Nottingham Trent University
Doctorate of Education

DOCUMENT 5

A study of corporate branding in a Higher Education Institution in the 21st Century

This document is submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements of Nottingham Trent University for the degree of Doctorate of Education.

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May 2014

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Abstract

Within the corporate branding and Higher Education (HE) literature there are few studies which explore university branding, particularly in more specialist university departments. While corporate branding has been conducted in a number of different commercial settings, this is the first study of its kind to conduct research into corporate branding in a specialist area of education in a university. This research study therefore attempts to address this gap in knowledge by exploring the different interpretations of corporate branding, and its implementation, in the context of a post-92 University, and more specifically in an education department particularly in relation to its teacher training provision.

Corporate branding is an important topic as the marketplace for universities is becoming increasingly competitive and there are key components of corporate branding that can provide an organisation with a competitive edge. It is felt that understanding these components, and how they relate to corporate branding in a university, will alleviate some of the confusion that exists in the literature. Useful recommendations are provided for the HE sector and to the wider service sector, particularly in terms of policy and professional practice.

An interpretivist approach is adopted for the research through the development of a single revelatory case study which draws on primary sourced data within a qualitative paradigm. This includes documentary evidence, fourteen semi-structured interviews with employees and three focus groups with seventeen students in a University's Faculty of Education. What has emerged from the research is a new theoretical framework which suggests that programmes have developed as sub-brands brought about by seven key antecedents: the changing environment, sub-cultures, the vision for a teacher, staff, shared values, partnerships and brand ambassadors. This study contributes to the academic knowledge by extending the concept of a sub-brand to the academic teaching programmes and related to this is the fact that creative and innovative graduates are contributing to the employability levels as well as to the reputation of a Faculty. Subsequently it is Faculties, or specialist areas, that contribute to the competitive advantage of a University.

Acknowledgements

To my Dad and Maureen – this is for you both with love.

Throughout the doctoral process I have been supported by the goodwill and kindness of so many people without whom I would not be where I am now.

First and foremost are my supervisors. I would like to thank Dr Carley Foster for her endless professional support, guidance and tolerance shown throughout the doctoral process. I would also like to thank Dr Sheine Peart, who came along a little later in my journey, but has since been a constant source of support with a smile that never failed to revitalise my spirits. Finally Professor Marie Parker-Jenkins, a friend and colleague who first encouraged me to undertake the doctorate and is my constant source of inspiration and encouragement.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance and support from staff at the University who helped me enormously with document 5. I am indebted in particular to time given up to meet me and to their openness and inspiring cordiality. I would also like to thank the students I interviewed at the University without whom I could not have undertaken this research.

I would like to express my appreciation to Chris, my critical friend, who read endless pieces of my work and provided me with such useful feedback (and cakes!).

To my dear friend Mel I thank-you for all your help but it is mostly your encouragement and friendship for which I will be eternally grateful particularly as you are travelling a similar journey yourself.

My gratitude also goes to my Mother who has travelled with me in spirit, if not in mind, with her endless love. My thanks also go to my brother Si for his support.

To my son Paul and my daughter Kate for all their emotional support and help with the doctorate and making it feel like a 'family thing'. And to my son Andy - thank-you for returning at such an important time.

Finally, I would like to thank my partner and soul mate Steve, not just for being there throughout the process, particularly over the last few endless months, but most importantly for believing in me.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BIS	Department for Business Innovation and Skills
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EdD	Doctorate of Education
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
KIS	Key Information Sets
MU	Midlands University
NCTL	National College for Teaching and Leadership
NSS	National Student Survey
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
ONS	Office for National Statistics
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NCTL	National College for Teaching and Leadership
PCFC	Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council
QTS	Qualified Teaching Status
QTLS	Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills
RoI	Republic of Ireland
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TA	Teaching Agency
UFC	Universities Funding Council
UK	United Kingdom
USPs	Unique Selling Points
WoM	Word-of-Mouth

CHAPTER 1 – THE EVOLVING RESEARCH JOURNEY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, branding has been associated with the commercial sector and products or services whose 'dimensions differentiate it in some way from other products or services designed to satisfy the same need' (Kotler *et al,* 2009: 426).   However, all types of organisations are now appreciating the importance and value of utilising their brands 'to improve their performance and build deep relationships with their customers' (Hariff and Rowley, 2011: 348).   Kapferer (2012: 51) maintains that organisations themselves are brands that go far beyond their particular markets and become 'a name with a personality, the power of influence, being driven by values, and a source of innovations that give birth to a community'.

Furthermore, organisations are realising that their stakeholders use corporate brands as an 'important navigational tool' (Balmer and Gray, 2003: 972).   Even a brand name can provide an accessible cue when customers have limited information concerning a product or service (Stamp, 2004). Corporate branding is therefore defined as:

> *...a visual representation of a company that unites a group of products or businesses, and makes it known to the world through the use of a single, a shared visual identity, and a common set of symbols* (van Riel and Fombrum, 2007:107).

In such a competitive marketplace universities are increasingly being viewed as businesses (Walton, 2005; Bunzel, 2007). Thus research highlights the rationale for branding in universities as it can be utilised to clarify a university's position in the marketplace and to alleviate its complexity of multi-faceted features (Chapleo, 2010). These include for example, tuition fees, position in league tables, status, points of differentiation and competitive advantage, experiences and position in the global marketplace (Melewar and Akel, 2005; Bunzel, 2007; Whisman, 2009; Chapleo, 2010). Chapleo (2011: 414) claims that 'one cannot ignore the relationship' between university brands and the league tables and that branding could be used to highlight unique selling points (USPs) to improve league table positions.   Interestingly, Chapleo (2011), in stating that these USPs can strengthen the brand, cites Hoeffler and Keller's (2003) assertion that strong brands can charge a price premium; an important consideration with increasing tuition fees.   In fact, universities and other educational institutions

across the globe are looking for ways in which to differentiate themselves from the competition (Hemley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). Silva (2013: 7) maintains that branding in universities is concerned with 'getting prospects to see the university as the only one that provides a solution to their particular need'.

Fetcherin and Usunier (2012) studied the way in which corporate branding has evolved over the last 40 years and found few articles, other than those concerning primarily multinational corporations, that had been used for research into corporate branding. In particular, there appears to be a gap in knowledge concerning corporate branding in universities in both the corporate branding and Higher Education (HE) literature. Further, despite the fact that 'higher education and branding go back a long way' (Temple, 2006: 15) those branding studies that have been conducted in universities have had limited application in specialised areas (Hankinson, 2004; Chapleo, 2011) such as the sciences or teacher education, as opposed to a business school where most marketing research is generally undertaken. Balmer and Liao (2007:368) point to other 'institutional settings' such as the Department of Music, at the University of York, which warrant a study with students into their identification with a University's corporate brand. In addition, although Temple (2006: 16) states that HE in particular is heavily reliant on 'the abilities, motivations, and interactions of the students themselves….'.there appears to have been very little research in establishing the views of students on branding/corporate branding (Jevons, 2006). This is with the exception of Walton (2005), who studied documentation from traditional and corporate universities in the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK), and Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007) who examined personal statements, and quotes that related to branding of both a university and its business school, from on-line student applicants. Finally, Balmer and Liao (2007) conducted exploratory case study research on corporate branding in universities but again it was with students reading for a general business degree as opposed to a specialised area.

There is confusion in the literature between some articles that fail to make a distinction between "corporate branding" in universities and that of "branding" such as those who acknowledge the lack of empirical studies of "branding" in the HE sector (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Waerraas and Solbaak, 2009). This may reflect a lack of understanding in the branding literature (Balmer, 2001[a]), for example, Waeraas and

Solbakk (2009) acknowledge that corporate branding is becoming increasingly important for organisations although the focus of their article is "branding" in HE. Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006: 333) maintain that although there have been a number of studies examining reputation and image 'branding has barely made its mark in higher education marketing'.   Further, the different components associated with corporate branding, such as corporate identity, corporate reputation and corporate image remain 'largely undefined and there is clearly no consensus as to what they mean' (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012: 744).   Moreover, when these concepts of branding are 'applied at the corporate level' (Balmer, 2001[a]: 249) it is considerably more difficult and complex than applying the same concepts to products.   There is therefore a substantial argument 'for a clear understanding of definitions, constituent components and overlaps of and between the constructs' (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012: 1050) in relation to corporate branding.

Importance is attributed to issues surrounding the management and implementation of branding/corporate branding (Jevons, 2006, Whisman, 2009).   However, there is relatively little empirical research into its implementation within the HE sector as, unlike many commercial organisations, universities do not have the same level of resources to implement branding strategies (Jevons, 2006).   Corporations are seldom able to create a 'meaningful connection' with their stakeholders (Kay, 2006: 744) and more specifically Balmer and Gray (2003) argue that a fundamental issue in itself is for a university to try and communicate a diverse and complex brand to multiple stakeholders (Chapleo, 2011). For example, Jevons (2006: 467) claims that universities tend to be organisations that are internally-focused, unsure as to what is important for their brand, their stakeholders and grasping 'at less-than-differentiating value propositions' citing a university in the US using the "strap line": *one of Florida's 11 public universities*.

Jevons (2006: 466) points to resistance from employees in universities that may have 'old-fashioned, non-business orientated faculties….'. This point becomes even more blurred since some university employees may associate more closely to the Department or Faculty to which they are attached (Chapleo, 2007).   Other studies of branding/corporate branding in universities have tended to be focused on either very senior personnel of universities (Chapleo, 2007; Curtis *et al*; 2009), marketing

personnel (Chapleo, 2010: Chapleo 2011) and not those employees in departments attributed to a university that have objectives which are not necessarily commercially-oriented (Brookes, 2003), for example, a Department of Education.

In view of the gaps in knowledge that were highlighted in the review of the literature this research aimed to contribute to the academic theory and professional practice through exploring the different interpretations of corporate branding, and its implementation, in an educational setting. In particular, perceptions regarding corporate branding/branding, and their related components, were sought from employees and students in a post-92 university. The context of the research was a Faculty of Education with a particular focus on its teacher training provision.

1.2   THE RESEARCH JOURNEY TO DATE

Research conducted for documents 3 and 4, which helped form part of this doctorate, took place at a university in the Republic of Ireland (RoI), specifically in a Faculty of Education. The contextual focus in these documents became significant due to the constant external policy changes being imposed, the influence this had on the perceptions of staff and students and the resulting importance attributed to corporate branding. This journey is now discussed and how it has led to the development of document 5.

1.2.1   Document 3

The purpose of document 3 was to look at corporate branding within an education setting primarily focusing on how corporate branding, and its related components, was viewed by different levels of staff. The research took place at a University in the RoI and the Faculty of Education. The research demonstrated that corporate branding was operating in the University environment but conflicting forces between the University and the Department were affecting its successful implementation and what was emerging was a 'sub-brand' (Chapleo, 2007: 29) associated with the Faculty. There was no specific reference to the existence of a corporate identity, nor any connection to the University's values by staff, and perceptions of corporate branding therefore favoured the more "visual" aspects of branding. This had resulted in a Faculty with a different culture, different priorities and different values to that of the University (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2001). This situation was exacerbated by a poor

internal communications system (Whisman, 2009) and an apparent lack of understanding as to what corporate branding was by senior managers. Employees were unsure as to what the University was trying to achieve and there appeared to be little buy-in to the mission and vision of the University.

1.2.2   Document 4

The main purpose of document 4 was to look at corporate branding utilising the same case study at a University in the RoI but gaining the views of the University's key stakeholders: its students. The aim was to test three related propositions that emerged from the findings in document 3 as follows:

- Messages are setting out the values of the University in a way that is meaningful both to internal and external stakeholders

- A strong reputation will enhance the image of the University

- A clear understanding of its identity will provide the University with a unique position in the marketplace

Following the research it became apparent that in the eyes of its students the University had secured its reputation through the delivery of a clear corporate identity and subsequent image (Herstein *et al*, 2007; Kapferer, 2012) . However, perceptions concerning the Faculty were less positive. Students had meaningful values that they attributed to corporate branding and which gave them an important sense of identity in the relationship they held with the University (Balmer and Liao, 2007) as opposed to the Faculty. Some of these values may have been contextually-driven in terms of a student's social background, gender and the faculty to which they belonged. The University was viewed positively in light of the competition and evidence suggested that it held a unique position in the marketplace. However, if the University was to sustain a profile that was distinct from the competition it would have to continue to look to differentiate the personal characteristics of its corporate brand.

1.2.3   The creation of document 5

Both document 3 and 4 concluded that the overall challenge for the Irish University was drawing all these different and complex factors together into a unified corporate brand.

These specific antecedents included corporate branding, corporate identity, corporate reputation and corporate image. This could require establishing more integration across Faculties and Departments through the development of values that were collectively congruent with the brand, the University and its internal and external stakeholders. Therefore document 5 aimed to achieve a deeper understanding of stakeholders' perceptions of corporate branding, and the related concepts, so as to ensure its successful implementation in an educational context.

1.3   OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

Higher Education (HE) in England and Wales has gone through major changes over the last 50 years, not least the abolishment of the division between universities and polytechnics in 1992 (HEFCE, 2011[b]) which meant that former polytechnics could apply for "university" status.   More recently this has included the raising of tuition fees (Browne, 2010), allowing universities to decide on student charges (Brown, 2010), with more focus on employability (Leitch, 2006) and the National Student Survey (NSS).

In Initial Teacher Training (ITT) there have been a number of legislative changes that have clearly shaped the institutional polices and professional practice in teacher education. The idea of partnerships between universities and schools has been around for some time but it was the former Department for Education and Science that formalised this arrangement (DES, 1992). More recently this arrangement has changed and there is a move towards schools providing teacher training rather than universities (DfE, 2011). This does not imply that schools can simply work independently, as they will still be required to be involved with universities, but it does mean that universities must work hard to build meaningful and lasting partnerships with their local schools and colleges. Thus corporate branding may be the way forward in building these important relationships.

These points highlight the continuing changes in HE and further uncertainty that teacher education and further education has had to endure. The context for this research therefore became more specific to corporate branding as this may either support or hinder its implementation. The resulting research purpose and objectives for this study were then developed.

1.4 OVERALL RESEARCH PURPOSE

To explore the different interpretations of corporate branding, and its implementation, in the context of a post-92 university in England

This study sought to examine the context of a university, and that of a university department, and the way in which this may affect stakeholders' views of the university's corporate brand. This study also sought to gain an insight into those antecedents and factors that may facilitate or hinder the implementation of corporate branding in an educational setting.

1.4.1 Research objectives

The three principal research objectives were:

i) *To explore and deconstruct the different components of a corporate brand, and the interconnections involved in its formation in a university*

The different key components of corporate branding were established and included identity (Balmer, 2001[a]; Balmer and Gray, 2003; Martin and Beaumont, 2003; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001), values (Chaploe, 2010; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001), reputation and image (Martin and Beaumont, 2003; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Curtis et al, 2009; Chaploe, 2011) but the exact meaning of these concepts still remain 'largely undefined' (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012: 744). In addition there appeared to have been very little research on how these concepts were understood in the context of a university. It was therefore planned to investigate the precise meaning of these terms and attempt to clarify any inter-relatedness between the different components involved in the corporate branding domain which may be operating in a university context.

ii) *To compare perceptions of a corporate brand by relevant employees and students in both the context of a university and that of a university faculty*

The question aimed to understand *how* a university's overall corporate brand was perceived, *how* it was structured in the minds of its stakeholders and *how* this compared with their views of a Faculty. So as to address a gap in the knowledge concerning views of stakeholders in a university department, other than a business or marketing context, perceptions from both staff (this latter group includes academic staff and administrators

in a university faculty) and students were examined for similarities and differences so as to establish whether or not:

- Stakeholders identified with a university (Kapferer, 2012).

- A university's brand values corresponded with the emotional needs of their stakeholders (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Chapleo, 2010).

- Stakeholders understood the difference between corporate reputation and a university's corporate image (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012).

These perceptions would be compared to the views of marketing employees (involved with branding policy making and its implementation) connected to the university and those associated with the faculty.

iii)   To provide insights for professional practice on how best to fulfil a university's brand promise through the implementation of a corporate brand

Importance had been attributed to implementation issues of corporate branding, in particular the significance of consistent and harmonious communication (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Jevons, 2006 Whisman, 2009). However, the literature demonstrates that this dialogue does not always happen (Jevons, 2006; Whisman, 2009). The role of employees is paramount (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Whisman, 2009) as is the way corporate branding is managed (Chapleo, 2010, Balmer and Gray, 2003; Hatch and Schultz 200). This question aimed to gain an insight into those factors that facilitate or hinder the implementation of corporate branding. While some of these topics had been examined in a number of different contexts there was very little evidence of their assessment in the context of universities.

1.5   OVERVIEW OF APPROACH TO RESEARCH

An interpretivist approach (Bryman and Bell, 2007) was adopted for the research through the development of a single, revelatory case study (Yin, 2009). The case researched was a University in the Midlands but focusing specifically on teacher education. Primary sourced data were drawn on through documentary evidence and semi-structured interviews, within a qualitative paradigm, with employees and students in the Faculty and Marketing staff in the University.

1.6   STRUCTURE FOR DOCUMENT 5

This chapter has provided a background to the research, including a rationale for the research conducted and a brief overview of the research context. A synopsis is also provided of the research journey taken through the documents required for the Doctorate of Education (EdD). This started with an exploratory study of corporate branding through to this research study which was much more focused on understanding the corporate branding domain in more depth so as to ensure its successful implementation in a UK educational setting.

Chapter two reviews the corporate branding literature both in an educational and non-educational context and in the services sector. This includes a brief review on how corporate branding differs from product branding followed by a review of each of the key components of a corporate brand; primarily identity, values, image and reputation; this also considers the way which these components interact.

Chapter three is the final section of the literature review and looks at issues related to implementation of the corporate brand followed by a conceptual framework.

Chapter four provides a review of the research context for this research study. In particular, a chronicle of the challenges that HE has faced and that of teacher education, followed by a brief review of the case: the Midlands University, its Faculty of Education and more specifically teacher education where the research is primarily focused.

Chapter five provides an overview of the methodological approach adopted for the research objectives.   The ontological position was that of a subjectivist and epistemologically, the position of an interpretivist was adopted. A single revelatory case study was proposed and primary sourced data were drawn on through semi-structured interviews and supported with secondary documentation, within a qualitative paradigm.

