious competition to well established public institutions” which in-turn should fight for survival (ibid).

There is considerable consensus among scholarly views that globally, the higher education system has gone through an era of rapid growth with limited resources or failing to secure enough funds and survival has become part of the new enterprise for public universities. Tagwirei (2000) acknowledges that with no exception, South Africa public institutions faced drastic changes on government funding methods while globalisation brought in new competitors with enrolment decreasing at some of these institutions. Law (2002) reveals that the “higher education marketing in South Africa” has a large potential for improvement as significant benefits from marketing programmes can accrue for the most progressive on this idea. Generally marketing in the higher education has been employed for two basic reasons which involve the desire to attract best students and to a lesser extend the best academic as well as administrative staff (intellectual resources). The other reason is to attract funding from government (subsidies), research funding and private contributions or grants which all constitutes financial resources.

However, it appears that the practice of branding South Africa’s higher education is quite a complex issue. PiyushiKotecha’s research on branding initiatives of South African higher education institutions revealed that “while many academic staff may understand this concept in theory, branding smacks of something vulgar and market related. The sustained myth that surrounds institutions is that branding is not needed when the institution has a solid reputation and long tradition.” (Kotecha, 2003). This suggestion was due to the fact that pursuing

branding initiatives was viewed as a clear indicator of deficient in the public universities. In his view this appeared “to be a mind-set which required attention before lasting damage is affected” (ibid). Kotecha (2003) suggests that the “roots of this perception evolved from origins of the university where it was established consciously as an institution on the margins of society without ever belonging entirely to that society”.

Despite what appears to be set back towards the branding and corporate identity in South African public universities, one can argue that “marketization” higher education intends to establish and “institutional brand” as well as differentiation. This is supported by Landrum et al, (1998) who portrays that “the image presented by institutions of higher education plays a critical role” and influences public attitudes towards the institution. According to Kirp (2004) institutional brand can be viewed as “synonymous with its reputation” and regarded as the most prestigious prize asset in education institutions. Paramewaran and Glowacka (1995)’s study of university images revealed that “higher education institutions need to maintain or develop a distinct image” as a way to enhance competitive advantage the “increasingly competitive market”. According to Kotecha (2003) in South African public universities, “institutional branding remains clichéd and highly unoriginal”. There is reflection that branding does exist it seeks to serve the ideas of reputation, excellence and tradition (ibid). A close analysis reveals that within South Africa, the “private institutions changed the branding landscape by selling institutional experience as opposed to old buildings, smiling student faces, and impressive library collections” by the public institutions.

Furthermore, Waithaka et al (2005) in the study of *Corporate Visual Identity Systems and Brand Performance of Kenyan Universities* revealed that “visual identity systems play a significant role in the way an organization presents itself to both internal and external stakeholders”. The study also revealed that in the wake of high competition, the “universities developed strategies for competitiveness and survival such as management of corporate visual identity and improved brand performance systems in order to positively impact on their corporate image and performance.” (ibid). According to Wanjiku, (2015) as of (2012), *the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology in Kenya* comprised of fifty-two (52) private, public and constituent institutions of higher learning which compete for students hence the need for “aggressive” marketing using both print and electronic media to advertise their programmes. Wanjiku (2015) further stress that as part of their branding initiatives, Kenyan university broadcasts their graduation ceremonies on local television channels. Kashorda, (2002) suggests that technological evolution “have pushed institutions” to embrace

part of their marketing through social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, My Space and Instagram. This is usually done through creating an official account run by the Information Technology (IT) department or the public relations office.

The Kenyan experience also reveals that majority of the higher learning institutions have changed their “marketization” for programmes and courses. Nganga (2010) observes that in Kenya’s higher learning institutions reach their perceived targets by introducing courses which “have market demand”. The most notable example is the Master in Business Administration which has been introduced by the both public and private institutions (ibid) This reflects product differentiation as part of the differentiation among the Kenyan universities. Nganga, (2010) notes that public higher learning institutions are now “spending money to make money” and has been “forced to supplement their income through high-fee courses such as Masters in Business Administration (MBA), as their subsidies have declined”. Corporate identity thus can improve brand identity through implementing the strategic direction of the university which include the vision and mission statement as well as conveying the visual identity from logos and signs.

3.4 Attributes of a University Brand

Melewar and Akel (2005) suggests that for universities have realised the significance of a “comprehensive corporate identity as a source of competitive advantage” and identification. For this feat to be achieved there is need for the university to possess the perceived attributes for a corporate brand. Research and contributions on the concept of branding resulted in the realisation of the need for individual attributes among higher learning institutions. Curtis et al (2009) suggest that universities can promote themselves through “academic program offerings, quality of teachers and resources, facilities, campus life and services”. This supported by several studies such as those by (Moogan 2001 and Wolverton 2006) which resulted in the establishment of an almost uniform model of features determine a strong corporate identity.

According to Wolverton (2006) universities should emphasises more on “the importance of both identity and audience” and it involves determining distinctiveness of their programmes. This is due to the fact that for universities a strong identity can be revealed by offering unique services while ensuring that all stakeholders served. For instance, Wolverton (2006) suggest that in business schools some universities which possess long established identities are able to “determine their strengths and build on them, remain focused in their program offerings and stay connected to the communities they serve”. Of critical importance is the ability to

constantly maintain stakeholder relationship over time as well building reputation of the university over time.

Chapelo (2010) acknowledges that despite the lack of uniform strategy for building a strong brand, there exist factors which are associated with highly rated university brands. Initially (Chapelo, 2010) alludes that a deliberate positioning strategy might be the most important prerequisite for the creation of positive or successful university brand. Attributes of successful university brand includes a clear vision and support from its leadership. For the university to be strongly identified as possessing an ideal brand, the brand should “clearly articulate and position their vision and purpose”. The strategic vision thus certainly subscribed from within, fully supported internally and “consistently communicated to external stakeholders” (ibid). These are a clear indication of what the organisation has done for itself as a way of differentiation. Press and publicity became an indispensable tool for information dissemination and its activities should be based on protecting and promoting the university identity and reputation.

Chapelo (2010) suggested that for some institutions, “location” equally contributes towards success of a university brand. This particularly due to existence of “a great deal of synergy” between the brand and reputation of the city the university is located and a successful university brand. However, for the Midlands State University this might be different as it was named after the iconic midlands region of Zimbabwe. There is need to realise that location of an institution can impact on the brand and should be precisely done considering the prospects of the university brand. For instance, Moogan et al. (2001) emphasize, that institutions with a “well-known brand, a good reputation and easily accessible comprehensive information will have better chances to recruit students as well as administration staff”. In this case the location of the university can determine stakeholder perceptions (particularly students) and their willingness to enrol.