Chapter six presents and discusses the key findings that were analysed inductively and which are compared to the literature reviewed. A key finding to emerge in the case study is that of sub-brands. Seven antecedents have contributed to this situation: changing environment, sub-cultures, Vision for a teacher, changing environment, ITT

staff, shared values, partnerships, brand ambassadors. A revised conceptual framework is also illustrated.

Chapter seven concludes this research study by addressing the research objectives. This is followed by an outline of theoretical contributions that have been made to the corporate branding and education literature. Finally implications for managers, limitations of the research and opportunities for further research are stated.

CHAPTER 2 - THE LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONTEXT

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Kay (2006:753) claims that branding and corporate branding are 'fundamentally different' while Abratt and Kleyn (2012) assert that there is little consensus on what constitutes a corporate brand.   Balmer (2001:248) uses the metaphor 'fog' due to the ambiguity that surrounds the corporate branding sphere which 'is in deep need of – at least – properly articulated models ….' (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012:744).   There appears to be a growing consensus that corporate identity provides the basis for other corporate level concepts, in particular, corporate branding, corporate reputation and corporate image (Balmer and Greyser, 2003: 39).   For example , several authors agree that corporate identity needs to be clearly understood (Balmer, 2001[a]; Kantanen, 2012) and maintain 'that an organisation needs a single clear corporate identity to secure its reputation in the eyes of internal and external stakeholders' (Herstein *et al*, 2007: 485). The interconnectedness of the different concepts is not clear, for example, causality of corporate identity might 'sometimes run both ways between key concepts in the domain' (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012: 744).   Therefore corporate identity could be both a consequence and an antecedent of corporate branding.   It is therefore these antecedents that are viewed as particularly important for this research and in the context of HE.

Following an overview of corporate branding, its definition and how the concept differs to product branding, a brief examination is provided on the importance of understanding the different components of a corporate brand; primarily identity, image and reputation. Corporate identity is the initial component explored followed by a discussion on corporate values as, according to Balmer and Wilson (1998), there is a general agreement in the literature that the key component of a corporate identity is its values and how these resonate with the personal values of staff. As a connection is also made between corporate identity and corporate image (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006) the latter is also discussed as a concept on its own and its relatedness with corporate identity.   The final component to be examined is corporate reputation both in the context of corporate branding and its relationship with corporate identity and corporate image. Throughout this document, and where relevant, the concepts will be explored in

relation to HE or service organisations. The final section of this chapter looks at issues related to implementation of the corporate brand, in particular, the importance of consistent corporate communications (He and Balmer, 2007) and buy-in from staff (Chapleo, 2010) as it is the employees who will influence stakeholders' perceptions of the corporate brand (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006). Where relevant the concepts will be explored in relation to HE.

2.2   THE CONCEPT OF CORPORATE BRANDING

Kapferer (2012:27) asserts that the term "corporate brand" 'designates the profile which the company wants to promote among its different audiences'. Coca Cola, for example, is both company and brand and has been able to maintain its strong position in the marketplace due to its trademarks which 'denote values that go beyond mere physical attributes and product labelling' (Nandan, 2005: 264). This notion of values is discussed further in section 2.3.1.   In increasingly competitive and turbulent environments, corporate brands are concerned with differentiation, enhancing images and improved communications (Kay, 2006).   Most importantly 'a corporate brand makes the company and its espoused values easily identifiable and connotes a level of quality and consistency of performance in the minds of its target audiences' (Balmer and Gray, 2003: 985).

Conversely, a product brand is generally undertaken by a marketing department with short-term solutions, such as advertising campaigns and logo redesigns, whereas corporate branding is typically represented as embracing the whole organisation (Hatch and Schultz, 2003).   Confusion therefore exists between graphic design and corporate branding (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012) where 'the industry still has a strong graphic design rather than a truly multidisciplinary derivation' (Balmer and Gray, 2003: 976). Further, a number of researchers use the term "branding", as opposed to corporate branding, in the HE literature when referring to the branding of organisations. For example, Petruzzellis and Romanazzi (2010) maintain that if branding were to be applied to a university then this would comprise many different and complex features including teaching, research, specialisms and consultancy described as 'the whole range of criteria that go to make up the quality of a university' (Jevons, 2006: 466). Dibb and Simkin (1993: 26) discuss branding and the variance of intangibility in different

services placing "education" at the extreme end of the continuum questioning: 'what is the product, the institution, the course; the experience or the qualification?'. Then again most of the articles concerning branding in universities appear to be written in the spirit of corporate branding such as Chapleo (2010: 173) who cites Bennett and Ali-Choudhury's (2007) definition of a university's brand (rather than a corporate brand) as being:

> *A manifestation of the institution's features that distinguish it from others, reflect its capacity to satisfy students' needs, engender trust in its ability to deliver a certain type and level of higher education and help potential recruits to make wise enrolment decisions.*

There appears to be a similar phenomenon in service sector organisations, including universities, where a number of articles appear to be referring to branding issues at an organisational level. For example, Temple (2006) defines the University of Oxford as a strong brand, which invokes distinct images and values in the minds of prospective students, and a strong product in terms of league tables for research and teaching. Where, then, does this leave the post-92 universities that may not hold a 'world-class brand' (Temple, 2006: 16) but may be recognised for their outstanding teaching and widening participation? Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007: 944) maintain that there are two types of 'brand architecture systems'. The first is the corporate brand being the university name that is used for all the services and programmes being offered by faculties/schools/departments which are verbally and visually linked to the university corporate brand. Second, is the 'house-of-brands' (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007: 944) where the university corporate brand is more of 'a holding company' and each school or department offers individual brands tailored to their particular target markets. This then suggests that the university is the corporate brand while the faculties / departments / schools become the product brand.

Essentially corporate branding implies much more than an advertising slogan (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Balmer and Gray, 2003) and is only one element of a much broader picture which needs to be an all-inclusive organisational process that comprises 'a single umbrella image that casts one glow over a panopoly of products' (Hatch and Schultz, 2001: 129). Thus, product brands primarily target

customers and consumers while a corporate brand has an orientation towards multiple stakeholders (Balmer and Gray, 2003).

Several authors maintain that discussing corporate branding cannot be done in isolation of discussing corporate identity (Balmer and Gray, 2003; He and Balmer, 2007) as the corporate brand's offer should be derived from its identity (Balmer, 2001[a]). In addition it is corporate branding that plays a 'pivotal role in the construction of identities' by many stakeholders (Balmer and Gray, 2003: 974) and thus the corporate brand becomes 'the interface between the organisation's stakeholders and its identity' (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012: 1053).   As Balmer (2001: 306[b]) states, it is corporate identity that 'provides the grit around which the pearl of a corporate brand is formed'.

2.3   CORPORATE IDENTITY

Dating back to the early 1960s corporate identity is now more recognised as a 'core area of marketing' (He and Balmer, 2007: 766). If organisations have a strong identity it can help them to 'align with the marketplace, attract investment, motivate employees and serve as a means to differentiate their products and services' (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006: 846) with features that are unique (Nandan, 2005). He and Balmer (2007: 771) claim that an organisation has distinctive attributes that address 'what the organisation is' while Fetscherin and Usunier (2012) maintain that there has been insufficient empirical research into the concept due partly to the lack of an integrated conceptual framework that encompasses causal relationships and exact definitions. As a result, there is a variance of opinions among practitioners concerning the components of corporate identity (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006).   In academic research it appears to have changed from graphic design (van Riel and Balmer, 1997), to a focus on employees and other stakeholders (Balmer and Wilson, 1998) and is now viewed as being much more strategic (He and Balmer, 2007).

However, the literature stresses that the term corporate identity is still associated with graphic design (Balmer and Gray, 2003; Curtis *et* al, 2009) and tends to be the visual cues of an organisation to which stakeholders can identify such as logos, name, strap lines, buildings, colours, house typeface (Dowling 1993; Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006).   He and Balmer (2007: 771) define visual identity as being the 'means of self-presentation' and that by treating it as a separate concept should prevent it being viewed

as an equal concept to that of corporate identity. This is an important point as Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) claim that those practitioners who focus on the more visual aspects of corporate identity are inclined to overlook other, more strategic areas. Balmer and Wilson (1998) claim that this tends to be due to graphic design being one area of the organisation over which senior managers have complete control. Conversely, visual identity is given limited consideration in the business literature and He and Balmer (2007) claim that it should be reflected on since corporate identity does share certain similarities with visual identity. In particular, both represent the values and philosophy of the organisation and both support corporate communications (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006) in terms of influencing stakeholders. This latter point concerning corporate communications is discussed in more detail in section 3.1. Relating 'visual identity and corporate branding/corporate identity' more effectively is highlighted as a gap in the business research literature (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012: 745).

What is clear is that the concept of corporate identity is broad and embraces a number of different management specialities. Abratt and Kleyn (2012: 1051), for example, claim that corporate identity is about 'what the organisation is and what is seeks to be' which Kapferer (2012: 150) defines as an organisation being its 'true self, driven by a personal goal that is both different from others and resistant to change'. For example, it takes a much more multidisciplinary stance regarding the performance of an organisation overall with strong links to 'strategy and competitive advantage (He and Balmer, 2007: 773). Similarly Curtis *et al* (2009) maintain that corporate identity concerns the more 'fundamental attributes of an organisation' (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012: 744) and the way an organisation goes about its everyday business. This then indicates a more multi-faceted approach to corporate identity that Cornelissen and Elving (2003: 115) describe as a 'stretched definition' which has led to 'circularity and ambiguity in theory and research'.

Thus, an organisation's identity is concerned with 'ethos, aims and values that create a sense of individuality' (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001: 442) which 'evolve and are amorphous' (Balmer and Gray, 2003: 981). Stakeholders identify with an organisation by basing their knowledge on what they know and/or what they believe which is 'further characterised by being positive, negative or ambivalent' (Balmer, 2008: 890).

This also includes the degree of importance that an individual attaches to her/himself by being a member of an organisation which He and Balmer (2007: 770) term 'organisational identity'. It is therefore important for employees to understand exactly what the identity is and what it actually stands for (Roper and Fill, 2012). Problems come to the fore 'when organisations reach a particular fork in the road' (Balmer, 2008: 881), such as changes in the environment or if confused perceptions are held of the organisation. At junctures such as this, corporate identity should be afforded particular importance in order for the institution to maintain its competitive position in the market (Balmer, 2008:).

Harris and de Chernatony (2001) stress that staff at different levels or backgrounds and from different departments will affect perceptions of the corporate brand's identity as they are shaped from a mix of sub-cultures and multidisciplinary in scope (Balmer, 2001[a]). As an example, Hatch and Schultz (2001), suggest an engineering department is more likely to have a completely different set of priorities and values to those of the sales and marketing team. Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) provide a reminder that organisations are made up of a number of heterogeneous groups in the form of departments with different desires and needs and that having a unified culture would be 'virtually impossible' (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006:857). The organisation's identity then embraces 'a bundle of values that are derived from a federation of subcultures' (Balmer and Gray, 2003: 981) which give the organisation its uniqueness. This is defined by He and Balmer (2007: 769) as 'the defining characteristics of an organisation' particularly from the employees' point of view which He and Balmer (2007: 769) coin the 'organisation's identity'. However, Waeraas and Solbakk (2009: 459) who conducted research in a Norwegian University, concluded that understanding and expressing a single identity for a university 'may be too complex and fragmented….' and that 'retaining multiple values and identities may promote uniqueness'. This dilemma is discussed further in section 3.3.

Jevons (2006) cites the University of Cambridge where the identity of their colleges is much more distinct than the entire University. Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana (2007) refer both to the heritage of universities, and of their departments, and the fact that in the past universities have played a much less visible role in branding which has allowed different departments to develop strong brand identities of their own. Hemsley-

Brown and Gonnawardana (2007) refer to these faculties/schools/departments as sub-brands where there is a parent company, such as Proctor and Gamble, which simply provides brand endorsement to the sub-brands. However if branding practices change in universities, and 'corporatization' (Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana , 2007: 945) is introduced, departments may have to align their identity with that of the university. This could result in departments losing their 'house-of-brands approach' (Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana , 2007: 946) and hence their individual branding to different target markets particularly those departments operating in niche markets.   This issue is raised again in section 3.2 in the context of communications.

In summary corporate identity is based on the organisation behind the corporate brand (Roper and Fill, 2012) and, like corporate branding, it is about communicating messages internally to employees (Kay, 2006).   Abratt and Kleyn (2012: 1050) assert that stakeholders will 'never interact with an organisation's corporate identity in its entirety' only certain aspects which in turn helps them to build a perception of the corporate brand. The structure for strengthening the corporate brand and building the corporate identity will depend on particular circumstances but Kay (2006) claims that it could be to improve morale, change particular aspects of corporate behaviour or create support for an organisation in difficulty. Several authors (Balmer, 2001[b]; Waeraas and Solbakk, 2009) claim that a corporate identity plays a key role in permeating these unique qualities of a corporate brand while Kay (2006) claims that corporate identity should support corporate branding by consistently relating to what is central to the organisation as problems may develop if a corporate brand's values are inconsistent with the personal values of stakeholders. It is these values which are next examined.

2.3.1   The concept of values

The links to values that an organisation portrays (Balmer and Gray, 2003), and how these relate to their stakeholders (Chapleo, 2010; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001), is well documented. De Chernatony and Cottam (2006: 622) claim that companies with a culture whose values are congruent with that of employees and of the brand will have a much stronger brand that will be 'genuinely "lived" by the employees'.   This is considered by Harris and de Chernatony (2001) who maintain that the values and behaviours of employees need to be aligned with the desired brand values as it is the staff which are central to the brand building process and the way in which they behave

will either reinforce or weaken the brand's values. Hatch and Schultz (2003) also argue that as it is the organisation under scrutiny, rather than the products, organisational behaviour becomes much more visible. Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) found in their study of organisations from a broad range of industries that they would have a much better image if employees were able to represent the organisation's values to external stakeholders.

With increasing competition in the marketplace and the rapid progress of modern technology, it is becoming more difficult to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and organisations are looking to differentiate the emotional, rather than functional, characteristics of their brand (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). Balmer (2001 [b]: 308) defines the values of an organisation's identity as:

> *.... a summation of those tangible and intangible elements which make any corporate entity distinct. It is shaped not only by the actions of corporate founders and leaders, by tradition and the environment, but also by the mix of employee values and affinities to corporate, professional, national and other identities ....*

Examining HE more specifically, other commentators suggest that the more a university's values fit with those of the students, the less likely they are to drop out (Jevons, 2006; Balmer and Liao, 2007). These 'desirable end states' (Lages and Fernandes, 2005: 1563) can be further classified into object and individual values (Rokeach, 1973). It is the individual or 'personal values' (Lages and Fernandes, 2005: 1564) that are significant in the literature and described as those 'that underlie important goals of students ....' (Gutman and Miaoulis, 2003:106) which 'deal with the end states of our existence or the ultimate goals that people wish to achieve in their lives' (Durvasula *et al*, 2011: 33). Balmer and Gray (2003: 980) make the general claim that 'corporate brand values should be clearly articulated, concise, well defined and distinct'. Therefore, shared values will only occur if the consumer appreciates and understands what the brand message is trying to say (Nandan, 2005).

The literature on services marketing includes the alignment of customers' expectations and perceptions to that of employees' behaviour (Edvardsson, 1998; Grönroos, 2000; Santos, 2002; Canal and Fletcher, 2001) and '.... where the employee is pivotal in delivering customer satisfaction' (Hariff and Rowley, 2011: 348). The higher education

sector could be likened to that of the service industry in that students experience the 'simultaneous production and consumption process' (Durvasula *et al,* 2011: 34). Petruzzellis and Romanazzi (2010) maintain that value creation is strongly related to service quality and may therefore be a key consideration for universities. Lages and Fernandes (2005: 1564), who integrate the literature on personal values of consumers and that of services marketing, claim that it is the 'personal values that allow one to understand the personal inherent reason(s) that explain why the service is used' and that consumers use these values to evaluate the quality of a service.

The importance of relationship building concerning values is mentioned by several authors (Durvasula *et al*, 2011; Timmor and Rymon, 2005) which is another significant point for this study, as it is satisfying the students' values which may lead to 'a notable impact on the development and furtherance of their relationship with the university' (Durvasula *et al*, 2011:34). For example, students' involvement with a corporate brand and the degree award can be exceptionally important and highly emotional and therefore provides a student with 'an important sense of identification ….' (Balmer and Liao, 2007: 357). Related to this is loyalty both in terms of its relevance to relationship building and in relation to the significant 'direct influence of image on student loyalty' (Alves and Raposo, 2010: 82).

Based on the above discussion it is clearly important for organisations to decide what they are hoping to achieve through branding (Chapleo, 2010; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). For example, Kapferer (2012: 154), in discussing "product" branding, maintains that it is brand identity that articulates 'the brand's tangible and intangible characteristics – everything that makes the brand what it is and without which it would be something different'. The importance of values is emphasised by Balmer and Gray (2003: 973) as they are 'inherent in or associated with the corporation and its products and services'. It is evident from the literature that brands are more successful, whether corporate or product-based, if the values that organisations create for their brands correspond with the emotional needs of their stakeholders (Chapleo, 2010; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). This, then, suggests that employees become the "product" brand, for example, Kotler et al (2009: 452) claim that employees are 'walking representatives of the brand' and their behaviour therefore needs to be managed both externally, to

ensure that they understand the brand values, and internally in terms of delivering the brand promise (these points are discussed further in Chapter 3).

2.4   CORPORATE IMAGE

Corporate image is frequently used 'to refer to an opinion that is independent of actual experience' (Davies *et al*, 2004: 126). Similar to product branding, corporate image is more short-term as it 'reflects current, changing perceptions' (Harris and de Chernatony, 2010: 445). This is clarified by Abratt and Kleyn (2012) who claim that when stakeholders experience the corporate brand they develop related brand images but these can change over time and new images are compared with earlier images (Rindell and Strandvik , 2010). This suggests that organisations can have more than one image due to the different perceptions their stakeholders hold of the image (Dowling, 1993). Corporate images are also formed by, for example, employees' and other's comments concerning the organisation not just by the products / services received (Dowling, 1993).