Furthermore, for universities to have a strong brand names they should ensure clear and desirable positioning of the brand in the minds of stakeholders for them to fully realise what they stand for (Moogan et al. 2001 and Curtis et al. 2009). This can be realised as suggested by Baker and Balmer (1997) to create and enhance corporate identity as well as the branding programs as a part of the strategic positioning and expansion initiatives. Bunzel (2007) alluded for corporate market oriented marketing strategies such as “rebranding” programs which can include changing the name creating and creating new visual identity packages as

well increased admission (more flexible enrolment criteria) to be employed as a way to create a distinctive university profile and even improve its ranking. This sums up the fact that strong brand can help to outclass rivals and universities use it a way of differentiation.

3.5 Summary

The chapter aimed at bringing out the conceptualisation, comparative analysis of branding and corporate identity in context of higher learning institutions.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This aim of this chapter is to highlight the research instruments which were involved in data collection. The researcher used qualitative method which involved conducting interviews and distribution of questionnaires to the key informants and targeted respondents. The chapter also serves as the justification for the selected methods and research instruments in the course of data collection.

4.1 Research Design

According to Burns and Grove (2003) research design can be defined as the “blueprint used for conducting a study with maximum control over factors which may interfere with the validity of the findings”. Polit and Hungler (1999) described research design as a blueprint or an outline used for conducting research study in such a manner that maximum control can be exercised over factors which could interfere with the validity of the research outcome. Parahoo (1997) described a research design as the plan which highlight “how, when and where” data is to be collected and analysed. Polit et al (2001) view research design composed of “the researcher’s overall answering of the research question or testing the research hypothesis. Research design thus serves as the master plan and framework for action. It helps to achieve the maximum efficiency and reliability from the available data or information. Research design can be thus described as the advance planning on the methods which are to implemented for collection of relevant data as well as the techniques to be involved in the analysis whilst bearing in mind the research objective as well as the availability of time, staff and money (Kothari, 2004).

The research was aimed at bringing out the impact of branding on corporate identity on a higher learning institution. As part of the research the major function of a research design was

to ensure that the available evidence obtained on the topic in question would help to address the research topic to the most unambiguously extent. This involved gathering of all relevant evidence and suggestion which is required not just to answer the research question but also to test the theory and make some accurate evaluation on the phenomenon. In this regard research design is solely different from the methods of data collection. According to Kothari (2004) the research design consist of an outline “of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final analysis of data”.

4.1.1 Qualitative Research

According to Burns and Grove (2003) qualitative research approach can be described as the systematic “subjective approach which can be used to describe life experiences and situations and give them meaning”. Parahoo (1997) maintains that qualitative research usually has more focus on the human experiences and stresses the uniqueness of an individual. Qualitative research can thus be viewed as a form of “social enquiry which focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world in which they live” (Holloway and Wheeler, 2002). The researcher used the qualitative approach as way to explore perspectives, behaviour, and experiences as well as feelings from the respondents with the ultimate goal of understanding of these elements.

According to Domegan and Fleming (2007) qualitative research is aimed at exploring and discovery of issues concerning the problem at hand since very little maybe known about the research problem. Field and Morse (1996) states that researchers who resort to qualitative research adopt a person centred holistic and humanistic perspective as way to understand the lived human experiences without much focus on specific concepts. The rationale for qualitative research in the research was to explore the opinion and create an understanding on the experiences of university stakeholder’s perspectives both past and present about the brand. However, Holloway and Wheeler (2002) suggest that “complete objectivity is impossible and qualitative methodology” cannot be completely since human beings do not usually act logically or in a predictable manner.

4.1.2 Exploratory Research

According to Polit et al (2001) explorative studies are conducted “when a new area is being investigated or where little is known about the area of interest”. Exploratory is thus essential for investigating fully the nature of a phenomenon and any other related factors. Brink and Wood (1998) suggests that exploratory research “examines the relevant factors in detail as

way to have an appropriate description of reality and the existing situation”. In the study, the impacts of branding on corporate identity using a focus group interview.

4.2 Study Population

According to Parahoo (1997) study population can be defined as the sum “number of units from which data is being collected”, for instance individuals, events or organisations. Burns and Grove (2003) suggest that study population consist of all the “elements which meet the criteria for inclusion in a study”. Eligibility criteria can be described as the list of characteristics which are required for consideration as part of the target population (ibid). The process of selecting participants which were involved in the study was done in such a manner that it didn’t influence the obtained results obtained and compromise validity since the impact of branding and branding can’t be homogenous. Alston and Bowles (2009) a defined case study as typically a case, where there need to fully investigate and thoroughly analyse the details which may be lost in a larger study.

4.3 Study Sample

According to Polit et al (2001) a sample can be regarded as the proportion of a population. The sample was drawn from former and current students, staff and members of the community in Zvishavane. The university is a public institution which has a large pool of stakeholders some of which were not considered as important for the sake of the study since their interest may not be in line with issues of branding and corporate identity.

4.3.1 Sample Size

Holloway and Wheeler (2002) maintains that sample size cannot “influence the importance or quality of the study” and highlights a lack of guidelines for determining sample size in qualitative research. According to Holloway (1997) sampling goes on until “saturation has been achieved, namely no new information is generated”. This is due to the fact that in qualitative researchers usually are un aware of the number of participants in the research beforehand and the sample can even change in size and type during the course of the research.

4.3.2 Sampling Process

According to Burns and Grove (2003) sampling process refer to the way of selecting a group of people, events or behaviour with which the study is to be conducted. Polit et al (2001) suggest that the sampling process reflects a sampling a portion which represents the whole selected population. In the research sampling was non-probable and purposive. Parahoo (1997) suggests that during non-probability sampling researchers resort use their judgment as

the basis for selecting the subjects which can be included in the study primarily based on their knowledge of the phenomenon in question.

4.4 Purposive Sampling

Parahoo (1997) view purposive sampling as a sampling method where the researcher deliberately chooses whom to include in the study “based on their ability to provide necessary data”. Every stakeholder of the university has a chance to make reflection on the corporate identity of the institution and can make their own judgement based on different experience and knowledge of the institution. In the study only stakeholders who were eligible were purposively considered to participate in the research. This was due to the fact that the researcher wanted to get information which was deemed necessary for the sake of the study.

4.5 Research Instruments

Research instruments are the tools which were used by the researcher during data collection and gathering. The researcher used interviews and questionnaires as primary sources of data collection for gathering information from the target population surrounding the study area.

4.5.1 Interviews

According to Shneiderman and Plaisant (2005) interviews are very productive since “the interviewer can pursue specific issues of concern that may lead to focussed and constructive suggestions”. The major advantage here is that it allows the researcher to have an interface with the respondents which can lead to certain specific constructive suggestions. Interviews can be structured, unstructured as well as semi-structured and even focus-group interviews depending on the design and needs of the research.

Unstructured interviews provide the interviewer an opportunity to pose some open-ended questions and gives room for interviewee to air his/her own opinion freely. Preece et al (2002) notes that unstructured interviews “makes it difficult to standardise the interview across different interviewees since each interview takes on its own format”. The fruitfulness of the interview thus cannot be pre-determined but rather depends on both parties in the interview.

Preece, et al (2002) suggests that structured interviews can be viewed as the “most appropriate when the goals of the study are clearly understood and specific questions can be identified”. In this case the interviewer can resort to set of predetermined questions which can be precise and clearly articulated. The semi-structured interview involves both structured and unstructured interviews and the researcher can resort to both open and closed questions.

Interviews were conducted to obtain information from key informants who are directly involved in the branding and public relations which seek to further and protect the university's identity.

4.5.2 Questionnaire

Polit and Hungler (1997) defined a questionnaire as the method of “gathering information from respondents about attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and feelings”. According to Abawi (2013) a questionnaire is a data collection instrument which consist series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents.

4.5.3 Documentary Reviews

Guba and Lincoln, (1981) defined documentary review as any “written material other than a record which was not specifically prepared as a response to the requests from the investigator”. Documentary review involves collection of data by reviewing existing documents. The documents can be both internal or external. According to Silverman (1993) documentaries can be classified into different distinct groups which includes files, statistical records, and records of official proceedings as well as images. Documentary review is thus an instinctive proceeding where the researcher seeks to unearth the moral underpinnings of the research or social inquiry.

4.6 Observations

According to Marshall and Rossman (1989) observation can be viewed as "the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts" within a certain social setting chosen for study". Et al notes that observations enable the researcher to “describe existing situations using the five senses” which provides a written caption of the situation under study (Erlandson, et al, 1993). deWalt and deWalt, (2002) suggests that participant observation enables “par researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating” within the activities. This offers the option of contextualising and development of sampling guidelines and interviews for the research. The major goal for design using participant observation is that the researcher develops a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study more accurately and objective within the possible limitations.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

According to Silverman (2000) researchers should always bear in mind that when carrying out a research as there is a possibility for them to actually enter the “private spaces of their participants”. Creswell (2003) suggests that a researcher has an obligation to “respect the

rights, needs, values and desires of the informants”. Ethical considerations thus refer to the moral obligations which should be considered when carrying out a research. This understandably raise ethical concerns which should be addressed while carrying out research. The researcher acted in utmost good faith whilst observing the need to be honest and trustworthy, relying on informed consent and keeping privacy, confidentiality of gathered data and information and anonymity.

4.7 Summary

The objective of this chapter was to highlight on the research methodologies which were involves in the course of information gathering for the purpose of the research.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the gathered information during data collection. This includes information gathered through interviews, questionnaires, documentary reviews and observations as the primary sources of research instruments. This chapter also discusses the study sample, the impacts of branding on corporate identity, the challenges facing the institution and the mitigations.

5.1 Information about the sample

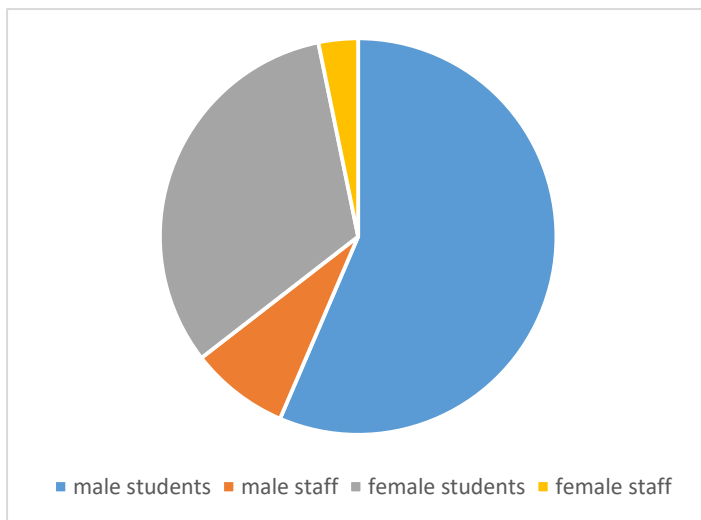
The researcher distributed and administered 40 questionnaires with 15 questions each to the major or immediate stakeholders of the university (students and staff). The questionnaires were on random to the students and staff but for the members of the community selection was primarily considered on the ability to meet the goals of the research. The researcher was determined to assist respondents on the questions on the questionnaires as to improve the quality and content of the response as far as possible without influencing the respondents.

The researcher carried out structured interviews with the key informants from the relevant departments from the Midlands State University Zvishavane Campus who had a deep understanding on the research topic. The researcher in some cases had to refer to the Gweru Main Campus headquarters as a way to get more informed responds from the various relevant departments which deals the branding and corporate identity issues. Unstructured interviews were conducted with the members of the community and other key external stakeholders as well as interested students and staff at Zvishavane campus as way to reinforce the gathered information and understanding on the impacts of branding and corporate identity.

5.2 Information about the questionnaire respondents.

Majority of the respondents for the questionnaires were male from for both staff and students. For the students twenty-four males responded and ten of them were at least on level 2.2 or above, seven of them level 2.1 or below four were from the visiting and block classes and three were from the members of staff. For the female students six of them were at least level 2.2 or above, three of them level 2.1 or below, three from the visiting and block release classes and four from the members of staff.