Some of the literature is confusing as reference to "corporate image" in the literature is sometimes referred to as "brand image" even though the research focus has clearly been the organisation. For example, Gutman and Miaoulis, (2003:106) state that brand image might be thought of 'as a network of linkages between all the cognitive and emotional elements evoked by the name of your institution'. This confusion also exists in university studies where a fairly recent article: *The influence of university image on student behaviour* (Alves and Raposo, 2010) discusses the importance of a university's "corporate image" as it influences a student's loyalty, and their satisfaction with a university. Further, Gutman and Miaoulis (2003) maintain that a positive brand image can be a key driver in influencing a student to attend a particular university and it is therefore important to understand the students' associations with the University's brand in relation to its image.   However, Alves and Raposo (2010) assert that the literature on how students perceive a university's corporate image is rare.

As discussed further in section 3.1, a consistent gap or difference between internal messages (identity) and external messages (image) can create irreversible damage to an organisation's reputation (Dowling, 2001; Roper and Fill, 2012). If, for example, employees' roles and length of service are diverse, this may lead to employees holding

different images of the organisation; an organisation therefore needs to ensure that these images 'are compatible with each other and mutually reinforcing' (Dowling, 1993: 104). Rindell and Strandvik (2010) describe this internal view as "closed source" branding while "open source" brands are where 'the organisation loses control and the consumer becomes empowered' (Rindell and Strandvik, 2010: 277). This latter point is referred to as a 'co-creation view' (Rindell and Strandvik, 2010: 279) and is where the customer has more of a defined role in the brand building experience. This idea of co-creation is mentioned in other literature but more in the spirit of "brand image" as opposed to "corporate image". For example, Grönroos (2007), who specialises in services marketing, maintains that it is the consumer who is responsible for building the brand as 'brand image is a consumer-constructed notion....' (Nandan, 2005:267). Payne *et al* (2009: 388), who developed a conceptual approach to understand the co-creation of a brand, discovered that senior managers in several companies found the model to be a useful and practical tool in supporting them to 'co-create the brand relationship experience with their customers'.

Christensen and Askegaard (2001: 293) maintain that there is a general lack of consistency when image and identity 'are adopted to theoretical models or applied in practice'. While Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) stress that almost all of the literature they reviewed makes an insightful connection between corporate identity and corporate image and 'that image is the collective perception that stakeholders have of corporate identity (He and Balmer (2007: 848). Dutton and Dukerich (1991: 546) maintain that there is a relationship 'between individuals' senses of their organisational identity and image and their own sense of who they are and what they stand for.....'. Further, Dutton and Dukerich (1991) maintain that two themes emerge from the literature concerning interpretation of corporate identity: what employees see as their organisation's identity, or their unique attributes, and what employees believe other people see as unique to the organisation is its image. However, Christensen and Askegaard (2001) argue that this fails to take into account the way in which the organisation is represented symbolically and how this symbolism is viewed by its various stakeholders. Once again certain authors appear to discuss "brand image" and "brand identity" but their foci are more affiliated with corporate image and corporate identity. Temporal (2002), for example, stresses the importance of an organisation

understanding its current image and whether this matches the actual identity trying to be described. Nandan (2005) claims that brand identity and brand image are related but also have distinct differences and while identity stems from an organisation the consumer is the receiver of the image. Kapferer (2012: 151) stresses that brand identity *precedes* brand image and it is therefore essential that 'before projecting an image to the public we must know exactly what we want to project' (Kapferer, 2012: 151). Finally, Palacio *et al* (2002:500) maintain that if a university's brand image is relevant to its students then the benefits of identity that the university projects will also be relevant and can be 'provided in a unique, distinctive manner'.

In summary, both corporate image and brand image appear to share similarities and both seem to be more concerned with how a "brand" is perceived and the decoding of all the signals that emanate from the brand in terms of products, services, an organisation and communications (Kapferer, 2012). This may be why stakeholders tend to hold more than one image of an organisation (Dowling, 1993) which in terms of HE could be, for example, a university (corporate image) and one of its departments (brand image) where stakeholders spend more time. These points are highlighted in Figure 1 including the construct of co-creation (Rindell and Strandvik, 2010) which is highlighted by the interlinking arrows between the internal and external stakeholders. These different themes could be described as 'creating a holistic experience that delivers an emotional fulfilment so that the customer develops a special bond with, and unique trust in, the brand (Kotler *et al*, 2009: 427) which can in turn create a positive reputation (Dowling, 2001). This is an interesting point as several authors argue that a number of organisations focus more on corporate reputation than corporate image (Martin and Beaumont, 2003; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) since, unlike corporate image, corporate reputation is built up over time (Balmer, 1998).

Figure 1:   Corporate identity, and its components, in relation to corporate branding and corporate image

```
┌─────────────────────┐
│ Corporate brand     │        ┌────────┐      ┌──────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Corporate/Visual    │───────▶│ Values │◀────▶│Corporate │◀───▶│ Product/Sub-brand   │
│ identity            │        └────────┘      │  image   │      │ Internal stakeholders│
│ Vision              │                        └──────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
│ Strategy            │                                                      ▲
│ Competitive advantage│                                                     │
└─────────────────────┘                                                      ▼
         ▲        │                                 ┌─────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
         │        ▼         ┌──────────────┐  Co-   │         │      │   Product    │
         │                  │   External   │◀──────▶│creation │◀────▶│ brand image  │
         └──────────────────│ stakeholders │        │         │      └──────────────┘
                            └──────────────┘        └─────────┘
```
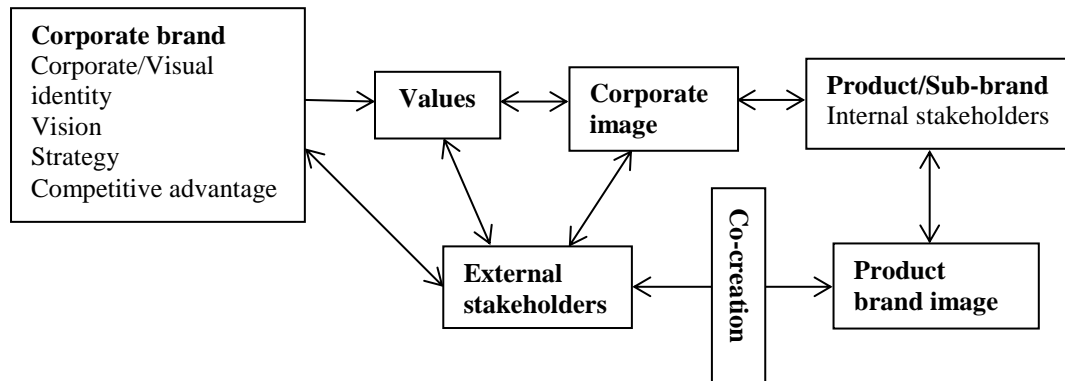
2.5   CORPORATE REPUTATION

Corporate reputation, corporate image and corporate branding are all built on stakeholders' perceptions of the three concepts (Balmer and Greyser, 2003: 311) and therefore the means by which the corporate brand is positioned in the minds of key stakeholders.   Reputation appears to be a more representative indicator of a brand's performance (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). For example, several author's state that reputation creates a competitive advantage (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012) and it is also an organisation's most valuable asset (Dowler, 1993; Firestein, 2006). However, Abratt and Kleyn (2012) point to the lack of consensus on the definition of corporate reputation while Davies *et al* (2004: 127) maintain that the construct of reputation is complex and it is useful to think of it in terms of a metaphor, or a corporate character with particular traits that 'makes an organisation different in the eyes of different stakeholders'. This moves into the realms of 'corporate personality' (Balmer, 1998: 974) which goes beyond the scope of this research. As outlined in the previous section both internal stakeholders (identity) and external stakeholders' (image) perceptions of an organisation's reputation should be aligned (Hatch and Schultz, 2001) to prevent the creation of potential gaps which can create irreversible damage (Roper and Fill, 2012). According to Greyser *et al* (2006: 906) 'the principal threats to a corporate or non-profit brand today come from reputational trouble' and, as with corporate identity (section 2.3), reference is made to sub-brands. For example, findings from a study undertaken with senior personnel in UK universities cites evidence of different faculties / departments seeking their own distinct reputation which has led to the emergence of

'sub-brands' (Chapleo, 2007: 29). This only became an issue if the sub-brand had 'a higher profile than the overall institutional brand' (Chapleo, 2007: 29); if it was an issue, it was not necessarily seen as negative and in some cases is was seen as beneficial. Indeed Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007) maintain that if a department, or sub-brand, were to gain a poor reputation this could be changed, re-branded or even closed but would not necessarily damage the university's corporate brand.

Stakeholders are provided with a number of different opportunities to assess an organisation's reputation (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001[a]; Abratt and Kleyn, 2012) based on, for example, relationships with employees and their perceptions of communication activities and symbolism concerning the way in which a company behaves, in comparison to its competitors (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001[a]; Chapleo, 2011). Therefore the way in which employees interact with external stakeholders will affect the organisation's reputation and they need to be encouraged to 'live the brand' (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001[b]: 103). Further, it is the employees that can provide an organisation with a competitive edge (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Balmer and Gray, 2003; Boxall and Purcell, 2008; Abratt and Kleyn, 2012). Boxall and Purcell (2008: 89) discuss this sustainable route to competitive advantage and managing 'these valuable resources in such a way that rivals are frustrated in their efforts to imitate or out-flank them'.

While there is confusion surrounding corporate reputation, particularly concerning its relationship with corporate branding, several authors emphasise that an organisation has a number of different reputations which are dependent on the stakeholders involved and actual experiences they have had with an organisation over time (Davies *et al*, 2004' Abratt and Kleyn, 2012). This may particularly be the case for those traditional universities whose promotional activities and selection criteria has always been focused on the reputation of their 'academic excellence and pedagogic ability' (Boyett, 1996). However, since the implementation of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, which abolished 'the division between universities and polytechnics' (HEFCE, 2011), competition has increased and, even the "old" universities, have had to 'adopt a more managerial culture' (Boyett, 1996:24).

Finally, what is evident in the literature is that both corporate reputation and corporate image appear either 'as identical, as totally separate concepts or as interrelated phenomena depending on the viewpoints adopted' (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001[a]: 25). Gotsi and Wilson (2001[a]) highlight the different schools of thought concerning the relationship between corporate reputation and corporate image with some researchers seeing them as synonymous, and others as being different, and that causality flows 'either from corporate image to corporate reputation or vice-versa' (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012: 744). Fetscherin and Usunier (2012) examine the relationship and flow of causality between reputation and image, for example, Gutman and Miaoulis (2003) maintain that a positive brand image can be a key driver in influencing a student to attend a particular university and it is therefore important to understand the students' associations with the University's brand in relation to its reputation and the way in which it projects its images (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001[a]).

In summary, corporate reputation appears to share similarities with corporate identity in the literature, in terms of considering the views of employees, but reputation is more externally focused and built-up over time. Further, while corporate identity concerns communicating internally (Kay, 2006) corporate reputation relates further to the importance of managing internal resources so as to retain a competitive advantage. However, corporate reputation is challenging to manage as the way in which internal stakeholders interact with customers may affect its reputation and a damaged reputation is difficult for the organisation to recover from (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012); this is particularly the case if there are different departments seeking their own reputations (Chapleo, 2007). Overall it appears that a well-managed identity will bring about a favourable corporate image which, in time, will result in a favourable corporate reputation (Balmer and Wilson, 1998). These points are highlighted in Figure 2. This then takes us to the final section which examines the challenges of implementing a corporate brand.

Figure 2   Corporate reputation in relation to corporate branding
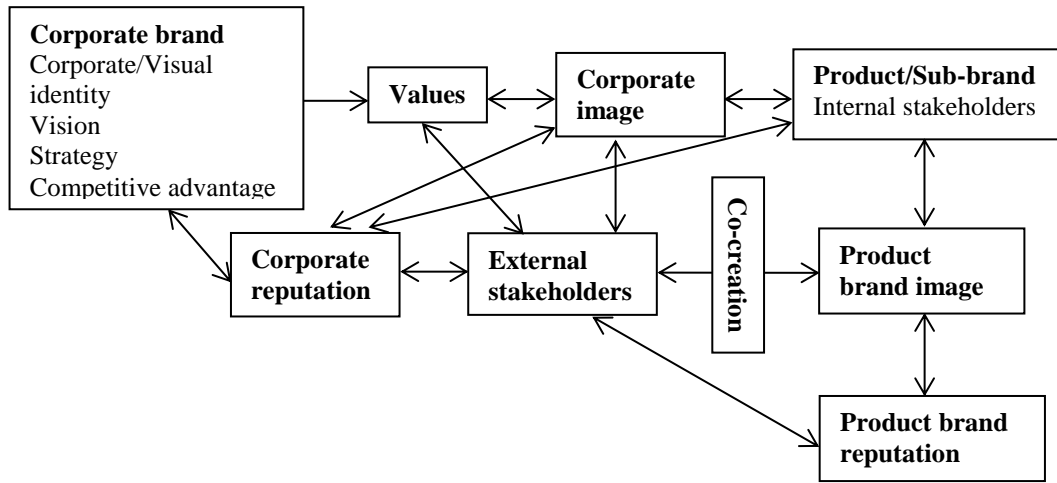
CHAPTER 3 - THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING A CORPORATE BRAND

3.1   EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Balmer and Gray (2003) argue that corporate branding is not necessarily suitable for all types of organisations while Abratt and Kleyn (2012: 1053) maintain that all organisations have a corporate brand but it depends on whether or not they decide to communicate this fact to their stakeholders. One of the key challenges of having an effective corporate brand is therefore to ensure that 'all the messages emanating from an organisation, everything that it produces and all the activities it is involved in ….' (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006:850) contribute to shaping positive stakeholders' perceptions of the organisation. This includes the various components of the corporate brand, for example, in order to create a positive brand reputation any form of communication that is delivered to stakeholder groups concerning its identity, needs to be consistent and harmonious (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). Dowling (2001: 147) claims that corporate communications has a vital role to play in 'image formation' which might be the only way that an organisation can inform stakeholders that what it does 'supports one of their free-standing values'. A link was also identified, in section 2.3, between an organisation's identity and its visual identity and utilising corporate communications as a means of communicating this identity and values to its stakeholders (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006). However, senior managers can fall into the trap of not distinguishing between marketing communications and what Balmer and Greyser (2003: 310) coin as 'total corporate communications (TCC)'. Whereas marketing communications is primarily aimed at customers through utilisation of the communications mix, TCC involves a much wider number of stakeholders (Balmer and Greyser, 2003). This involves multiple communication channels which need to be congruent over time (Balmer and Greyser, 2003) 'with the aim of garnering favourable perceptions among key stakeholder groups' (He and Balmer, 2007: 772).

3.2   INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

For universities in particular Whisman (2009: 368) points to the inadequate internal communication systems required to reach the 'silo' culture in universities which hinders the 'effective and meaningful dialogue about the identity of the organisation'.

Conversely, this silo culture is encouraged to a degree in order to nurture innovation and excellence. Nevertheless, Jevons (2006) claims that there are some individuals working in universities who view themselves, or the area in which they work, as the brand rather than that of the university. In HE there are some employees who tend to enjoy an autonomous role and may identify with their subject area rather than the department, or indeed the university, in which they are located. As discussed in section 2.3 these areas of specialism may lose their individual branding strategies to different target markets and even niche markets (Hemesley-Brown and Gonnawardana, 2007) should a university decide to corporatise. Similarly Hariff and Rowley (2011: 354) uncovered potential conflict in the library sector between 'the library brand and the corporate council brand' particularly in terms of adherence to corporate branding guidelines. Marketing research conducted highlighted that if a service was associated with a council it may be viewed 'as a second class service'. A very distinct image was therefore developed for the "Idea Stores", with no council logo or image and the word "library" removed, although it was acknowledged that the library was financed and run by the council in a strap-line. However, would this approach be appropriate for a more traditional university, as discussed in section 2.5, where the focus had always been on a reputation of academic excellence (Boyett, 1996)?

Hankinson (2004) highlights problems of internal stakeholders committing to the concepts of branding and Chapleo (2007: 26) cites "marketing" as one of the barriers to brand building in universities due to the way in which it 'invades most areas of the organisation'. Similarly, there was a problem in the library sector where associations with the term branding were that 'it is wasteful, expensive and unnecessary'(Hariff and Rowley, 2011: 354). The word 'identity', rather than branding, was therefore employed by these organisations as this was regarded as a more acceptable term. In universities there is evidence of resistance to the implementation of branding activities (Chapleo, 2010; Chapleo 2011) which Brookes (2003:139) argues is due to supporting marketing concepts being 'theoretically uncomfortable' for most academics or even 'culturally acceptable' (Chapleo, 2007: 29). For example, there may be different points of contact which stakeholders and employees may oppose, for example, corporate advertising campaigns (Kay, 2006). These points are significant as according to Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006: 863) 'a better reflection of internal integrity of a company via its

employees will have a positive impact on its perception' which can create more positive word-of-mouth (WoM) recommendations. WoM is a powerful communication tool in forming images and attitudes that people hold than any other communication that emanates from the organisation itself (Dowling, 1993).

3.3   LEADERSHIP, MISSION AND EMPLOYEE BUY-IN

In addition to effective communications leadership support, clear vision and employee buy-in are all factors required for a successful brand (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Melewar and Karaosmanoglu 2006; Chapleo 2010). Corporate branding tends to be far more dependent on an organisation's culture than that of product branding and relies on 'total corporate commitment to the corporate body from all levels of personnel' (Balmer, 2001[a]: 281). If managers of an organisation develop a strategic approach which employees do not understand or buy into this is described as a 'vision-culture gap' (Hatch and Schultz, 2001:130). This can lead to management blaming employees for resisting the change and employees become frustrated and suspicious 'like an ulcer they [employees] can eat away at a corporate brand from within' (Hatch and Schultz, 2001: 13). De Chernatony and Cottam (2006) found through a study on financial services organisations that those unsuccessful with branding tended to be rooted in the past with problems that included inadequate brand leadership in terms of a 'senior white knight' (de Chernatony and Cottam 2006: 624). Several authors point out (Balmer and Gray, 2003; Hatch and Schultz, 2003) that whereas product branding is usually managed by a member of the marketing department another key feature of corporate branding is that it involves a strategic viewpoint and responsibility therefore ultimately lies with the Chief Executive of the organisation. Conversely, following research into leading UK charities Hankinson (2004: 89) discovered that marketing and communication directors were viewed as 'the most appropriate custodian of the brand'.

Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) claim that many practitioners and academics perceive management communication as being the most important form of communication as it involves creating an internal understanding of the mission and vision of an organisation. Dowling (1993: 102) stresses the importance of displaying an organisation's vision, to inform the image forming process, and 'provide a common goal to focus the strategy of the company and the activities of employees' and remind

external stakeholders on the direction that the organisation is taking. Findings from a study undertaken with senior personnel in Marketing and Careers in UK universities (Chapleo, 2011) included a clearly articulated vision as being the important pre-requisite for a successful brand.

Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana (2007) maintain that as brand consistency is dependent on staff understanding the brand then it is crucial that the vision of the corporate identity originates from staff. While not in HE, but in a similar industry, research conducted by Keene and Fairman (2011) at Worcester Library and History Centre (WLHC) found that articulating a set of core values with input from staff helped to engage them with the mission of WLHC. A further study in the library sector undertaken by Hariff and Rowley (2011) also found that engaging a wide range of stakeholders to shape their brand benefited the organisations involved. However, Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana (2007: 945) also found conflicting views of opinion in aligning the mission and values, in that staff in the business school were perceived as being the most important 'contributing factor' in delivering the values. Conversely, outside of the business school it was felt that student satisfaction was the most important influence in delivering the values (Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana, 2007).

These points are all important considerations as understanding what the brand stands for, for who, what it offers and its core values can be used to differentiate a brand and therefore its positioning in the marketplace (Temporal, 2002). For example, research conducted by Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana (2007) found that the image of a university business school dovetailed with that of the university, as the university's mission statement and core values were used as a key tool for market positioning. The mission statement also provided 'a focus for strategic direction' particularly in terms of, for example, employability (Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana (2007: 945). Management therefore need to ensure that values are translated into 'daily activities with which they can then associate' (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007: 67). Thus an organisation cannot define the behaviours it requires from staff for its brand promise values and how these differentiate from competitors without this dialogue (Jevons, 2006).

3.4 POSITIONING, PROMISES AND PROPOSITIONS

The ultimate goal of managing both a brand and a corporate brand is to position the organisation in the minds of its target markets and to understand how external stakeholders view the organisation (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Jevons 2006). In other words the organisation needs to position itself in a way that their target markets are able to recognise the organisation's 'distinctive offering and image' (Kotler *et al,* 2009: 360). According to Curtis *et al* (2009) those universities who position their corporate brand have a competitive edge in the marketplace which is defined by Kapferer (2012: 152) as 'emphasising the distinctive characteristics that make it different from its competitors and appealing to the public'. In addition a unique position would allow the university to 'prepare itself to deliver what it has promised' (Gutman and Miaoulis, 2003: 111). As indicated by Balmer and Gray (2003) many organisations have failed to articulate a positioning strategy for their corporate brand which has lessened its effectiveness. For example Hariff and Rowley (2011: 353), in a study of branding in public sector service-based organisations, found that the concept of positioning 'has eluded public libraries in an increasingly technologically developed world….'. Marquardt *et al* (2011: 52) stress the importance of service organisations, like universities, managing their brand so as to create 'a compelling value proposition'. Stakeholders experience a number of different interactions with a corporate brand and during this time they will consider 'the extent to which it has fulfilled what it has promised' (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012: 1051).

Despite the confusion concerning corporate branding/branding of universities, Balmer and Greyser (2003:246) simplify the debate by stating that the philosophy of a corporate brand lies at its centre and '…. represents *an explicit covenant* between an organisation and its key stakeholder groups….'. In general the convenant is communicated through a variety of organisational channels, 'in terms of a clearly articulated corporate branding proposition' (Balmer and Gray, 2003: 982). Most significantly an organisation wishing to have a corporate brand needs to ensure that all its identity elements are aligned with the corporate brand covenant (Balmer and Greyser, 2003). Hence this is based on shared values, (Chapleo, 2010; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) between an organisation and its key stakeholder groups (Balmer and Liao, 2007) who frequently have a 'religious-like loyalty to the corporate brand' (Balmer and Greyser, 2006:737).

3.4   SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

What evolves from the literature is the interconnection, rather than isolation, between the different components of corporate branding and it is on this basis that a conceptual framework has been developed. Figure 3 has evolved from figures 1 and 2 and clearly highlights these different components. If the corporate brand is to be viewed positively then internal messages (identity) and external messages (image) need to be aligned (Temporal, 2002). In the longer-term this will result in a favourable reputation (Balmer and Wilson, 1998). Therefore, and notwithstanding the presence of "sub-brands" figure 3 highlights the importance of 'total corporate communications TCC' (Balmer and Greyser, 2003: 310), the need for 'total corporate commitment' (Balmer, 2001[a]: 281) and the inclusion of staff in developing related branding documents (Hariff and Rowley, 2011).   The two-way arrows demonstrate these points while the broken lines surrounding the framework illustrate the wider communication channels (Balmer and Greyser, 2003).   Also highlighted (in the corporate brand box) is the need for universities to position themselves in the minds of their stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz, 2001) with a proposition that is distinctive to the competition (Kotler *et al*, 2009) so as to deliver what has been promised (Guman and Miaoulis, 2003).

Figure 3   Conceptual framework of corporate branding
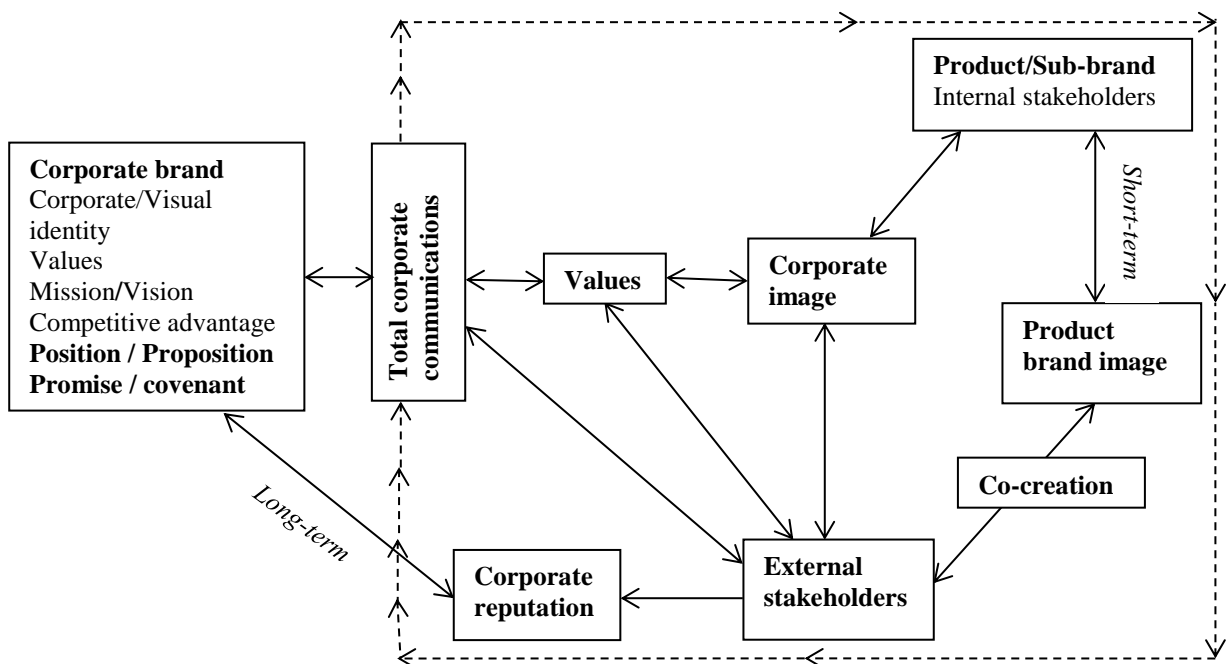
It is important for universities to understand the distinction between corporate branding and "product branding" so as to position themselves positively in the minds of their key stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz 2001) and create 'a compelling value proposition' (Marquardt *et al,* 2011: 52).

With the exception of Walton (2005), who studied documentation from traditional and corporate universities in the USA and the UK there appears to have been very little research in establishing the views of stakeholders on corporate branding particularly concerning the related components such as reputation and image (Martin and Beaumont, 2003; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) in an educational setting. The literature is therefore confusing and the boundaries between these concepts contested. It is felt that understanding these components, and how they relate to corporate branding in a university, will alleviate some of this confusion that exists in the literature. As a result of the literature review the overall research purpose for this study and objectives have been developed in section 3.4.1.

3.4.1   Overall Research Purpose

To explore the different interpretations of corporate branding, and its implementation, in the context of a post-92 university in England (see section 1.4).

3.4.2   Research objectives

i)   *To explore and deconstruct the different components of a corporate brand, and the interconnections involved in its formation in a university* (section 1.4.1)

ii)   *To compare perceptions of a corporate brand by relevant employees and students in both the context of a university and that of a university faculty* (section 1.4.1)

iii)   *To provide insights for professional practice on how best to fulfil a university's brand promise through the implementation of a corporate brand* (section 1.4.1)

CHAPTER 4 - RESEARCH CONTEXT

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The overall research aim was to explore the different interpretations of corporate branding, and its implementation, in the context of a post-92 university in England.   It was therefore believed important to provide an analysis of the wider context of Higher Education (HE) for the research design. As the locality of the research was an English Faculty of Education and, more specifically teacher education, the background concerning teacher education was also considered. This was so as to 'display adequate mastery of [the] data and insight into the relative significance' (Cohen *et al*, 2007: 197) of the context.

HE is influenced by a number of issues including demographic trends which may affect the number of university applications. For example, based on data obtained from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) between 2010 and 2020, the number of 18-20 year olds is predicted to fall by more than 14 percent (ONS, 2013) while the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) state that the mobility of students across the globe are expected to increase (HEFCE, 2013[a]). In addition, entries to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and clinical subjects have performed better (HEFCE, 2013[a]) than subjects, for example, in the social sciences.

4.2   HIGHER EDUCATION: A BRIEF HISTORY

Over the last 50 years HE in England and Wales has gone through some major changes which commenced with the 1963 Robbins Report. According to the Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE, 2011[b]:1) this was the advent of the first planned mass expansion and formed 'the basis for the development of the university sector for subsequent years'.   In fact the Robbins report predicted that by 1980 almost all HE would be provided by teacher training institutions or universities (HEFCE, 2011[b]). Growth in the 1980s followed predictions of the report as in 1988 came the Education Reform Act and the creation of the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) and the Universities Funding Council (UFC). Over 50 polytechnics and colleges, formerly funded by local education authorities, were funded by the PCFC while the UFC funded all 52 UK universities (HEFCE, 2011[b]:1). In addition, and 50 years on

from the Robbins Report, latest figures show that almost 50 per cent of young people in the UK attend university (Times Higher Education, 2013).

By 1992 the Further and Higher Education Act was introduced which created new UK funding councils, including HEFCE, and abolished 'the division between universities and polytechnics' (HEFCE, 2011[b]: 1). This was a key Conservative Government policy of the time as former polytechnics could now apply for "university" status. The Further and Higher Education Act, 1992 outlined a number of matters that had to be addressed before polytechnics could achieve Chartered status.   This included, in particular, the establishment of a committee that assessed the quality of teaching and changes to staff contracts (The Further and Higher Education Act, 1992: 70).

The 1997 National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, known as the Dearing Report, was the first review of HE since the Robbins Report in 1963. Recommendations included changes in institutional and student funding, further expansion and a framework for qualifications (HEFCE, 2011[b]). In 1998 the Teaching and Higher Education Act introduced procedures which included changing financial support for students and tuition fees had to be paid by every student 'except the poorest ' (HEFCE, 2011[b]: 1). In 2004 the Higher Education Act developed the recommendations made in the 2003 White Paper published by the former Department for Education and Skills (DfES): *The Future of Higher Education* (DFeS, 2003). Recommendations included widening participation in HE, the introduction of variable fees and a new annual student survey (DfES, 2003) which was introduced in 2001 (HEFCE, 2011[b]).   The National Student Survey (NSS) was designed to gather information from students on their views of the quality of university courses which then contributes to public accountability, assists universities in enhancing the student experience which in turn helps inform the choices of future students (HEFCE, 2013[b]).

In 2010 the Browne Review recommended major changes to HE in England, not least raising tuition fees to £9,000 (Browne, 2010), and allowing universities the freedom to decide on student charges (Brown, 2010). According to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the 2011 White Paper: *Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011), further developed recommendations made in the Browne Review (HEFCE, 2011[b]). These included 'putting financial power into the hands of learners....' (BIS,

2011: 4) and 'removing the regulatory barriers that are preventing a level playing field' (BIS, 2011: 5). This was so as to improve student choice and guide universities to concentrate on high-quality teaching.

It was the Leitch Review (2006) which provided more focus on employability referring to the skills base in the UK as 'mediocre by international standards' (Leitch, 2006:10). This was as a consequence of 'historic failure in the education and training system' (Leitch, 2006:10) and has since been a major priority for both past and present governments. More recently the coalition Government now require universities to provide Key Information Sets (KIS) for all of their undergraduate programmes (HEFCE, 2011[a]). Aside from NSS results this includes employability rates, average earnings and the most common jobs attained. Universities and colleges display a small amount of data on their webpages but with a link to the same data on the national KIS site (The Complete University Guide, 2013[a]). Essentially this provides a guide for students on where to study, and potential outcomes as a consequence of taking a particular degree programme.

These contextual issues are important to take into account as they informed the policies and practices of the location in which the research project took place. In addition there have been a number of external, but different influences on teacher education.

4.3   TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE UK

The significance of legislative changes has clearly shaped the institutional polices and professional practice in teacher education and this trend has continued significantly since the coalition Government came into power in May 2010.

4.3.1   Primary and secondary teacher education

In order to teach in state primary or secondary schools in England or Wales, students need to undertake an initial teacher training (ITT) course unless they take either the direct entry or non-qualified routes. The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), who report directly to the UK Government, is responsible for conducting inspections of those who provide programmes leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) and programmes of further education teacher training which are validated by HE institutions (Ofsted, 2013). In response to the Leitch Review (2006) the Department for Education

(DfE) published the 2010 Schools White Paper: *The Importance of Teaching* which sets out a radical reform programme for state schools, drawing heavily on evidence gained from some of the 'best education systems in the world' (DfE, 2010: 8). The 2010 White Paper outlines how the status of teaching professions would be raised and the quality of ITT and continuing professional development (CPD) would be transformed significantly (DfE, 2010). This would be through the introduction of a national network of Teaching Schools which would act as centres of excellence for a number of initiatives including ITT (DfE, 2010). There are now 358 Teaching Schools in England (DfE, 2013[a]) and the Education Secretary, Michael Gove, has more recently made a call for more independent schools to apply to become teaching schools (DfE,10 July 2013[d]).

The idea of partnerships, between schools and universities, has been around for some time. However, it was the former Department for Education and Science (DES) that formalised the requirement for delivery of ITT to be accomplished through universities and schools working together (DES, 1992). Although 'nothing much changed' (Furlong *et al*, 2005: 32) for any period of time this approach to partnership working 'has been one of the core principles of teacher education in England' (Furlong *et al*, 2005: 32). However, following the 2010 White Paper came: *Training our next generation of outstanding teaching: implementation plan* (DfE, 2011). This reaffirmed the move away from teacher training providers towards ITT being 'led by schools' (DfE, 2011: 3). This does not imply that schools can simply go it alone as they are still required to be involved with universities. A new inspection framework was introduced which requires university ITT providers 'to include schools fully in their provision' (DfE, 2011: 13) including selection of trainees and the delivery and design of teacher training. In fact only those universities that attain grade 1 status and are able to 'demonstrate extensive school involvement and high quality training' (DfE, 2011: 13) are guaranteed to retain their allocation of students.

Dovetailing with Teaching Schools is School Direct which was brought about to give schools the opportunity to train 'the best graduates as teachers in the subjects and phases they need, and work with accredited providers – such as top universities and other schools…' (DfE, 2012).

School Direct includes a salaried route which replaces the former Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), previously run by universities, and gives schools a greater role in recruiting and training new teachers (DfE, 2012). Similar to School Direct, the salaried route allows schools to select their training partner as well as deciding on the content and nature of the course (DfE, 2012). However the content is heavily influenced by Ofsted and in order to gain QTS schools will need to meet prescribed standards.

Until recently the Teaching Agency (TA), an executive agency of the DfE, allocated all teacher training places and was responsible for the quality and standards of teacher training for schools. Furthermore, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) was responsible for funding teacher training places in accordance with sector needs and national targets set by the DfE. However, on 1 April 2013 both these agencies merged to become the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL, 2013[a]) and on 2 April, 2013 the Education Secretary, Michael Gove, announced this merger stating '…. it will ensure that the best schools are at the heart of teacher training ….' (DfE, 2013[b]). The NCTL's remit is developing a 0-18 educational system, together with schools, to ensure that 'teacher and leadership training, CPD, and school-to-school support are delivered locally by partnerships led by the best headteachers' (DfE, 2013[e]).

Professor Tim Brighouse, who was knighted for his services to education (The Guardian, 2008), announced that teacher education 'is undergoing an unpublicised crisis in recent months' (Brighouse, 2013: 1) and that:

> *…no one person or agency has the duty to ensure a sufficient supply of training teachers nationally, or an efficient local distribution of training places covering all subject areas…*

Professor Brighouse, portrayed by his critics as a 'trendy lefty' (The Guardian, 2007), claimed that the partnership between universities and schools was 'ever changeable but to divorce them completely is a mistake ….' (Brighouse, 2013: 4). Essentially these initiatives imply that universities no longer need to be involved in teacher training.

4.3.2   Further Education

Universities also train teachers for Further Education (FE) institutions and although changes have not been as radical in comparison to the schools sector, they are still significant. The White Paper: *Further Education: Raising skills, improving life*

chances, refers to the development of 'a new national strategy for raising the quality of teaching and learning in Further Education' (DfES, 2006: 2). This was in response to the Leitch Report concerning the UK's skills base (Leitch, 2006). As part of this new strategy and to align FE teachers with school teachers, in terms of ITT, a Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status was proposed (DfES, 2006).

Similarly the paper: *Review of Vocational Education – the Wolf Report* (2011) was in response to the Leitch Report (2006). This review was commissioned by the Education Secretary, Michael Gove, who asked Professor Alison Wolf of King's College, London to carry out an independent review of vocational education and 'to provide practical recommendations to help inform future policy direction ….' (DfE, 2013[c]). In the report John Hayes, Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning stated that for a long time 'vocational learning has been seen as the poor relation of academic learning' (Wolf, 2011: 6). Recommendations made in the report included the recognition in schools of QTLS, the FE equivalent to QTS, so as to ensure parity between the two qualifications but only for those over the age of 14 (Wolf, 2011).

In 2012 an Independent Review Panel was set up, chaired by Lord Lingfield, the Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, to review professionalism in FE. Lingfield (2012) maintained that the QTLS standard was not mandatory and devolved this decision to individual FE colleges. In recognising the FE sector's diversity (between schools and HE) the report stated that the sector appeared to be lacking in 'a distinct and unique personality of its own' (Lingfield, 2012: 3) which was in direct contrast to earlier work. Recommendations in the report included a single post-compulsory sector of education which united FE and HE and made the term ''further education' redundant' (Lingfield, 2012: 3).

These points highlight the continuing policy changes and the uncertainty that primary, secondary and further teacher education has had to endure. The context for this research therefore becomes more specific to corporate branding.

4.4   Midlands University

The Midlands University (MU) was originally granted polytechnic status in 1970 and launched as a university in 1992. It has performed well in the league tables (The

Guardian, 2013[a]; The Complete University Guide, 2013[b]), and continues to attract a high number of students from across the globe, the majority of whom progress to employment or further study within six months of graduating (MU, 2013). The University has a key document (MU, 2010) which identifies the organisation as a leading university delivering education and research in its Mission statement (MU, 2010). The MU key document (2010) also outlines Strategic Aims and Strategic Platforms. The University values, which took some time to identify, were obtained from MU's Marketing Department, and briefly include: customer focus, openness and honesty, responsiveness, accessibility, flexibility, quality, value for money, partnerships (MU, 2004).

The academic faculties offer undergraduate, masters and doctorate level programmes and all are involved in research and knowledge transfer activities. The faculties are supported by a manager from each the University's central teams including finance, human resources and marketing. These managers report to both the Head of Faculty and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor with the purpose of developing 'a close understanding of local operational issues' (MU, 2010: 7).

4.5 The Faculty of Education: University in the Midlands

The Faculty of Education in this study was originally a College of Teacher Training before it was integrated with the MU. It has performed slightly better than MU in the league tables (The Guardian, 2013[a]) and comprises approximately 100 academics and 30 administrative staff. Employability rates in the Faculty are very high (Faculty of Education, 2013), particularly those graduates of ITT courses, where the majority obtain employment in teaching establishments (Faculty of Education, 2013).

The Faculty was restructured in 2011 (Faculty of Education, 2013), which was in response to all the anticipated changes outlined in section 4.3, and partnerships were put at the very centre of their operations across every area of the Faculty. These areas are Primary Education; Secondary and Continuing Education; and Undergraduate and Professional Development. Although the Faculty is one of the smallest in the University it has a large support team, due to an extensive partnership team, and complex external relations. There is now a Head of

Partnerships, a Partnership Development Manager and a Partnership Manager for each of the three areas: primary, secondary and undergraduate as well as one for professional development. It is important to note that teacher training students tend to spend most of their time on placement and when they do attend University they are based in the Faculty.

The Faculty's Mission statement expresses a desire to promote and enhance learning and teaching for their stakeholders (ITT Group, 2011). There is also a Vision statement which is concerned more specifically with the aspirations of a teacher. The Vision was developed collaboratively within the Faculty, and with wider partnerships, and underpins courses that involve ITT (Faculty of Education, 2013).

Due to the constant changing nature of teacher education, national priorities and the influences of external agencies, courses are regularly reviewed and modified to mirror these changes. For example, the development of an MSc Computing in Education is in response to government reform and school teachers are now required to teach computing skills at primary and secondary level. All teacher training courses are aligned with national teaching standards and are subject to Ofsted review (Faculty of Education, 2013). In addition, the content of FE teachers courses have been aligned more closely to secondary ITT courses to accommodate some of the earlier recommendations made by Wolf (2011) and Lingfield (2012); most notably there is a greater emphasis on 14-16 year old education.

The full effect of the recent merger of the National College and the TA was not known at the time this research was conducted. However, as the Faculty is a grade 2 ITT provider, this has had a significant impact on the number of allocations it receives. For example, in secondary education there is a range of routes and specialist subjects, and mainstream allocations can change year-on-year resulting in some sub-cohorts being quite small. This has resulted in the academic team drawing their diverse portfolios of courses together as the Secondary Professional Year so that shrinking allocated numbers from NCTL are met. This professional year has a number of different routes and a portfolio of different subjects and

therefore tends to work in courses, modules and subject strands. The Faculty has run a small pilot of the School Direct route with one school and as a result has secured partnerships with 21 lead schools to deliver 170 training places for 2013/14 (Faculty of Education, 2013).

Although Primary education does not have these specialist courses, and programmes have remained the same, allocation decisions have affected this area of education. For example, School Direct allocations (where trainees spend more time in schools) have doubled whereas centre-based allocations (where trainees spend more time in the Faculty) have been halved. This will result in a loss of revenue for the Faculty as any income for School Direct has to be split between the Faculty and NCTL. It is hoped that Primary Education's Partnership manager is able to negotiate the way in which the partnership is run and ensure that the Faculty has some share of the training.

Many students who complete an ITT course wish to continue studying and progress on to the MA in Education. These participants are working at either a college, a school or any other part of education services and can elect to attend taught sessions at the University or undertake a distance learning route to gain a relevant professional qualification. Participants who have an FE teaching qualification can also gain QTLS working with the Institute for Learning (IFL). However, in recent years external factors such as cost and increased competition have seen the MA in Education market decline. The Faculty has responded to this change by offering more provision in partnership with schools.

CHAPTER 5 - METHODOLOGY

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the research was to explore the different interpretations of a corporate brand, as well as the gap in knowledge on its implementation, in the context of a post-92 university.

In deciding on how best to conduct the research two key areas were considered: epistemology and ontology. Ontology concerns 'what there is to know about the world' (Ormston *et al*, 2014: 4) and whether or not this world exists independently of people's beliefs (objective) or whether it is through meanings that have been socially constructed (subjective).   It could be argued that all research is subjective as even scientific researchers will select data and data sets. Epistemology relates to 'what constitutes acceptable knowledge' (Saunders *et al*, 2009: 112) and how this knowledge is collected. This can either be through induction, which is how knowledge and theories are developed from the data collected (Ormston *et* al, 2014) while deduction is concerned with testing the strength of particular theories (May, 2008). This section considers all aspects of the research study's methodology, as well as methods, sampling, interviews, focus groups, validity and reliability, ethics and data analysis.

5.2   UNDERSTANDING THE RESEARCH PHILSOPHY

According to Bryman and Bell (2007: 17) there is a fundamental difference in the subject matter of the social sciences, which is the study of organisations and the people who work within them, and 'the appropriateness of the natural science model for the study of society'. Objectivism lends itself to a phenomena suggesting that organisations are not influenced by the people who operate within them but rather the organisation is 'a constraining force that acts on and inhibits its members' (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 23) therefore reality is independent of social actors and their thoughts and beliefs (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). This is outlined by Ormston *et al* (2014: 4) as 'an external reality' with an existence independent of people's understanding of it or their beliefs (Saunders *et al*, 2009). Therefore subjectivity focuses on meanings that individuals apply to their social environments, or their 'inner world' (May, 1997: 13) rather than the actual environment or the world 'out there' (May, 1997: 13).

In determining the research design a subjective position was adopted as the world is given meaning 'from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors' (Saunders *et al.*, 2009: 111). Individuals' perceptions are influenced by the way they view the world in which they are variously immersed, how they interpret reality and how they interact with one another (Fisher, 2010; Cohen *et al*, 2007). Adopting the subjective approach was also done in the knowledge that social science is constantly developing and changing (McQueen and Knussen, 2002) and that it 'is vulnerable to the ebb and flow of time with the changing concerns and emotional swings of the eras' (Kincheloe, 2003: 92). This was an important consideration as education, and particularly teacher education, is a working environment that is constantly changing.

Interpretivism is also referred to as "phenomenology" by some writers such as Milliken (2001: 73) who maintains that there has been an age-old argument within the social sciences concerning 'appropriate philosophical positions from which research methods should be derived'.   While interpretivism/phenomenology concentrates on *understanding* human behaviour, which fits within a subjective position, the positivist philosophy tends to be based on collecting facts and *explaining* human behaviour (Bryman and Bell, 2007) and therefore adopts an objective position. Bryman and Bell (2007) maintain that social science researchers complain about the limitations of positivism and that there has been a long-standing debate about this approach being used to study society. This is rationalised by Cohen *et al* (2007) who point out that individuals do not necessarily put themselves in situations of their own choosing nor do they '…. behave simply or deterministically like puppets' (Cohen *et al*, 2007: 18). Cox (2008) argues for a paradigm shift within social research, where historically the positivist concept has been prevalent, and that research now takes place in contexts that are rapidly changing, as are the individuals within them.   There is an emerging recognition that both researchers, and their research subjects, 'are inseparable from the influences of our bodily experiences and emotions' (Cox, 2008: 18). Simons (2007: 75), who acknowledges the neatness and cleanness of the post-positivist paradigm, discovered the 'limitations of such designs in exploring the social context'.

The research conducted in document 4 embraced a positivist approach as it allowed the researcher to attain a more holistic view of the issues surrounding corporate branding within a higher education context. Importantly it may be possible to study the 'tangible

aspects of human behaviour' (Fisher, 2010: 19) with a positivist approach, such as speech and behaviour, but not why or what motivates individuals to think in this way. Several authors argue (Fisher, 2010; Bryman and Bell, 2007) that 'it is possible to have an objective, scientific social science without taking a fully-fledged positivist stance' (Fisher, 2010: 19). However, Black (2006: 320) claims that the interpretive paradigm is one where important meanings are hidden particularly those that are '… buried within superficially inconsequential inflections of voice, body language or situational details'. It is this depth of understanding that the researcher wished to reach with individuals and their surroundings in this study.

The phenomena being examined were therefore seen through the philosophical lenses of an interpretivist. This took into consideration the limitations that might occur with the topics being studied, concepts such as identity, values and image which would be difficult to articulate, and where human behaviour would be difficult to understand through a positivist lens.   Milliken (2001) maintains that increasingly a phenomenological/interpretative approach has been used for research into the areas of management and particularly marketing. In document 3 it was important to gain an insight into perceptions from employees and the research philosophy was therefore that of the interpretivist as it is an approach 'that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural order' (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 17).   May (1997: 38) posits this as 'the common-sense methods' which people apply when trying to making sense of their particular social environments. Several authors (Robson, 2011; Creswell, 2014) point out that interpretivism is often referred to as constructionism and that personal views 'are negotiated socially and historically…' (Creswell, 2014:8) and formed through discussion between the researcher and individuals. Creswell (2014) claims that constructionist researchers recognise that their own backgrounds, in the case of this researcher a lecturer in HE, help them to make sense of the world; it was in this context that the researcher sought to understand how others viewed the concept of corporate branding in HE.

5.2.1   Process of theory generation

The research was driven by 'the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world…' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) and how it should be studied and understood. The method of induction was therefore adopted which Lincoln and Guba (1985: 113)

describe as an 'open process' as the findings are employed to generate new theory (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Saunders *et al*, 2009). Document 3 implemented this method as the findings were utilised to address, for example, some of the gaps in knowledge concerning corporate branding in HE. Creswell (2014: 65) explains that the inductive process builds on themes and categories, which are then compared with existing theory, and a variety of 'end points' are reached. This occurred in document 3 where propositions emerged and were utilised for further testing in document 4. A deductive approach, described as a 'closed' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 113) process, is concerned with testing the strength of particular theories (May, 2008) and the approach adopted in document 4. Theory in this research study was generated through induction as this is associated with a phenomenological/interpretative approach (Saunders *et al*, 2009), where it is proposed to generate new theory in the data analysis.

5.3   A QUALITATIVE PARADIGM

A qualitative paradigm was employed to collect the research evidence as this 'usually emphasises words rather than quantification' (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 28). In addition the data is characterised by a 'richness and fullness' (Saunders *et al,* 2010: 482). This was an important consideration as an understanding was required of individuals' perceptions and expectations concerning corporate branding and there was a need to enquire about their experiences at university and their resultant behaviour. This was also the paradigm adopted in document 3 where it was acknowledged that in qualitative approaches it is the researcher who is the 'main instrument' (Bekerman, 2008:157) for data collection and, through their own experiences of the world, try to understand the experiences and perceptions of others. Milliken (2001: 74) posits an alignment between different marketing concepts, and the needs of both internal and external customers, and claims it is qualitative research that is useful in identifying why an individual might behave in a certain way.

One cannot ignore those positivists who favour survey data that is 'reliable and valid, objective and clean…' (Macpherson *et al*, 2000: 50) and there are clear advantages in employing this approach. For example, Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that it is easier to generalise the findings to other settings due to much larger sample sizes whereas interviews tend to be conducted with a small number of participants and are therefore

not as representative. In addition where once statistical analysis took much time and skill the advent of digital technology and 'powerful statistical software packages' (Denscombe, 2003: 236) has changed all this. Credibility is therefore noted with this approach (Hanson and Grimmer, 2007) although as meanings are based on numbers (Saunders *et al,* 2007) measuring in such a way will only be valid if there are no other factors that might influence the factors being measured (Field, 2009). This was found to be the case in document 4, where a quantitative approach was adopted, and there was evidence that the results may have been affected by contextual and social backgrounds, but only assumptions could be drawn rather than any degree of certainty. Gummesson (2005: 310) argues that quantitative methods alone are insufficient in raising the status of marketing and that 'scientific excellence' will only be achieved with the support of qualitative methods.   Taking these points into consideration it was a qualitative approach that was adopted for this study.

5.4   REVELATORY CASE STUDY

Lewis and Nichols (2014: 66) define a case study as being an 'exploration of multiple perspectives which are rooted in a particular context…' which aligns with this research as views from different groups of individuals were sought on corporate branding in a university setting. Case study is also an approach that requires 'extensive examining of how things get done' (Stake, 2008 in: Denzin and Lincoln 2008). For example, in document 3, quite a wide-range of data were collected which allowed for the development of a number of propositions. These propositions were then utilised in a single critical case in document 4 to 'confirm, challenge, or extend the theory' (Yin, 2009: 47) which tends to be common practice in guiding the data collection for case studies (Fisher, 2010; Yin, 2009). Further this approach 'can give a powerful boost to knowledge and understanding' (Robson, 2011: 255). Balmer and Liao (2007) deem the case study approach the most relevant when little is known about a particular phenomenon. Therefore, for this research the single revelatory case (Yin, 2009) was adopted as the researcher had access to an environment that had not previously been studied in the context of corporate branding.

Gerring (2007: 40) maintains that the case study approach is appropriate for research that is exploratory in nature while Yin (2009) claims that case studies can also be

descriptive and explanatory in nature just as with other methods of research. Although it is possible to combine several cases studies, Gerring (2007) states that as the numbers increase it is not possible to study these as intensely. This study has one embedded unit of analysis or "case", a faculty within a university, although Yin (2009: 52) emphasises the importance of focusing on more than one unit of analysis as otherwise the 'original phenomenon of interest' will be lost. While this study has one case (a faculty), where appropriate it does draw on the wider context of a university. For further details of the case see sections 4.4 and 4.5.

Bell (2005) claims that case studies are useful in identifying key issues, while Cohen *et al* (2007) maintain that it may only take the occurrence of one single event to provide an important and significant insight into either a person or situation which Gerring (2007: 40) describes as 'light bulb moments'. It is exactly these revelatory instances that the researcher was hoping to capture so as to understand perceptions of corporate branding in an educational setting. Lewis and McNaughton Nicholls (2014) maintain that it is difficult to understand exactly what it is that makes a case study different while Yin (2009: 18) explains that what does distinguish the case study method from other approaches is that it provides the researcher with an opportunity to understand 'a real-life phenomenon in-depth' including contextual situations. Most importantly Cohen *et al* (2007: 257) claim that case study research often follows the interpretative paradigm, and sees the circumstances 'through the eyes of participants'.

Lewis and McNaughton Nicholls (2014) point to the design stage of a case study and differences that might occur between populations involved in the research. Cohen *et al* (2007) and Yin (2009) expand on this by citing situations that may be unique to a particular case study and therefore it is more difficult to demonstrate reliability. However, the researcher felt sufficiently familiar with the context, particularly as access to the place of study was made best use of, in which to gather the case study evidence. As two research studies had also been conducted (documents 3 and 4) the researcher felt confident in recognising a situation that may be unique. The researcher is also a university lecturer and is therefore familiar with the working environment being studied. Indeed Cohen *et al* (2007: 257-8) maintain that a key characteristic of case studies is that they 'replace quantity with quality and intensity'. Webster *et al* (2014) maintain

that confidentiality may be breached in gaining this in-depth understanding (this is discussed further in section 5.7).

In summary the research philosophy was that of the interpretivist and the research design thus a revelatory case study which drew on primary sourced data within a qualitative paradigm. So as to explore the different interpretations of corporate branding and its related domain, it was important to consider the different types of methods that would be appropriate for this particular context.

5.5   RESEARCH METHODS

Yin (2009: 114-5) emphasises that one of the major strengths of case study data collection 'is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence' and that findings that emerge from case study 'data triangulation' (Yin, 2009: 116) are much more likely to be truthful and substantiated. Data collected was therefore from documentary evidence, interviews and focus groups.

5.5.1   Collection of data: documentation

Documentary evidence was collected as Yin (2009) claims that every case study tends to have documentary material that is related to the topic. As cited by Saunders *et al* (2009: 258) 'documentary secondary data also includes non-written materials'. The University's website was useful, for information about the University and the Faculty, as was a key University document (2010) which provided details of the University's Mission and strategic platforms. Of particular value was the Faculty of Education's Review (2013) which proved to be most useful as it underpinned a large part of the context for the Faculty. The Faculty's Mission and Vision were also examined (ITT Group, 2011) together with the values of the University (MU, 2004). Engagement in policy and document analysis helped endorse some of the comments received from the interviews.