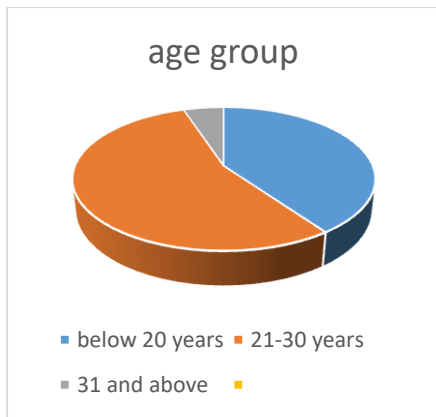
Figure 5. 1 Gender of respondents to Questionnaires



Age groups of respondents to questionnaires

The researcher used questionnaires to gather information from students and members of staff. Majority of the respondents were students who enrolled through the normal entry as per the University Regulations and General Information 2015-2020. Most of the students were well above the age of 18 and major target was those who had an understanding on the research topic as per the constitution of and literate. Selected individuals from the visiting/ block release classes and members of staff (both academic and non-academic) were also given questionnaires. From a total of 40 respondents 11 were below the age of 20 while 15 were between 21-30 and 14 were well above the age of 30.

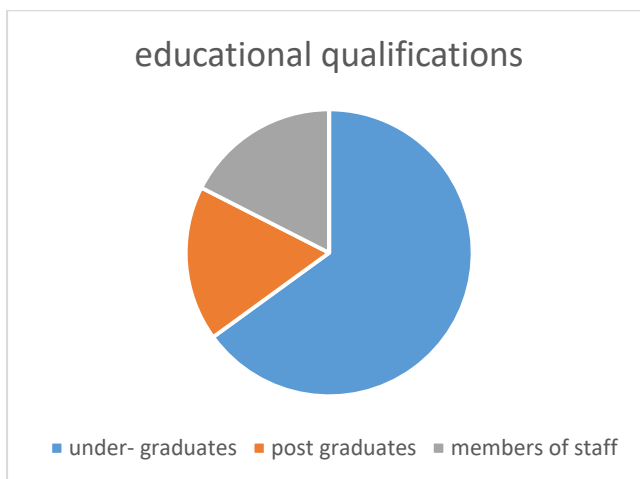
Figure 5. 2 Age groups of Respondents



5.2.1 Literacy rate and educational qualifications of questionnaire respondents

Midlands state university Zvishavane Campus is a higher learning institution which offers both under and post graduate programmes. This eliminates the issues of illiteracy but however notable differences on the levels of education among the respondents were identified. The majority of the respondents were under-graduates still pursuing their first degrees.

Figure 5. 3 Educational Qualifications Of The Respondents



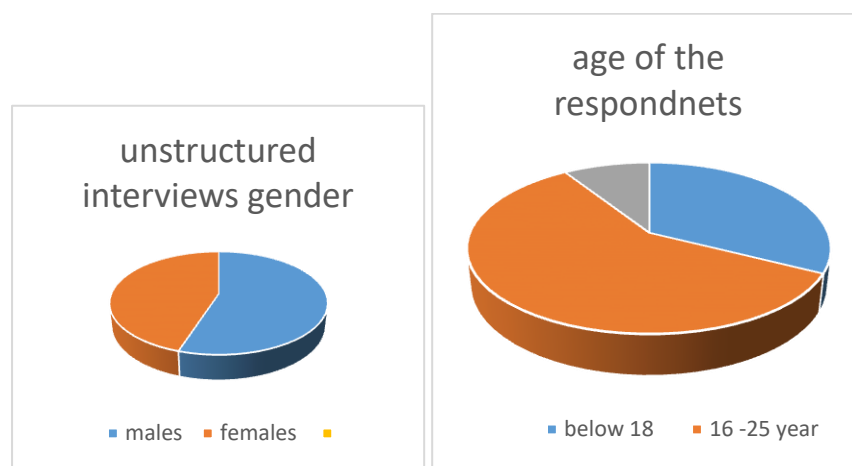
5.2.2 Information about the structured and unstructured interviews

The researcher managed to conduct four structured interviews with the department of public relations, the registrar, the library department and the Zvishavane campus director. The interviews were intended to get an insight and understanding on the branding initiatives by

the Midlands State University which could help in the research. The researcher managed to conduct 20 unstructured interviews with the members of community which were deemed relevant for the sake of the research on branding and corporate identity with more focus on visual identity and nine were females whilst eleven were males. The interviews with the members of community were targeted all ages within the community. The interviewees were of different ages and educational qualifications as well as occupations.

5.2.3 Gender, and age for unstructured interviews presentation

Figure 5. 4 Gender, and age for unstructured interviews presentation



5.3 Impacts of branding on corporate identity

The University's Information and Public Relations Office has a mandate to handle the University's public relations and marketing functions. The office seeks to promote the image, reputation and brand of the University locally, regionally and internationally. It strives to empower communities through dissemination of information pertaining to the University academic programs, research output, student life, community engagement activities, current developments and achievements. The public relations office is thus committed to establishing

and maintaining cordial relations between the University and its various internal and external stakeholders. It also acts in its capacity as the official spokesperson for the University and as such, it manages media relations for both internal and external stakeholders.

5.3.1 Product differentiation

The University offers unique services and packages for all its stakeholders as way to further its brand and improve the corporate image. According to a respondent from the Public Relations Office the University has resorted to offering *flexible packages for academic programmes as a way to enhance a competitive advantage while highlighting that every product offer represents part of the university's identity*. Addressing guests at the 12th graduation ceremony at Gweru Main Campus Former Vice Chancellor Professor N. Bhebhe revealed that *the University was adopting a more international cosmopolitan nature for its enrolment through recruiting students from other nations such Swaziland, Namibia, Angola and recently Sudan*.

The university as part of its distinguished flexible packaging and in pursuit of comparability as well as transferability of MSU student's qualifications in Africa, has 'benchmarked' its business degree programmes with continental standards. The Midlands State University successfully became part of the "elite group" by joining 27 leading business schools in Africa (the Association of African Business Schools AABS) and became the only institution to offer AABS accredited Masters in Business Administration Degree in Zimbabwe. For the students who enrol in MBA with MSU, their certificates will bear the internationally recognised ABS logo. This improve the identity of the institution by offering and meeting international standards as well as creating a life time bond between the university and the graduates even after they have finished.

Strategic marketing of the University academic products also benefited from the joining the AABS as it becomes part of the collective marketing identity. One respondent who required anonymity said that, *the Midlands State University Graduate School of Business Leadership as a member to the Association of African Business Schools (AABS) improved the university reputation and identity by producing excellent business and entrepreneurial knowledge which can benefit the economy*. However, the University has also resorted to offering unique and flexible academic products such as weekend schools in Harare, full semester parallel and conventional classes with Work Related Learning as well as visiting and block release classes. Below is an advert posted by the University which appeared in The Pulse (official publication of the University) and integrates the AABS, Harare Weekend School, post and

undergraduate programme offers. This integration of the flexible packages creates an overall impression on the identity of the university.

Figure 5. 5An advert of Harare Weekend School and AABS logo



Source: www.msu.ac.zw/archives.

Retrieved on 10 September 2017

The marketization discourse in higher education requires that students cannot be solely viewed as major stakeholders but “customers” as well. For Midlands State University it presented the way to fight competition and create a unique identity by offering distinguished academic packages and accessibility for its students. For instance, *the University offers flexibly packaged programs which are further augmented by the Work Related Learning programme which shows multifaceted efforts by the University to produce innovative and enterprising graduates who doesn't only seek to be employees but also possess the proclivity to establish their own enterprises.* The University has also become the fastest growing outclassing other public universities in the process with an estimated enrolment of 23 000 in 2013. In 2017 as a way to enable ease of access for its major stakeholders, MSU set up mobile admissions and registration centres at various points around the country for the February intake at places such as Bulawayo, Kadoma, Gokwe, Gutu and Jerera. One respondent suggested that it was a good idea and it represented the non-discriminatory values of the University and an appreciation that *both undergraduate and postgraduate students come from across the nation divide to pursue their passions and set a course for future success with the university.*

Furthermore, Midlands State University has a shop which sell official branded line of clothing to all its stakeholders. A respondent from the public relations office highlighted that *the major idea was to create and sell a unique identity of the university hence the establishment of non-academic brand products.* The shop has both formal and casual range of products which are branded with either the university logo, motto, official colours and the official website depending on the product. The products can be accessed online through the

official website or at the institution's public relations office making it convenient for both internal and external stakeholders. *Selling branded line of clothing products is a way for the University to communicate, advertise and build impression of the University. This is due to the fact that apart from the design impression, the one wearing it will always communicate message.*

Informal branding by the third party internal stakeholders namely departments, student's unions/organisations and representative councils has established a new trend of low cost branded line of clothing. Although primarily not based on the official designs by the University this line of products has become a norm and a force to reckon in disseminating and communication of the corporate image, logo, motto and official colours. The research identified that majority of the clothing line are low cost caps and t shirts which are easily affordable. Departments has assigned specific colours and in some cases designs and message to be printed as way to market their individual programmes. For instance, the department of Politics and Public Management's '*Power can't be shared*', Young Ambassadors Forum's "*We believe in Diplomacy*" are very popular among the department students and members of the group for the latter. Several church groups with on-campus fellowship programmes has also resorted to integrating the University official colours and logo with their fellowship messages as way create an integrated identity with the University corporate brand.

Interestingly is the marketing of University life and corporate brand by the informal branding initiatives at Midlands State University Zvishavane Campus. A close look on some of the messages described on the informally branded products gives an impression that student life at the Midlands State University could be the best than any local university. For instance, the phrase "*Fact MSU Rocks*" popular among the University's students and give a positive impression about University's life to majority of High School Students. One student said *that wearing these informally branded products produces sense of identity and belonging to the university.* Another respondent highlighted that *I could not afford the officially branded products but wanted something which bears the University logo and I has to get a cap.* This significantly contribute to corporate brand and image communication as well as awareness despite the fact that the University is not always in control of the messages which accompanies the official logo, motto and colours on these informally branded products which in some cases not be a true reflection of the mission values, ethos and beliefs of the institution.

In branding names have tremendous symbolic meaning and power to influence stakeholder's perceptions over the brand. The Midlands State University which was named after the iconic central region of Zimbabwe has one of its most prized assets in its own name. During the interviews the researcher established that despite the existence of official University logo, colours and motto, the acronym *MSU* which comes from the University's official name represented the first impression at the expense of all other branding artefacts. One respondent suggested that the acronym *MSU is the identity of the University*. The majority of respondents who were not aware of the University brand suggested that they got more impression from the name acronym more than anything else. The institution avoided to be named after its predecessor former Gweru Teachers College where the university's main campus is housed and created its own unique brand identity in the process. The university name thus bears a strong institutional identity in the minds and perceptions of its stakeholders making it a perceived popular destination for most prospective students.

5.3.2 Midlands State University Brand Communication

The University has an information and public relations communications policy and guiding documents which set the parameters and regulations on brand communication. These policy documents establish the procedures for communication and who should communicate the brand, when and how as well as what to communicate as way to disseminate the right message. The University Act (Chapter 25:21 and Ordinance), seeks to protect the brand identity and regulate the student conduct. It makes any act or conduct whether on or off campus which may reasonably likely to bring the university into disrepute or likely to harm university interests an act of misconduct and punishable offence. Organisational reputation once tarnished cannot be rectified over night as the process may require re-branding as way to send the correct message to stakeholders. One respondent said that *the University is highly committed to ensure they communicate the right message to its stakeholders and avoid bringing the institution into disrepute*.

The University has also an employer code of conduct specially designed to ensure that members of staff (both academic and non-academic) acts in the best interest of the organisation. For instance, students and staff are not allowed to communicate with the media and news outlets in their own capacity. The major reason is that when marketing a brand, communication is very critical as it may not just help disseminate information but can also mislead stakeholders by communicating the wrong message. A respondent from the academic staff who required anonymity highlighted that *communication is the nerve centre of any*

brand and from time to time the University issues internal circulars, policies and manuals as way to improve successful communication of the brand to various stakeholders [both internal and external] at all levels.

The University has established official social network accounts for various blogs such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram as a way to communicate its brand and reach out to prospective students. The platforms are used partly for official announcements such as examination dates and results announcement and market University activities and student life and the institution. This gives an impression for prospective students about the environment as well as the achievements of both the institution and students which are communicated via these social media platforms. Apart from the social media the University has also an official publication, The Pulse which helps in branding by incorporating visuals from the University symbols, motto and colours.

5.3.3 The multi-campus approach

A home to more than 23 000 students and an estimated 2 000 members of staff, some of whom renowned top scholars and researchers in Zimbabwe, the University has four vibrant campuses spread across the country namely, Harare, Zvishavane, Mutare and the main Campus located in Gweru. The University houses nine faculties namely Arts, Commerce, Education, Law, Natural Resources Management and Agriculture, Science and Technology, Social Sciences, Medicine and Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering.