5.5.2   Collection of data: interviews

Yin (2009) claims that interviews are the most important source of information for a case study. Gillham (2000) stresses the importance of the researcher considering those methods that will best provide answers to the research questions. Bryman and Bell (2007) claim that the research questions should not be so precise that different lines of

enquiry cannot be followed up during data collection. Bryman and Bell (2007) also stress that the researcher needs to be certain about what needs investigating to ensure that the research questions are addressed. Research questions can therefore be modified accordingly as the aim should be 'to represent what the people you interviewed told you, in response not just to the questions you asked them but the purpose of the research' (Gillham, 2005:163). The researcher needed to obtain in-depth data as insights and understanding of perceptions of different individuals were required (Gillham, 2000). Within the qualitative paradigm Bryman and Bell (2007) claim that there are two key approaches to interviewing. Different viewpoints on these two approaches are evaluated in table 1.

Table 1:   Unstructured and semi-structured interviews

Interview type	Comments
Unstructured	May only be one question with 'at most an aide memoire; (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 474) which has a number of topics to prompt the researcher. An 'informal conversational interview' (Cohen *et al*, 2007: 353) which lacks structure and different information from different people make analysis difficult.
Semi-structured	Purpose is to '…place more emphasis on exploring the why' (Saunders *et al*, 2009: 321) It allows for an 'elaborate in-depth response' (Gillhan, 2000: 19) Includes an interview guide (Cohen *et al*, 2007) comprising a list of topics that the researcher wishes to cover and the participant is able to answer largely as they wish (Bryman and Bell, 2007)

The semi-structured approach was adopted as this permitted the researcher to explore a list of topics through the use of interview schedules (section 5.5.4). Twelve individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with employees in the Faculty comprising 4 senior managers, 2 academic (middle) managers, and 6 lecturers. Two individual face-to-face interviews were also conducted with 2 marketing personnel; a senior marketing manager and a marketing manager. The list of participants can be found in section 6.1, table 3. In order to obtain a broader picture the respondents were purposively selected

which is where the researcher uses their own judgement in selecting cases that will contribute to answering the research questions (Saunders *et al*, 2009). This is important as views on the context and corporate branding were required from participants representing different groups of staff including academic and administrative staff in the University and Faculty (Saunders *et al*, 2009; Cohen *et al*, 2007). An initial email, inviting the targeted people in the Faculty to participate, was sent out by a key contact in the Faculty of Education which the researcher then followed up.

Interviews were arranged at a time to suit the interviewees and all respondents were available on the day as scheduled and, on average, the interviews took approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Apart from the pilot interview and one interview with a marketing person, which took place at the researcher's place of work, interviews took place either in the interviewee's office or in a pre-booked room close by. All the participants agreed to be digitally recorded (Saunders *et al*, 2009) and fieldnotes were also taken during the interviews so as to record specific terms or words expressed and body language (Bryman and Bell, 2007). These were written-up as soon as possible after the interviews.

5.5.2.1 Strengths and weaknesses of interviews

Face-to-face interviews enhanced the significance of non-verbal communication (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Cohen *et al*, 2007) and were also useful in picking up where strong feelings were being emphasised. In general, interviewees commented that they found the experience enjoyable and interesting and while a few appeared to 'welcome the opportunity to offload issues and problems' (Bryman and Bell, 2007:481), one interviewee was quite challenging due to the 'status and power held' (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 480) and the researcher felt quite intimidated. This latter point is reflected on in document 6. An interviewer who expresses their own experiences or points of view during an interview 'can inhibit the flow of the interview' (McQueen and Knussen, 2002: 208). This did occur during a number of early interviews, particularly when there was a commonality of experiences, but this did improve as the interviews progressed.

5.5.3   Collection of data: Focus groups

Interviews can also be held in the context of a group and this was considered to be the most effective method for talking to students particularly as a greater number could be

interviewed (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The size of a group is important as 'the group must be small enough for everyone to have an opportunity to share insights, yet large enough to provide diversity of opinions' (Murdaugh *et al,* 2000:1509). A group would therefore usually comprise seven-ten participants who share similar characteristics but may not be familiar with each other (Murdaugh *et al,* 2000). Three focus groups were held and details of these can be found in section 6.1, table 4. The first group comprised nine participants, and despite being held in-between supervisor meetings, it worked well and was very interactive. Only two respondents turned up for the second focus group, as the member of staff with whom this had been arranged had not realised that most of the students had another commitment. The researcher decided to proceed and approached the meeting as an interview. The third group comprised six respondents but this entailed quite a bit of last-minute "persuading" and part of the negotiation was that it would only take 40 minutes. The opening stage was therefore omitted. The focus groups are reflected on in document 6.

Taking into consideration the variability that can exist between groups (Finch *et al*, 2014) it was felt that the number of groups held balanced 'the idiosyncrasies' (Murdaugh *et al,* 2000: 1512) of the interviews with staff. All groups were digitally recorded with the agreement of the participants. The researcher's role was key, as although the focus groups comprised students of a similar age, they tended to be quite different personalities. The researcher felt sufficiently experienced in running focus groups and was aware of those dominant members and the need to draw in members that were less assertive (Bell, 2005).

5.5.3.1 Strengths and weaknesses of focus groups

Focus groups provide a discussion that occurs between the participants and the group dynamics produce data and insights not found in individual interviews (Flick, 2006). It is these group dynamics that emphasise topics that are important to participants and where they hold a common view (Robson, 2013). Focus groups are also a useful setting to help the researcher understand more complex topics, for example, particular values and 'the interaction helps participants form, analyse and explain their own viewpoints' (Milliken, 2001: 75).

Analysis of data from focus groups can sometimes be more difficult as the interaction in a group 'provides a social context' (Murdaugh *et al*, 2000: 1512) although this did not occur as respondents generally did not want to prolong the interview. A specific problem that was initially encountered at the analysis stage was identifying individual speakers, particularly when there were similar speakers making similar statements (Flick, 2006). Some of this was overcome by the fact that in the first group there were 2 international students and an internal lecturer, studying for a qualification, all of whom had strong accents. In the final focus group of six, all were of a similar age and British, suffice to say it was difficult to differentiate, apart from one male. These characteristics are highlighted where possible in the analysis.

5.5.4   Interview and focus group schedules

A detailed interview guide was developed (Byman and Bell, 2007) and, utilising the research questions as the basis of a framework (Cohen *et al*, 2007), quite a large number of open-ended questions were incorporated under each of the headings. The list required 'pruning' (Gillham, 2000: 20) to those topics that were most diverse and distinctive (Gillham, 2000) and to ensure that there was a certain amount of 'flow' (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 483). This process ensured that the focus was on the most worthwhile topics. The interview guide adopted Gillam's (2005) approach to the interview and included opening, middle and closure stages. By following these three stages the researcher was able to make the interview more aligned to a 'social encounter' (Cohen *et al*, 2007: 350) rather than an 'information exchange' and by and large most of the participants seemed relaxed and more comfortable to open up (Gillam, 2005). As the aim was to ask similar questions across the interviews and focus groups a schedule was developed for Departmental staff (Appendix 1), then modified for marketing staff (Appendix 2) and finally for the student focus groups (Appendix 3).

One of the advantages of open-ended questions is the provision of wide-ranging and developmental answers (Saunders *et al,* 2009) which allowed the researcher much more depth (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Another particular benefit is the opportunity to go into more depth where appropriate and clear up any misunderstandings (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Cohen *et al,* 2007). Probing questions were used when the researcher either misunderstood an answer or where particular areas of interest emerged (Saunders *et al,* 2007). Probing questions are highlighted in the interview schedules in square brackets.

Cohen *et al (*2007: 357) claim that this form of "probing" allows the researcher to 'test the limits of the respondent's knowledge' and can even result in 'unanticipated answers'. Generally, most of the questions were asked in a similar style, and in a similar order (Bryman and Bell, 2007), unless participants brought up topics before the researcher had a chance to raise them which occurred on numerous occasions.

Interpretive approaches outlined by Fisher (2010: 157) and sometimes referred to as projective techniques, were of interest to the researcher as they are used to 'tease out evidence about how people interpret and react to their organisation and work worlds'. Projective techniques tend to be applied in marketing research and Arthur *et al* (2014: 162) assert that the term is derived from the psychoanalytical approach of 'projection' where participants or 'individuals attribute some part of themselves, such as socially unacceptable feelings, to something external to themselves' (Arthur *et al,* 2014: 162).

Davies *et al* (2004: 130) claim that the idea of projecting 'the organisation as person metaphor' is useful in identifying how different stakeholders view an organisation. Although the person metaphor (Davies *et al,* 2004) was not used, in trying to discover participants' views on "identity", they were asked what model of car sprang to mind for the University and the Faculty. These questions attracted interesting responses and the researcher found this a particularly helpful method in trying to unravel the components of a corporate brand. This approach would have been expanded upon had the researcher not been concerned about a certain amount of cynicism that may emanate from the participants (following experiences from interviews in document 3). This technique was developed further with the students in the focus groups, in place of questions concerning the University's Mission and values, to which it was assumed they would not have access. Students were asked to complete the sentence (McQueen and Knussen, 2002) 'w*hen I think of the [University] I think of...'* (see appendix 3). Similarly this question was applied to the Faculty of Education but, although this had worked well on the questionnaire in document 4, this did not attract as many answers and the students related far better to the questions concerning models of car. These points are reflected on in document 6.

5.6   VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

There are a number of different issues that qualitative researchers may face when conducting their research concerning internal and external validity. Validity, according to Butler-Kisber (2010: 13), refers to 'the trustworthiness of a qualitative study' and 'the meaning that subjects give to data and inferences drawn…' (Cohen *et al*, 2007: 134). In addition, Silverman (2013: 285) describes validity as 'the credibility of our interpretations'.

5.6.1   Internal validity

According to Bryman and Bell (2007) one of the ways in which internal validity can be assured is for the researcher to have their interpretations of the data checked with the participants.   Accuracy of the findings was therefore ensured through respondent validation and a summary document of each interview was drawn up and sent to the 14 participants interviewed (7 responses were received and minor changes made in one instance). However, due to the nature of focus groups, it would have been too difficult to obtain unanimous support with a "group" finding. As an alternative, a thank-you email was sent to the students, through their appropriate tutor, and stating that the researcher looked forward to sharing the findings with them when appropriate.

In addition engagement in policy and document analysis helped endorse some of the comments received from the interviews with staff and students. This is an approach recommended by Saunders *et al* (2009: 492) who maintain that secondary data can also be summarised and used 'as a means of triangulating' other data that has been collected. Rowley (2002: 23) maintains that a key strength of case studies is being able to collect evidence from multiple sources so as to 'corroborate the same fact or finding'. This is further endorsed by Bryman and Bell (2007) who maintain that credibility of findings can be further established through the use of triangulation. Cohen *et al* (2007: 141) define triangulation as 'the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour'.   Silverman (2013: 287-288) describes this as 'method triangulation' where an attempt is made to obtain 'a true fix on a situation by combining different ways of looking at it'. As interviews were held with staff and students in addition to the documentary evidence, the researcher has indicated wherever possible, where comments from an individual member of staff are supported by a

student(s) in a focus group for example. Silverman (2013: 288) describes this as 'data triangulation'.

5.6.2 External validity

External validity concerns the extent to which findings can be generalised (Cohen *et al*, 2007). Not only did key themes resonate with the earlier literature review but many of the distinctions and nuances mirrored findings in documents 3 and 4 where research was conducted in a different university but the educational setting was the same. Some of these nuances were recorded in the researcher's field notes. Therefore the 'transferability' (Fisher 2010: 274) of this research to other educational settings would seem possible. However, Butler-Kisber (2010: 15) claims that generalisability is inappropriate for qualitative research as it is defined in a way that suggests more association with positivism, as measures are proposed which exclude the option of results 'occurring by chance'. Flick (2006: 369) maintains that 'qualitative studies are seldom engaged in such unchanging objects'.

The description of the research material provided was as detailed as possible to ensure external validity (Fisher, 2010) and referred to by Bryman and Bell (2007: 413) as 'transferability'. The final interview schedule was initially piloted with a number of the researcher's colleagues and students, and modified further before an interview with a respondent from the Faculty of Education. It was only the removal of a very small number of "introductory" questions that was required as it was felt that the interview was a little long. A pilot of one focus group of three students in the Faculty of Education was also conducted and the researcher had to make some modifications to this, as the students were unable to answer those questions that concerned "values" of the University and the University Mission statement.

5.7   POTENTIAL ETHICAL ISSUES

Pendlebury and Enslin (2001) maintain that we have no control over how our research will be received or the effects it may have on people while Saunders *et al* (2009: 183-184) define ethics in research as 'the appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work or are affected by it'.

The purpose of ethics is therefore to ensure that the subject, the research community and the organisation are treated fairly and that any information they impart with is not used in such a way that will harm them (Fisher, 2010). This research project was given approval by the programme leader of the EdD, under the Ethical Guidelines of the researcher's university. In addition the guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) were followed. Those guidelines that were specific to this research project included:

Voluntary informed consent

Clough and Nutbrown (2012: 60) stress the importance of being clear 'that the world of others are being subjected to some form of scrutiny' and permission therefore needs to be sought from these significant others. Bell (2005) stresses the importance of informing all those involved in the study of the reasons as to why it is taking place; all respondents were therefore fully informed of the nature of the research project. Respondents were also asked to complete an Informed Consent form (Appendix 4) which gave them the opportunity to opt out of being named and being recorded.

Right to withdraw

It was important that participants took part in the research in a voluntary way (Silverman, 2013) and participants were told that they could withdraw from the interview at any time.

Openness and disclosure

This was discussed in section 5.6.1 and the fact that a summary document of each interview was drawn up and sent to the respondents which then 'places the interpretation in the hands of the participants' (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012: 100). The participants' agreement was also sought to record the interview; all participants agreed to be recorded (interviews and focus groups).

Privacy

The participants' right not to answer particular questions was pointed out on the consent form (Cohen *et al*, 2007) and questions were designed so as to capture what the respondents might prefer to say, which the research undertaken concurred with, rather than promoting a personal agenda (Cohen *et al*, 2007). At the specific request of staff, protective pseudonyms were used for the institution and for the individuals who

participated in this study to eliminate the risk of violating confidentiality (Fisher, 2010). The researcher recognised that preserving anonymity of the University was an important part of the research and therefore much time was spent on planning and reflecting on how to ensure confidentiality, for example, by considering the number of new universities in the surrounding area. Further, for reasons of anonymity some of the documents in particular sections are not fully referenced to avoid identity of both the University and Faculty (see section 5.5.1) and no organisational documentation is included in this document.

Webster *et al* (2014) point to a number of issues in relation to case study research including relationships that may exist between participants, and the richness of data gathered. This could have occurred in the individual interviews as there were friendships, as well as line manager / staff relationships. However, the extent of rigour applied to the coding does not allow individuals to be identified and any reference made to individuals was omitted both during different interviews and in the analysis. Webster *et al* (2014:86) also highlight 'rich reporting' of both contexts and of participants, making it easier to identify a person (Flick 2006). Although participants did discuss their roles, experience and so forth this was in the opening stage and therefore designed to "break the ice". This material was not reported in the analysis and, although challenging, contexts concerning the University and the Faculty were kept deliberately brief.

5.7.1   Benefits to participants

The participants also gained by taking part in the interviews and focus groups, as they were provided with the opportunity to express concerns and anxieties to the researcher who was willing to listen and wanted to hear their stories. A number of staff had evidently enjoyed the experience and one participant was left feeling that she had been in a counselling session and thanked the researcher. An email was received from one participant saying that the interview questions had made her *'re-evaluate my own perceptions of my role in an academic environment'*. The students were quite vocal with a number of topics, about which they felt strongly, and one particular group were noticeably aggrieved with a number of occurrences. These points are expanded on in document 6.

5.8   THE ANALYSIS PROCESS

Before starting the analysis, NVivo (Robson, 2011) was explored but the researcher quickly realised that a considerable amount of manual analysis would have to be undertaken before entering data into the software.   The researcher also found the software extremely difficult to manipulate and to avoid any further anxiety it was decided to analyse the data manually which allowed for a more direct and immediate interpretation (Robson, 2011).   Thematic analysis was adopted as this research was examining the different views on corporate branding and how these contrasted between the different individuals and groups (Flick, 2006).   Themes and sub-themes started to emerge while initial transcribing was taking place as outlined by Saunders *et al* (2009) and marginal remarks were made (see appendix 5).   Further, a summary of thoughts had been drawn up from the fieldwork almost immediately following each interview, which produced a number of emerging themes and helped to confirm validity (Saunders *et al*, 2009) and which emphasised 'the tones, impact and feelings of the respondents concerning their perceptions' (Timmor and Rymon, 2007: 103).

Spencer *et al* (2014: 276) maintain that many researchers go through a 'broadly linear' process during the analytical journal, which occurred in document 3, but due to the higher number of interviews in this research study the researcher found it much easier to initially develop a spidergram for the first eight interviews with Faculty staff (see Appendix 6).   The spidergram demonstrates possible relationships between key themes and concepts with dotted lines and where the relationship is more certain a firm line is employed.   Miles and Huberman (1994: 69) describe this as 'pattern coding' and, in particular, was a useful way of reducing the data and aided the researcher in elaborating 'a cognitive map ….'.   This is also a form of 'indexing and sorting' (Spencer *et* al, 2014: 278) and meant that data could constantly be revisited in order to establish 'themes or interconnections that recur between the units and categories that are emerging' (Denscombe, 2003). As this was only an initial analysis the researcher was 'ready to unfreeze and reconfigure' (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 70) data until the data that remained added 'better empirical grounding'(Miles and Huberman, 1994: 70).

As a semi-structured interview schedule was used for the interviews and focus groups most of the data appeared well ordered initially, fitting into themes identified in the

literature review (Ritchie, 2014), and new insights were uncovered (Saunders *et* al, 2009). As a reminder, 14 individual interviews were conducted and 3 focus groups. In order to really understand different individuals' perceptions, quotations by participant and by theme (Spencer *et al*, 2014) were entered into matrices so as to provide 'a firm foundation' (Spencer *et al*, 2014: 284) on which to build an analysis of the findings. Miles and Huberman (1994) maintain that this process of 'clustering patterns' is where the names of clusters are actually the codes and allowed the researcher to consider different viewpoints on a particular theme. As the clusters are reduced, and labels attached, they can be 'combined to form a "meta-cluster"' (Miles and Huberman, 1996: 87).