The Midlands State University (MSU) extended its tentacles to Zvishavane as part of the of a growth strategy and opened a new campus in August 2015. The campus which is located at the old Shabanie-Mashava Mining Holdings became a fully-fledged and self-contained campus with teaching, learning, research facilities as well as support services just like those found at the Gweru MSU Main Campus. The university didn't just establish the key units and facilities for learning and accommodation for staff and students but also embarked on a branding programme to renovate, construct new facilities and "brand" them with the university's official colours, logo and motto as prescribed necessary. The major idea here was to enhance a new look for the premises which could reflects the goal ethos, values and mission as well as the image of the institution. The university was also resorting to the new "marketization" discourse in the higher education by resorting to the multi-campus approach as they could become conveniently located for the aspiring students within the area.

The multi-campus approach although has proved to be a reliable, natural development process and successful growth strategy in higher education for instance renowned universities such as Penn State University, University of Nottingham and University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa to mention but a few has successfully embraced this new global phenomenon, MSU has embraced the idea both for marketing and strategic growth ideals. For the University although the multi-campus approach was celebrated as part of the achievement of the University's strategic goals of having nine (9) faculties by 2015, it also represented the replica of the iconic Midlands State University Main Campus Gweru in a totally different geographic environment much for the delight of its stakeholders. One of the respondents who was part of the campus pioneer groups said that *from the first day you were never lost and one could familiarise the campus from a distance because of the university colours*. Midlands State University became the first public or state owned university to resort to the multi campus approach in Zimbabwe and can be recognised for that. Below is the caption of a branded university banner at the newly established campus.

5.3.4 Midlands State University Stakeholders Engagement

According to the Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Wekwetethe *University does three primary things, [to] teach so that people ultimately get their degrees [and] create new knowledge through research and the third area is community engagement. The university as part of its community engagement partake in various social responsibility initiatives*. The University through its Library Services Department recently have for the past years donated large consignments of books to various tertiary institutions and high schools in the Midlands Province as a whole. A respondent from the Library department suggested that the *donation of academic materials was aimed at strengthening the library capacity of the beneficiaries*.

One of the most prominent day on the University calendar is the MSU Open Day and perhaps the largest marketing platform for the institution. The University invites O and A' Level students as well as their teachers and school heads from across the nation for the Open Day as a way to give prospective access to the institution.

The event which is the product of patronage of the University's Open Day Committees and the Information and Public Relations Office, exposes prospective students to the demands of higher learning and the advantages which comes about with enrolling at Midlands State University. Addressing guests and students during the 5th edition of the Open Day in 2015 the University Registrar reiterated that *the Open day came as result of the need [by the University] to significantly contribute [towards] development of pupils by granting them a*

rare access to the University for a whole day and got the chance to ask questions. The Open Day like any other marketing or exhibition event runs under a theme with emphasis on contributing towards the economy and national policies such as Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET). For the 2015 edition the theme was *Transforming dreams into reality* highlighting the critical played by higher education in transforming lives with more emphasis on STEM.

The University utilises the Open Day as a way to show the prospective students its high commitment towards ensuring that its major stakeholder (students) are provided with a conducive learning and recreation environment at all-time once they enrol. The fact that University has a well-resourced library as its centre piece of learning, teaching and research, as well as well-resourced library facilities at all its campuses helps to convince these prospective students.

Despite the existence of the University Open Day, the institution participates at both provincial and national exhibition programmes such as Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF), Midlands and Harare Agricultural Show as a way to engage and market itself. This creates a platform from the interaction with stakeholders and provide them with an understanding of the University offers goals value and ethos. For the University concept of community engagement is not just a way to market awarding of degrees and communicate the brand but also meant to ensure that MSU create a unique identity as part and parcel of the communities they serve.

5.3.5 Midlands State University Visual Brand Identification

As part of its brand marketing and communication, Midlands State University has identified pillars for visual identification as the University motto, logo and official colours. The research indicated that values of iconic identification for the institution contributes towards a successful corporate image and identity. According to respondent from the Public Relations office, *the University values and understand the role of the logo, colours and motto as the foundation of a strong visual identity and appreciate its role towards branding of the institution.* One respondent, a pioneer student at Zvishavane Campus said that *from the first day you could not be lost as you could identify the place by familiarising with the official colours.*

The university as part of its branding resorted to the use of an integrated visual, verbal and pertinent design as way to create a unique identity. the institution has put great faith in the colours motto and logo with a strong determination on their continuity on the new campuses like Zvishavane Campus. The University motto *Our Hands Our Minds Our Destiny* means the University relies on itself to build a university truly instrumental to the development of Zimbabwe. Below is welcome board at the Zvishavane Campus which is composed of the integrated official colours, University logo and motto. The University has achieved a milestone in creating a “family resemblance” on its branding.

Figure 5. 6A branded welcome billboard at Midlands State University Zvishavane Campus.



Source: *The Pulse*, (January 2016 Vol 5 Issue 1 page 10)

5.3.6 The Midlands State University Logo

Midlands State University has a “mixed logo” which includes both symbol and text. The text on the logo include the official name of the University and the motto while the symbol is a geometric shape with various images inside (which includes the iconic Zimbabwe bird). The logo consists of three dominant colours (gold, white and blue) in a log. A respondent from the library department suggested *that the [University] logo can be understood as graphic message [the official motto, our hands our minds our destiny] and bears characteristics which makes it possible to be reproduced in any size*. Since its inception in the year 2000, MSU has maintained its official logo as a way to establish a well-known identity in the minds of stakeholders. One the most notable strength of the University logo is that is has a “geometric shape” an important element of corporate identity strategy and it strives to satisfy the “attributes and the functions” of a logo which is to communicate the identity of an

institution. All official documents and publication as well some vehicles of the University bear the logo as way of identification and differentiation. However, the use of the logo depends on the nature, role, purpose of the item or event among other determinants considered as important on the use of the logo.

Figure 5. 7 Official Midlands State University Logo



Source: www.msu.ac.zw Retrieved on 10 September 2017

Branding in the higher education goes beyond the use of the logo, motto and colours as iconic symbolism alone cannot be able to create an academic personality for the institution. The University has successfully been able to consider the dynamics of branding as a way to create a strong identity. Official colours and the University logo despite being the strongest artefacts of the brand have not always stand alone. The University, a multi-award winner has also integrated its iconic buildings and award symbols as part of presenting its visual identity. The major idea is not just to create a positive identification but to market its achievements and distinguish itself. The University was awarded International Gold Star for Quality in Geneva Switzerland(2015) and has successfully integrated the star award on its visual marketing artefacts such as branded University calendars. The University has also resorted to integrate its iconic administration block as part of its visual presentation. Below is a caption which appeared in the University official publication the Pulse which shows an integration of the Motto, Logo, iconic Main block and official colours.

Figure 5. 8 An integrated advert of the administration block, motto, logo and colours



Source: *The Pulse* (June - July 2015, Volume 4 Issue 11)

The University owns a reasonably big fleet of vehicles and they have been branded either with the official logo, colours and the motto or a combination of all. However, in branding the major idea for a brand is to create an impression, communicate a message to the stakeholders as well as creating identity. A respondent from the Public Relations Office revealed that *despite the need to promote symbols and colours, the use of the University visual depends on [the] nature of the of the item being branded and its purpose. The respondent pointed out that gold which constitute a greater percentage on the Logo cannot be easily reproduced on a bus and may not do well on t-shirt but has been very successful on the student's identification cards (popularly known as the Gold Card).* The colours blue and white are more familiar on the calendars, roofs, pamphlets and brochures and for stationery the website address or the motto has been constantly used depending on the item, function and purpose of the branded item. The colours white and black as well as the logo dominates on the official vehicles such as buses.

5.3.7 The contribution of digital design

With the coming in of the digital age, conscience of branding has drastically changed encompassing the web and web design as part of branding. The University has a website (www.msu.ac.zw) and despite being popular for its e-learning portal among students and staff, the website is the “backbone” for marketing and branding initiatives. In this globalised world websites can be accessed from everywhere and University has developed its own as way to present and market its own brand through the web. The websites partly designed incorporating the officials colours incorporates the visual of the University such as the logo

and motto (which represent and communicate the brand) and the shop (which offers branded products) can be conveniently accessed from this web creating a modern feat of brand web design. One respondent said that *the idea of a website came as a way to reach out for all prospective students and market the University brand.* The University website is so informative and supports banner advertising which makes it possible to advertise upcoming events, products and serve important notices about the institution to all its various stakeholders. The website as part of the University digital design is run, designed and maintained by the Information and Technology department.

5.3.8 Challenges affecting Midlands State University branding and corporate identity

The major challenge facing the University's branding initiatives is patenting and trademarking. Despite Zimbabwe being a member of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) and a signatory to Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), the requirements for filing a non-PCT application in Zimbabwe are highly expensive. According to an official from the Deeds Office *the current cost for filing a patent application is estimated to be between US\$ 2400.00 and US\$ 2600.00 excluding translation costs. The additional fees for claiming each priority date are also estimated at about US\$ 60.00 per priority claim. For the initial trademark registration corporates should pay \$1335 and there will be an additional charge levied for advertisement and registration of a trade mark.* In Zimbabwe the official patent document confers a sole right/privilege or license to an inventor for a limited period of just 20 years only. However, the official document is specifically called Letters Patent which is different from the invention itself.

According to an official from the Public Relations Office *patenting is of interest to the University since [both] patents and trademarks reflect specific strategic intentions as well as protection of technological assets which includes the logo.* In Zimbabwe trademarks are in most cases filed in the form of a logo, name or phrase, symbol and may even include specific corporate colours in some instances. Most importantly, for the University brand is creating a distinctive trademark which ensures exclusion rights while patents are a relevant protector of competitive advantage which provide immediate power to exclude third parties and from the use of the University symbols and colours without permission.

Informal branding has presented a challenge on the institution's brand especially from music and entertainment promoters who targets the University students. Third parties do advertise and incorporate the University logo but the messages not solely directed at the interests of the University which makes it more difficult to consider legal action. The University logo and

name despite being officially registered and legally protected is still used in circumstances where it doesn't necessarily bear a message in line with the interest of the institution by both internal and external stakeholders. However, University can't not always legal action under these circumstances since it is a state owned and multi stakeholder institution.

The growth of the University hasn't always attracted positive media publicity. One responded a student suggested that *the University should do more in addressing "bad publicity" from both public and private media*. In branding of public institutions, the media plays a part in highlighting the good or bad practices but it's not always that they do it professionally, morally and factually in a responsible manner. Despite the existence of codes and communication policy and in particular the Public Relations Office, the University has received its own share of bad publicity from the media.

Branding requires both material and financial resources for the creation of a successful strong identity. The University is constrained in this manner as it relies mainly from government funding and subsidies as well as a small amount from tuition fees which isn't always sufficient to carry out comprehensive and aggressive brand marketing initiatives. The University despite enjoying some degree of autonomy is also governed and controlled by ZIMCHE with the more emphasis on academic excellence at the expense of branding.

5.4 Summary

The main objective was to discuss the findings from data collection through documentary reviews, observations, interviews and use of questionnaires. The presented information was gathered concerning the Midlands State University from relevant department, individuals and publications as well students experiences This chapter discussed how MSU presents its brand, the impacts corporate identity, how they communicate the brand and challenges at the University.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the conclusions and recommendations from the researcher on the research findings. Conclusions were drawn based on the research objectives, research questions and the subject of the research topic. Recommendations are the considerations from the which are deemed useful in strengthening branding and creating a strong identity for University.

6.2 Conclusions

The concept of branding and differentiation has drastically changed becoming more complex than ever before, especially in the wake of globalisation. There is now a set of new and critical questions which needs to be addressed and form the basic foundation for University's brand. Branding has shifted from the traditional basis of basing on a logo tagline and motto. There has risen a new set of questions over what the organisation really stand for, emotional reaction and loyal relationships and the conception of reputation in the eyes of prospective students as well as regional identity. The University has made quite remarkable success towards addressing the needs of branding in higher education by engaging stakeholders and membership to regional union as well as participating at the global. The choice of a University from the prospective students has virtually shifted from the ability to pay to a more conscious manner in which brand personality and corporate reputation are now pre-determinants.

The University has successfully created an integrated Public Relations Office which performs brand marketing, master planning, architecture and communication as way to creates a strong identity for the institution. The department has successfully designed key media such as (digital marketing, print and electronic media and social media) outlets for the University to disseminate information to the targeted internal and external stakeholders. Moreover, the University has a well-defined communications strategy and policies aimed providing clarity and consistency of institutional brand, corporate reputation and image as well as disseminate information about brand development and support. This helped to create a solid understanding University's key attributes and points of distinction as well as the core functional constituencies.