The same process was followed with the remaining interviews and the focus groups with the research questions guiding the definition of categories (Murdaugh *et al*, 2000). This allowed the researcher to consider general opinions across the groups and the interviews (Flick, 2006: 197). As more data were analysed this process became confusing, particularly as comparisons had to be drawn between the different groups of participants within the case study (Lewis and McNaughton Nicholls, 2014). Coding was therefore adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994) which initially revealed a total of 32 codes (Appendix 7) which were developed around the corporate branding domain. The data needed to be reduced and classified further by moving on 'from surface features of the data' (Spencer *at al*, 2014: 285) to something much more analytic. This involved examining the interrelatedness of themes by comparing data within each category (Flick 2006). What emerged were themes that had undergone a 'major transformation' (Spencer *et al*, 2014: 285) including complexities and nuances that appeared to explain their existence (Butler-Kisber, 2010). These are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6 - KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This research aimed to examine the different interpretations of corporate branding, and its implementation in an educational setting.   In particular, perceptions regarding corporate branding/branding, and their related components, were sought from employees and students in a post-92 university. This took into consideration the context of a Faculty of Education, and more specifically teacher education, which was the primary area for the research. A total of 21 themes were identified and subsequently arranged around 7 key categories. These are highlighted in table 2 together with an indication of where the data was sourced. Each member of staff was given a code (see table 3), both to preserve their anonymity and to indicate their level of seniority, as this was significant to some of the responses given in the findings. It was impossible to identify students within the focus groups, apart from the secondary teaching students who are referred to as SEC1 and SEC2. Table 4 highlights where differences were identified and the number of participants. The findings that emerged from the interviews, focus groups and documentation are next presented.

Table 2:   **Final coding**

Category	Themes	Data source
The corporate brand	Lack of differentiation	Staff
		Secondary students
		Primary students
	Unmet target market needs	Masters students
Management specialities	The University Mission	Staff ; documentation
	Employability	Staff ; documentation
	The Faculty Mission	Staff ; documentation
	Role of communications	Staff
Values	Conflicting values	Staff; documentation
Corporate visual identity	Facilities	Staff
		Masters students
		Primary students
Corporate image	Visual	Staff
		Primary students
	Internal and external	Staff
Corporate reputation	Specialist areas	Staff
	Faculty reputation	Staff
		Primary students
		MA students
Sub brands	Government changes	Staff
	Cultural differences	Staff
		Masters students
		Secondary students
	Vision for a teacher	Staff; documentation
	Shared values: ITT staff	Staff
	Shared values: students	Staff
		Masters students
		Secondary students
	Relationships and values	Staff
		Masters students
		Secondary students
		Primary students
	Image of programmes	Staff
		Secondary students
	Reputation of programmes	Staff
		Masters students
		Secondary students
		Primary students
	Reputation of graduates	Staff

Table 3:   **Coding of Respondents**

Role	Code
Senior Manager, Faculty	SF2
Senior Manager, Faculty	SF3
Senior Manager, Faculty	SF4
Senior Manager, Faculty	SF5
Academic Manager, Faculty	AF2
Academic Manager, Faculty	AF3
Lecturer, Faculty	LF1
Lecturer, Faculty	LF2
Lecturer, Faculty	LF3
Lecturer, Faculty	LF4
Lecturer, Faculty	LF5
Lecturer, Faculty	LF6
Marketing Manager, University	MMU1
Marketing Manager, University	MMU2

Table 4: Details of focus groups

Student type	Number in group	Participants' characteristics
Primary education	6	1 male
Secondary Education	2	1 male (SEC1) 1 female (SEC2)
Masters	9	All female; 2 of these international students

6.2   THE CORPORATE BRAND

6.2.1   Lack of differentiation

It is clear from a number of authors in the literature (Balmer, 2001[a]; Kantanen, 2012) that the corporate brand needs to be understood. There was no mention of a corporate brand, or related strategy, in the documentary material although the makings of a corporate brand were evident from discussions held with the participants. Comments

concerning the University's "corporate brand" were not particularly insightful which was partly due to difficulties in applying the concept to education *'when it comes to education I'm not about branding'* (AF3). This was despite the fact that when participants were asked what a "brand" was, most had a good idea as highlighted in table 5. Several authors highlight problems of internal stakeholders committing to the concepts of corporate branding (Hankinson, 2004; Chapleo, 2007; Hariff and Rowley, 2011) particularly when it is perceived as being in the domain of marketing.

Table 5:   Perceptions of branding

Quote	Participant
'It's that match isn't it, between that aspiration or some belief that they have managed to engage you with…'	LF6
'It has to speak to me and be something special'	Secondary education student
'Something that just makes them go "oh I hadn't thought of that"'	LF5
'…product or service which is linked to sort of perceptions of the the organisation…'	LF2
'…a deep psychological level as well, you know that Cadbury's purple…'	LF3
'…it does what it says on the tin…makes you feel good when you put it on…'	AF3
'…you see the name and automatically make the connection'	Primary education student
'The John Lewis advert…'	MA education student

Employees' views of the corporate identity overall felt either negative or ambivalent which, as Balmer (2008) maintains, is based on their knowledge of what they believe or know about the University. This was similar to the findings in document 3, where research was conducted in the RoI, although this was partly due to a "brand development plan" that had not been fully developed or circulated at the time the research took place. However, in document 4 (research was also conducted in the RoI), the students were able to identify with the same University but not the Faculty of Education. This ambiguous state became clearer in this research with the perceptions of the University as a car, both from staff and the students, suggesting a lack of

differentiation. Several authors argue that these different perceptions are due to people being at different levels and different departments in the University (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Kay, 2006; Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006) . This did not appear to be the case apart from MMU1, a senior manager external to the Faculty, who perceived the University car as something *'slightly upmarket…'*, and some of the MA students who thought the University car would be, for example, a 'BMW'. The majority of participants viewed the University as being:

> *…fairly reliable…something like a Volvo…it spends money on some of the wrong things… it has its lights on all the time* (LF5)

 The above quote was expanded on with an example of the University expanding a course in the Faculty but with no thought given to rooming the additional students (LF5). The word "reliable" was echoed by a number of interviewees as highlighted in table 6.

Table 6:   **The University car - reliable**

Quote	Participant
'…it might be one of those reliable Japanese jobs'	LF6
' A Golf….reliable, trustworthy, not cheap, solid, lasts forever'	AF3
'...we wouldn't be seen as anything vintage….more of a reasonably modern reliable car'	LF4
'….big, fairly bland but fairly reliable people carrier that does everything you need it to do without being too flash'	LF3
'…something sound and reliable like a Ford Focus maybe'	SF2
'fairly reliable and bland…. a family-oriented saloon'	SF4
'…a bit sporty, a bit 'here I am' but also tried and tested, reliable and adaptable'	SF5
'…its reasonable quality, its reliable'.	LF2
'Something German, not overly expensive but reliable' *'Like a mid-range reliable car'* *'Any type of German car, it's pretty reliable'* *'Very reliable, very helpful'*	Primary education students

Fetscherin and Usunier (2012) suggest that a corporate brand is an intrinsic part of everyday life but staff appear unclear as to the University's identity except for this point of reliability. This assumes that the University is perceived by some participants as being average or lacking in distinction. For example, LF6 made reference to the post-92 universities in the region and the fact that it was hard for the University to have a corporate brand *'...because they've all got to have the basics in place haven't they?'* and the fact that they were all *'much of a muchness...'* (LF1). SF4 felt that the University was *'stuck in the middle...trying to do everything for everybody'* in terms of competing with other universities for the same students. Even the KIS data was viewed as *'homogenous'* (LF6). However, AF3 thought that the University was aspiring to be different, but when asked in what way *'I'd have to think about that long and hard'* was the reply. Further comments from both employees and students, relating to this lack of differentiation, are highlighted in table 7. As claimed by a number of authors (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012; He and Balmer, 2007; Roper and Fill, 2012) this may be due to a lack of clarity as to exactly what it is that the University is seeking to be.

Table 7:   The University car - stuck in the middle

Quote	Participant
'Probably mid-range…fairly high spec...a salesman's or rep's car….'	LF1
'We can't pretend to be a Rolls Royce…we're not a Skoda either'	SF3
'…more along the lines of a Peugeot, a mid-range car'	MMU2
'…not cutting edge, but not an old banger, somewhere in the middle'	SEC1
'…middle of the range, nothing too flash but not an old banger'	Primary student

6.2.2   Unmet target market needs

It was generally viewed that the University is the *'umbrella'* (LF1) that attracts the students which Hatch and Schultz (2001) maintain highlights all the products and services that the University encompasses.   However, for some students this may be

more in name and therefore the students appear unaware of what the University's corporate brand is offering which Balmer (2001[a]) states should be derived from its identity. This is evidenced by the primary education students who thought that the image of the University was its name and nothing else (section 6.6.1). By trying to do everything for everybody, the University is losing sight of some of its target markets. According to a number of authors (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Jevons, 2006), the University is therefore not positioning itself in the minds of different target markets. As Kotler *et al* (2009) maintain some students are not able to distinguish what is different about the University. He and Balmer (2007) remind us that corporate identity, after all, is concerned with competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Participants LF1 and SF5 suspected that it would be the undergraduate students that would perceive the University as having the stronger brand as opposed to the Faculty of Education. However, the primary education students clearly thought that the corporate brand was the University of which the Faculty was a part: *'I think if you said Fingers you wouldn't necessarily think of Cadbury's'* (primary education student); this was viewed the same for the Faculty of Education. Similarly all the MA students felt that the corporate brand sat with the University rather than the Faculty, however, when the researcher asked if it was acceptable to report this remark the students were not happy. The MA students explained that this was due to a *'lack of that recognition that we have different traits and needs to undergraduate students'.* This is discussed further in section 6.5.1.

Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana (2007) maintain that parent companies usually provide brand endorsements to the sub-brands over which they reside. However, one of the MA students explained that she did not think the University understood *'the whole of their client base'* as the focus appeared to be on the *'undergraduate experience'*; the postgraduates have a different experience as *'we have different traits and needs…'* (MA student). All the MA students concurred with this comment. Gutman and Miaoulis (2003) state that this may imply that the University is not delivering what it has promised to particular markets. Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana (2007) point to the different target markets, particularly niche markets, that belong to different departments.

6.2.3   Summary

Reliability is perceived to be a key element of the University's corporate brand by its staff and students. It is suggested that there is a misalignment of the University's corporate identity with internal staff and, as a result, its external stakeholders.   By trying to do everything for everybody, the University is losing sight of some of its target markets and is not positioning itself in the minds of different target markets with points of differentiation to which stakeholders can relate.

6.3   MANAGEMENT SPECIALITIES

6.3.1   The University Mission

In document 3 it was primarily senior staff that were familiar with the University's strategic branding documentation. In this study responses were more balanced between different levels of staff.   MMU1, who was in post when the University's Mission statement was developed, felt it was quite broad but argued that the University's markets were broad also.   MMU2 felt that the University Mission did not just concern teaching the students but also *'building students'*.   AF2 was not at all sure where the University was *'trying to sit'* as it was felt that the University was attempting *'... to chop and change things too much'* (AF2).

Although LF1 commented *'...like it or not we are a business'*, which she was not keen on, she did recognise the importance of competing in the marketplace.   However, a number of participants expressed cynicism towards the University's Mission which was not helped by the fact that LF3, SF5 and AF2 were not sure what the Mission was. A number of authors (Brookes, 2003; Chapleo, 2010; Chapleo, 2011) point to internal employees being uncomfortable with marketing terms.   For example, LF5, who appeared unfamiliar with the Mission, felt it was about '*value for money*' with the programmes while LF2 did not think the University had a mission, rather priorities. Further, related comments are outlined in table 8. Balmer (2001[a]) explains that this lack of clarity gives the impression of a misunderstanding or absence of commitment. This is evidenced by LF3:

> *'To me its kind of that corporate bullshit that people sit down at meetings and come up with something just because we needed to, its just horrible really'*

Table 8:   Perceptions of the University Mission statement

Quote	Participant
'Its bound up with a business model that I don't think should be such a priority'	LF2
'Its very annoying and slightly false and I don't know why but its irritating'	LF6
'Its driven by pragmatism and the market….outwardly it looks as though we know what we're doing…even if sometimes we don't'.	LF3

Apart from one senior manager who was clear on how the University and Faculty Missions aligned, perceptions from most of the staff participants were that the two were not entirely congruent. This lack of understanding appears to be leading to the vision-culture gap described by Hatch and Schultz (2001) which is exacerbated by the fact that the University's Mission is buried in its strategic plan, aims and strategic platforms. Some of these points are expanded on in section 6.3.2.

6.3.1.1 Employability

The one point of reference that does link the University's corporate brand to the Faculty is employability which was highlighted by Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana (2007) as an example of utilising the Mission as a key tool for market positioning. Although most of the staff interviewed felt that this link to employability was positive (AF2, LF4, AF3, AF2, SF5) and *'incredibly important to the University'* (LF4), AF2 felt that the link was not as explicit.   The researcher noted that it was not apparent in the documentation or on the University's website.

This indeed may be a feature that is unique to the University which several authors claim addresses, in part, what the organisation is (He and Balmer, 2007; Nandan, 2005). This is supported by SF2, LF4, LF1 and SF4 who thought that employability was a unique selling point for the University despite being *'… a bit wooshy…'* (LF1). MMU2 also described employability as *'spectacular'* and an area of uniqueness for the Faculty although LF3 acknowledged that this was partly due to numbers being allocated centrally, this was discussed in section 4.3.   LF6 felt that one of the key reasons for students applying to the Faculty was its high employability levels.   Conversely SF2,

LF6 and LF5 thought that employability was an important consideration when a large amount of money was being invested and assured parents that their money had been well spent. Interestingly LF5 linked reputation of the Faculty to employability although this was not an area specifically raised by the ITT students.

6.3.2   The Faculty's Mission

There appeared to be some confusion between the Faculty's Mission and Vision which may have been partly due to the fact that the two only appeared to be included in certain documentary material. For example, the Vision is in the Faculty's Review (2013) but not the Mission. This was confusing for the researcher as some of the responses were unclear initially as to whether they were referring to the Faculty's Mission or Vision for a teacher. SF2 explained that the Vision is a framework for *'the ethos of a teacher…'* whereas the Mission *'speaks to the University's strategic platforms…'*.

Generally participants felt that the Faculty's Mission was much clearer than the University's Mission (section 6.3.1) as it focused on developing partnerships (AF2) and was therefore not '*completely congruent*' (LF4). This was confirmed by most of the staff interviewed (LF1, LF4, SF4, SF3) who felt that the Faculty's Mission started *'in a different place…'* (SF4). This focus on partnerships is a good example of a clearly articulated vision that Chapleo (2011) maintains is an important pre-requisite for a successful brand.

MMU1 pointed to individual Mission statements that Faculties had developed and said that some Faculties could do with a *'little reality check'* and was concerned that the gap between what a Faculty aspired to and what could actually be achieved may become too big. The Faculty's vision is discussed further in section 6.8.3.

6.3.3   Role of communications

The University's new logo, strategic plan and values were all launched together at a road show in 2004/05 and MMU1 felt that this could have been introduced more effectively as it appeared that some people had not seen these documents. For example, MMU1 pointed to a lack of *'sharing or discussion'* and that senior managers should have been fundamental to the delivery of the documents, rather than just the Marketing team. According to several authors (Balmer and Gray, 2003; De Chernatony and Cottam, 2006; Hatch and Schultz, 2003) senior managers should be an integral part of

delivering key messages and interact more with the different Faculties so as to understand their environments better. SF2 felt that senior management needed to '*touch base more'* with individual Faculties so that important messages could be presented and '*kind of tailored too'*. This was clarified by SF3 who explained that the Faculty was a very small part of a large University and that '*....a lot of the stuff that comes at us…it doesn't always fit you'*.

Referring to the University's Mission statement LF4 commented that it was communicated '*through the many tiers of management'* and concerned resolving particular problems rather than asking people for ideas. AF2, LF2 and LF5 referred to the '*hierarchical attitude…'* (AF2) and that very little dialogue took place '*...I'm told to do things, my experience isn't valued'* (LF2). This does not fit well with the philosophy of a brand which several authors claim (Hariff and Rowley, 2011; Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana, 2007; Keene and Fairman , 2011) is more consistent and beneficial if staff are engaged in the development of missions and visions. A view of "exclusion" appeared to emerge which LF5 felt could be improved: '*If you've got happy people, generally happy people, the outputs will be good'*.

As in document 3 there was no evidence of the total corporate communication described by Balmer and Greyser (2003), for example, LF3 stated that communication stops '*at one level and doesn't filter down'*. This was a particular concern for LF3 who felt there was a perception that programmes were not as important as the '*big issues'*. SF5 felt this was due to assumptions that communications would filter down to the correct person but that in reality it was about finding out things '*by accident'*. AF2 felt that changes were made too quickly and not thought through properly which has resulted in the University being '*not streamlined...quite a slow moving car with too many parts'* (AF2).

A number of participants mentioned marketing when asked about communications in the University. For example LF1 stressed that marketing of teaching and learning should be undertaken by '*someone who understands'* and did not think that '*anyone in the senior management team does'*. In fact, LF5 and LF1 were unsure that the Marketing department '*get education'* (LF5) giving an example of brochures presenting unsuitable images. LF1 thought that someone from marketing should be assigned to

spending a day in the Faculty and sitting in on the teaching sessions in order to see what really went on in the classroom. MMU1, a senior manager external to the University, conceded that she did not necessarily work with the faculties closely but that she saw a number of items *'…that skirt past my desk or through my emails…'*.

6.3.4 Summary

A number of staff were unfamiliar with the University's Mission statement and some had difficulty in relating to its content, due to the "marketing" language that is used, which has resulted in a certain amount of scepticism. Employability is a key factor that not only aligns the University and Faculty Missions, but also the University's corporate brand as the Faculty makes a large contribution to the employability levels.   It is suggested that communications have a key role to play at the University, as it is perceived as too top-down and generally important strategic issues lack commitment from senior managers. This situation appears to be aggravated by the fact that the Marketing team does not necessarily understand the way in which teacher training operates.