The University has also capitalised on its large pool of internal audiences, a product of the increasing numbers of enrolment. This presented an opportunity to empower students and "anoint" faculty and administrative staff as they serve as brand ambassadors. This has been one of the major breakthrough for creating a strong brand communication and reaching out efforts. This gave rise to the concept of informal branding at the University a stride which has helped the institutional brand to withstand the test of time since its inception. In this case the University has a successful brand strategy which can be easily implemented by internal stakeholder to both internal and external audiences.

The University brand is also a way communicate values, mission and ethos among both internal stakeholders. This includes issues of non-discrimination, gender equality, policies

against sexual harassment, contributing to national development and upholding national culture as well as community engagements. In the modern era University branding should also target the families of prospective student's alumni, faculty staff, donors, community leaders and therefore the institutional environment is much more important. The University is highly determined and believe in producing holistic graduates with both academic competence and as well as physical fitness. MSU brand thus remain committed to ensure that its students as a major stakeholder provided with a conducive environment for both learning and recreation all the time.

6.3 Recommendations

The University should embark of brand identity assessment initiatives as a way to determine its corporate identity and image as well as stakeholder's perceptions. The assessment may be conducted in various forms but should include an insight into the current reality about the University. The importance of brand assessment contributes towards developing the brand strategy, emancipating perception of the brand in the minds of stakeholders and creating loyal relationship for the University.

The University should also resort to the campus and faculty branding. This includes creating new internal visual artefacts for the faculties and campuses. The impacts for developing this trend is creating specific brand standards at all levels while co-branding strategies and activities can continue as critical part of the University's over-arching brand plan (brand self-preservation). This helps create unique identities for faculties campuses and programmes.

Furthermore, Midlands State University should adopt a branded house identity model as a strategy to embrace the success of its multi campus approach. The major objective will be to keep the University brand while sub-brands do not necessarily need to detract from the main brandbut rather build an easily recognizable brand and memorable identity. This new branding mode on the University will not just embrace identification but internally it can signal a messages about the desired culture while reducing information overload problems from the current line branding and brand administration costs.

There is need for improved institutional capacity and aggressive marketing principles of the University brand. This involves changing pre-conceived notions of branding and corporate identity through identifying unique essence of internal stakeholders as the basis for branding foundation and plan for measurable results. This perceived benefit includes increased student

enrolments, access to more donor and external revenue as well as quantifiable value of the brand awareness programs and continued stakeholder support

The University should establish formal legal joint ventures as a way to create or establishing a distinct or separate legal entity, for the corporate symbols, colours motto and visuals. This will help address the issue of abuse by third parties.

6.4 Summary

The objective of the chapter was highlight the conclusions and recommendations from the researcher and their perceived benefits.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Progress Mutamiri (Reg # R136176B) currently studying for a Bachelor Science Honours Degree in Politics and Public Management with the Midlands State University. I am carrying out a research focusing on The impact of branding on corporate identity. A case study of Midlands State University as part of the requirement of the programme. The questionnaire is designed to collect data on the impact of branding on corporate identity on Midlands State University (MSU)

I am kindly requesting you to complete the questionnaire anonymously in the spaces provided. Be assured that the data collected from this questionnaire shall be used in absolute confidence and for academic purposes only.

INSTRUCTIONS

- i) Tick [] where applicable.
- ii) Write your answers on the spaces provided below.
- iii) Do not write any names on the questionnaire.

Section A

Demographic information

- 1) Sex: male [] female []
- 2) Age: below 18 [] 19-39 [] 40-59 [] 60 and above []
- 3) A you enrolled with the University Yes [] No []
- 4) Educational level: primary [] O' level [] A' level [] Tertiary []
- 5) Occupation: Student [] Staff [] Member of the community [] Prospective student []
- 6) How long have you known about Midlands State University?
1-4.... 5-8..... 10 and above.....

Section B

The impacts of branding on corporate identity.

Tick [√] where necessary and write your responses on questions below.

1. How much do you know of University branding and corporate identity?

.....
.....
.....

2. In your view what do you think are the benefits of a strong university identity?

.....
.....
.....

3. Does Midlands State University have a brand and corporate identity policy?

yes []

no []

If yes, any comments

.....
.....
.....

4. How are the official symbols, logo, motto, name and colours presented by MSU?

.....
.....
.....

5. From your experience and understanding what are the challenges affecting branding and corporate identity of the University?

.....
.....
.....
.....

6. What has been done to ensure differentiation of the University?

.....
.....

7. What is the essence of branding and corporate identity to the University's reputation and identity?

.....
.....
.....

8. Does the logo, name of the university, colours, motto and symbols represent branding initiatives?

.....
.....
.....

9. How are the official symbols logo and motto of Midlands State University protected?

.....
.....
.....

9 What is the importance of corporate identity policy/ and or initiatives for Midlands State University?

.....
.....
.....

10 Who is allowed to reproduce university logo, symbols, motto, colours or insignia?

.....
.....
.....

Any other comments

.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU!!!

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Structured Interview Guide (Midlands State University organisation)

- 1) From your own understanding, is there any relationship between branding and corporate identity?
- 2) What are the benefits of a strong identity to the University?
- 3) How do the University presents and communicate its brand?
- 4) How does the University support its brand?
- 5) What is the contribution of visuals (logo, motto, colours and symbols) to the University identity?
- 6) Is there any support from ZIMCHE towards branding?
- 7) How does the University protect its identity?
- 8) What can be done to improve the University identity?
- 9) What are the future prospects of the university brand and identity?
- 10) What are the major challenges affecting branding and corporate identity of the University?

APPENDIX 3: UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Unstructured Interview Guide (locals and prospective students)

- 1) Do you know Midlands State University official logo, symbols and colours?
- 2) In your view does the University have a brand?
- 3) Does Midlands State University have a good reputation and identity?
- 4) What do you think are the strategies to improve the university reputation and identity?
- 5) What are the contributions being done by Midlands State University to the communities?
- 6) What can be done to improve the University Identity and reputation?
- 7) In your view can Midlands State University become an ideal world class institution?
- 8) Is branding impacting on the growth and development of the University?
- 9) Does the university brand represent ethos, mission and values of the University?
- 10) Do you consider identity and reputation when choosing a University to enrol?