6.4   PRIORITIES AND VALUES

6.4.1   Conflicting values

In document 3 there was little evidence that the University's values corresponded with the emotional values either of their employees or of external stakeholders. The findings in this study imply that the University's values are not easily identifiable and, as suggested by Balmer and Gray (2003), the quality and consistency of performance is therefore lacking in the eyes of its target markets. Indeed the researcher had difficulty in identifying the document containing the University's values. Although a number of participants (LF6, SF3, LF1, SF2, SF4) had not seen the University's values they did agree that generally they could identify with them in terms of, for example, *'quality and value for money'* (SF3). Further probing, however, drew out more remarks such as LF4 who did not view the values as *'people-related'* and thought that they should include such matters as partnerships. AF2 saw the University values as much softer than those of the Faculty which she felt were more focused. This suggests a lack of clarity with the University values which became clearer when LF6 remarked:

> *… I can give my money to Oxfam because I believe in their values as they want to make the world a better place for people*

Although MMU2 had not seen the University values she felt that she followed their ethos as did staff in the Faculty who were constantly striving to improve teaching and courses. MMU2 also felt that the Marketing team had a responsibility to *'sort of change how academics are thinking and make them think more about the values'*. However, the majority of Faculty staff interviewed were not so convinced and, as with the University's Mission, the values of the University was an area that participants expressed a particular dislike of the marketing language, outlined by a number of authors in the literature (Brookes, 2003; Chapleo , 2010; Chapleo, 2011). For example, SF4 stressed that it was difficult to live the values as she was continuously dealing with conflicting *'business imperatives'*, such as the student experience and financial constraints, while LF4 thought the values appeared more concerned with *'expectations'* rather than *'something that's there'*. Several participants did not like the focus on "customers" particularly in the context of education (LF4, LF6); related comments are included in table 9.

MMU2 was well aware that marketing was viewed as *'all lies and fairy dust'* and that it was difficult to put forward matters such as values in an overt way to staff *'you've not just got the cynicism side…you have the entrenched opinions as well'*.

Table 9:   **Perceptions of the University's values**

Quote	Participant
'…I do want to be open and honest and all of those things, but identifying customer needs is not how I position myself'	LF6
'its that horrible business language…turns into mistrust'	LF3
'gold-standard customers…it kind of jars with me'	LF5
'Values are passed on but not in a top-down aggressive way…more in a cultural kind of relationship'.	LF4

Interestingly while MMU1 felt that the values did not need to be written down and that people *'just do it'*, SF3 spoke at length of the importance of "values" and of

understanding and valuing *'each other's cultures…the values could be the bridging…on every wall, on every notice board'.* Dowling (1993) stressed the importance of displaying an organisation's Vision. A number of authors (Balmer and Gray, 2003; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Chapleo, 2010) maintain that the values and behaviours of employees need to align with the desired brand values to ensure that employees "live the brand". Work in the Faculty was underpinned by something more profound which LF3 described as:

> *some quite complex philosophical stuff…deep rooted beliefs…tied up in political, social, economic thinking*

These are values shared by the academic staff, to which partners and students can relate, and which are discussed further in sections 6.8.4, 6.8.5 and 6.8.6.

6.4.2   Summary

A number of participants had not seen the University's values. However, the University's values and priorities are not aligned with those of the Faculty staff and the majority of staff, as in section 6.3.1, had difficulty in relating to the "marketing" language.

6.5   CORPORATE VISUAL IDENTITY

6.5.1   Facilities

As outlined by a number of authors in the literature (Dowling, 1993; Karaosmanoglu, 2006) several negative comments were received concerning the facilities at the University. SF3, LF4, AF2, LF3 discussed various events that had been held at the University describing one as being *'like the Marie-Celeste'* (SF3) as it was held at a weekend with a number of important partners and there were no facilities available. SF3 expressed concern about this situation:

> *to not have that welcome, because that's what a good brand is…. you get that efficiency, its like banks isn't it?*

Initially the researcher felt these remarks were unimportant until a number of students supported these claims made by staff. The primary students were not happy generally with the availability of the facilities. Comments included insufficient availability of computers, too many library books being one-week loans and no buses to and from the

campus (when undergraduate students are not in the University). Referring to their campus, one primary student announced *'I'm spending as much money as people [on a different campus] but I haven't got as nice facilities'*. This was echoed by a secondary student who in making reference to new University buildings on a different campus thought *'that could push it [the University] towards a modern car'* (SEC2). These are important points as Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) stress that corporate identity and corporate visual identity represent the values and philosophy of the organisation in terms of perceptions of a corporate brand overall. Further, Fetscherin and Usunier (2012) highlight a gap in the literature in relating these two concepts. The MA students had similar views but were more outspoken due to the fact that they study part-time and work full-time, in fact, this particular topic rather monopolised the discussion. The *'difficulty of access'* during out-of-hours was mentioned by most of the MA students, particularly parking and the library, and one MA student said that *'it has impacted on my identity and how I perceive the University'*.

One of the secondary students, who had not studied at the University before, felt the campus (on which the Faculty of Education stands) had an *'aura…very much a place that attracts postgraduate people…it's quiet and not crazy'* (SEC1). Open-plan "classrooms" (known as the resource space) in a dedicated Faculty of Education building were cited by LF4 and LF5 as being an important influencing factor for prospective students (LF5). Reflecting on the resource space, SF3 wondered whether it was a *'sense of place'* with which students identified. This comment summarises the students' views well, and the importance attributed to facilities at the University, which resonates with He and Balmer (2007) who maintain that visual identity shares similarities with corporate identity.

6.5.2   Summary

Overall external stakeholders are being made to feel undervalued by the University while the Faculty appears to cater for their needs. The findings in this section demonstrate that facilities have a significant impact on the University's identity (see section 6.2.2). Corporate identity and corporate visual identity are therefore closely linked and both contribute to the success of the corporate brand.

6.6   CORPORATE IMAGE

6.6.1   Visual

The University image in document 3 was perceived as much stronger than that of the Faculty of Education by staff.   In document 4 students were more positive about the University's image; one student described the University as *'big and beautiful'*. In this study, despite probing, corporate image was confusing, for example, MMU1 felt that the University's reputation was not unlike its image and that they were *'one and the same thing'*. Harris and de Chernatony (2010) maintain that corporate image is concerned with the short term, and current but changing perceptions.   Nonetheless, some participants viewed image as a more visual concept and comments made linked to those in section 6.5.1. For example, SF4 described one of the University's campuses as being '*a front... resource heavy, lots of resources, spanking buildings'* which had improved its image while the campus on which the Faculty was based was perceived as *'not so great…'* (SF4).   However, Christensen and Askegaard (2001) argue that corporate image is about symbolism. Despite constant probing, the primary students thought the image lay with the University, not the Faculty, and that the image was the name of the University and nothing else.   These are key points as Gutman and Miaoulis (2003) claim that a positive image can be a key driver in influencing students to attend a university while Fetscherin and Usunier (2012) claim that a poor image will affect an organisation's reputation.

6.6.2   Internal and external

Some of the staff interviewed recognised that image went beyond the visual aspects. SF4 claimed that the University wanted to be perceived as *'an innovative, research-led institution that provided an excellent student experience'* but that this was not the external perception. AF3 who pointed out that prospective students were usually met by smiling staff, and had access to a wide range of information, but that it was important to attend *'...a place that makes you feel good…'*.   This is expanded on by Rindell and Strandvik (2010) who state that images can change over time and new images are compared to earlier perceptions. These points are expanded on in section 6.8.7.

Gutman and Miaoulis (2003) maintain that it is important to understand the cognitive and emotional elements that are stirred in a student by the image of a University. LF5, a

former student, expanded on this point and described image as the *'inside to the outside view'* and that although the University was viewed as a business *'people'* were involved in the process. AF2 was much more forthright and pointed out that no matter how many wonderful things are demonstrated *'...it only takes one person...and that affects the image of the whole university'.* This then confirms the connection between identity and image that a number of authors discuss (Temporal, 2002; Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006; He and Balmer, 2007). In particular it is the importance attributed to that of employees' behaviour, as maintained by Kay (2006), in building the corporate identity. This includes the values portrayed through the corporate identity that de Cherntony and Cottam (2006) claim should be congruent with those of employees so that they live the brand.

6.6.3 Summary

The image of the University is perceived by some stakeholders as something more visual and not necessarily distinct. The role and importance of Faculty staff is recognised in the development of image. It is suggested that there is a misalignment between the internal corporate identity of the University and its external corporate image.

6.7   ALIGNMENT OF CORPORATE REPUTATION

6.7.1 Specialist areas

The misalignment of both corporate identity and corporate image are evidenced in the previous section, and as asserted by a number of authors (Dowling, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2001). This appears to have resulted in the Faculty having a more positive reputation than that of the University (Roper and Fill, 2012). For example a number of participants, both staff and students, had problems separating the reputation of the University from that of the Faculty. SF3, AF3, SF4 and LF6 guessed that the University may have a reputation for particular Faculties and programmes that were viewed as *'stars'* (SF4). A number of participants acknowledged the different *'pockets'* (SF5 and SMU) of specialist areas within the University that may be unique but not the University as a whole. MMU1 felt it was difficult for universities to say they were unique and gave the example of John Lewis *'it's not unique, it's a shop...'.* When the researcher pointed out John Lewis's outstanding reputation for quality of

service MMU1 agreed that the University could excel in certain areas but thought that it needed to be *'the whole that works'*.

Participant LF2 felt that the University provided a useful environment, within which the Faculty could build its reputation locally with partners, as the University held a National and *'part'* international reputation (LF2, LF4). When MMU2 was asked if the stronger reputation sat with the University she was unsure, due to the difference in target markets, although felt that the *'local side'* for teacher training was reasonably well known. MMU1 also thought that the Faculty had a good reputation regionally but nationally *'that doesn't come across to me'*.

6.7.2   Faculty reputation

In document 3, which related to a University in the RoI, reputation was perceived as much stronger in the Department than that of the University by staff. In document 4, which also concerned a University in the RoI, the University's reputation was perceived as much higher than the department by students. In this study LF2 and LF6 felt sure that it was the reputation of the Faculty that attracted students, as some had attended the University for a first degree or had had recommendations from fellow teachers or students that had trained in the Faculty. This view was supported by all of the primary students who were positive about the Faculty's reputation and had heard through various people that it was *'brilliant'*. Perceptions from the MA students, who are part-time students but working full-time, were more mixed and they appeared a little unclear as to the concept of corporate reputation. MMU2 explained that it is the undergraduate students that are most interested in the reputation of the University and Faculty whereas postgraduates *'tend to see it as more their decision'* rather than being influenced by, for example, league tables.

In this study, reputation also lay with the employees. Gotsi and Wilson (2001[a]) refer to opportunities that arise for stakeholders to assess the reputation of an organisation such as perceptions of communication activities which was evident from the excellent feedback that employees received from the open days and from the students interviewed (section 6.8.5). Gotsi and Wilson (2001[a]) and Abratt and Kleyn (2012) also point to the importance of relationships in building an organisation's reputation which again was

evident from the feedback received from partners and from students interviewed (see section 6.8.6).

6.7.3   Summary

Corporate reputation sits with different specialities rather than the University.   It is suggested that the misalignment of both corporate identity and corporate image appears to have resulted in the Faculty having a more positive reputation than that of the University.   It is primarily the staff that have contributed to this perception of the Faculty and the point at which sub-brands started to emerge.

6.8   SUB-BRANDS

6.8.1   Government changes

While it is acknowledged that the University is experiencing changes, not least the rise in tuition fees and the implementation of the NSS, the Values of a teacher are linked to further changes that staff in the Faculty are experiencing.   Document 3 highlighted a history of change in teacher education in the RoI which affected the way in which the Department worked.   In this study most of the Faculty staff interviewed commented on the most recent Government changes that were affecting the Faculty.   SF4 referred to the political environment in which the Faculty operated as being '*very turbulent…*' and that this had changed the Faculty's identity (LF4) and the way in which staff worked in the Faculty (LF2).   LF4 made reference to teacher education becoming more school-led and felt that the Faculty brand was therefore evolving.

Balmer (2008) maintains that problems can occur when there are changes in an organisation's external environment.   The difficulties associated with the changes in teacher education is a wearing-down of staff as the different climate is shifting the identity of the programmes and in turn the way in which staff work.   The influence of Ofsted was raised by a number of participants '*…the world and his dog knows the power of Ofsted'* (SF3).   AF2 stressed that if the Faculty had poor results from Ofsted *'it affects allocations and ultimately jobs'* but she also felt that the "Faculty car" would be more streamlined and organised due to heavy scrutinising from Ofsted.   This was summarised by SF2 as:

> *the   heavy   sense   of   monitoring…what   it   does   to   people…those tensions…sometimes its hard to remember what it is we're about here.*

According to Balmer and Gray (2003) ethos, aims and values not only evolve, but they are fluid, this was a point recognised by LF4, who acknowledged that branding concerned the University's identity, but that this should not be limiting: *'...things are always evolving and changing...its something about moving forward together....'*.

When AF3 was asked about uniqueness in the Faculty he referred to *'flexibility and adaptability'* particularly in the programmes which had been developed in response to changes. LF5 stressed that staff recognised the importance of sending out well-equipped students to schools and colleges and that releasing students that were *'ill-quipped, on a whole range of things is detrimental'*. SF2 explained that some of the Faculty's students, who were only 18, had to *'...display a sense of professionalism'* at the start of the programme (SF2). Expectations on the students were therefore high when it came to, for example, attending lectures and visiting schools which SF4 felt was a different culture to other faculties in the University where it may not be as stringent. LF4 viewed teacher education as *'being a very political issue'* and that it was important to prepare students to cope with change. Referring to change, SF2 said that the ITT courses have very strict guidelines and trainee teachers had to be fully conversant with the current National Curriculum, the political issues and the *'wider philosophical good solid educational arguments for thinking in a different way...'*.

6.8.2   Cultural differences

Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) state that it is virtually impossible for an organisation to have a unified culture but rather that posited by Balmer and Gray (2003) as an amalgamation of subcultures. This is evidenced by SF3 who did not believe that the Faculty, when it came to corporate branding, would be a priority for the University. Further probing revealed that the University corporate brand would not be *'a supportive, cooperative brand'* (SF3) a culture he associated with the Faculty of Education.

A senior manager external to the Faculty (MMU1), described the "Faculty car" as something reliable and safe but that it would not *'set the world on fire'*. The MA students had trouble viewing the Faculty *'as a separate entity'* although one student thought that it would be a car that once inside would be *'...much bigger and perhaps*

has more bells and whistles than on the outside…'. This may have been due to the fact that the Faculty has a number of different areas described by LF3 as being:

> *…really complicated underneath the bonnet, on the surface it all looks straightforward the way we present it to the trainees*

This point was expanded on when the majority of staff and some of the students, as can be seen in table 10, used quite powerful words to describe the Faculty as a car, that was different to that of the University.   Interestingly definitions of "Faculty cars" provoked different identities for different programmes.   For example, LF4 felt that teacher training courses were the Faculty's *'safety net'* and described them as *'something sturdy…a pick-up truck'.*

Table 10:   Perceptions of the Faculty car

Quote	Participant
'A low-end BMW or an Audi...'	LF1
'Something higher spec [than the University]'	SF2
'More streamlined [than the University]…probably with less parts'	AF2
'Good performance, but not expensive, and accessible'	SF4
'Feels powerful…something like a Cadillac…large and distinctive'	LF4
'VW Golf GTi…something comfortable and supportive'	AF3 LF2
'…tech savvy...not too flash...a sort of Guardian reader's car'	LF3
'a turbo-charged Mini'	SF3
'Its more the sort of the reputation of VW than the actual car	MMU2
'…something like a Porsche because of how fast moving it is…'	SF5
'…a Lotus Elise, a really sporty nice car'	SEC1

This became even clearer when LF4 explained that, whereas teacher education programmes used to be more integrated, a member of staff's identity now tended to be *'reinforced by programme and academic group labels'.*   LF1 described this as *'an*

unequalness' in the Faculty, as some of the academic teams appeared to have higher profiles than others which she felt was not necessarily justified.

When LF4 was asked what car the Faculty might be she compared the Faculty and teacher education as being *'slightly different things …. and teacher education 'as something with more of a history to it'* which was evolving at a speed much faster than education more generally. For example, LF4 and SF3 viewed their programmes as having *'a brand of its own…'* (SF3). This then takes the idea of subcultures proposed by Balmer and Gray (2003) to a different level and the emergence of sub-brands (Chapleo, 2007).

6.8.3   Vision for a teacher

Participants were far more animated when it came to discussing the Faculty's Vision for a teacher. SF4 claimed *'….for us its about inspiring and exciting learning',* both for staff and students, yet it appeared that Marketing did not understand the Vision of a Teacher and its related target markets. For example when MMU2 was asked about the Faculty's Mission she referred to a document of four pages, which the researcher had not seen, and the participant commented that it appeared more related to the development of teachers rather than the Faculty. Importantly, the Faculty's Vision for a teacher was developed collaboratively within the Faculty, and with wider partnerships, and underpins the ITT courses. This relates to Hariff and Rowley (2011) who maintain that their organisation benefited from the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in shaping their brand. LF3 also felt that the Faculty was much more driven by *'aspirations for what a good teacher should be'* and that this philosophy was in turn driven by Ofsted which the ITT courses use as *'...a starting point'.* SF2 stressed that it was in fact the Faculty's Vision that strengthened the Faculty's brand.

6.8.4   Shared values: ITT staff

The Faculty academic staff interviewed had all originated from specialist areas of education and, as outlined by Balmer and Gray (2003), had shared values. These values appeared well-defined, distinct, powerful and related *'...first to their course and then to their subject'* (SF4). Most staff appeared well aware of the impact of them not doing a good job and the number of people *'we can touch'* (LF5). Both LF4 and LF1 discussed the importance of training and educating students, and the wider impact this would have

on children and young people in schools, which gave LF1 *'a great sense of responsibility'*. SF2 also referred to the imparting of values to emerging teachers *'and all those things that are so central to a teacher's life'*. LF4 described these values as *'the very thing that drives us'* and that if these were compromised in any way that she would leave the University.

However, these shared values were not congruent with those of the University which a number of authors in the literature expressed was important (Chapleo, 2010; de Chernatony and Cottam , 2006; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). LF2 felt that values held by the Faculty were important for a teacher to hold in order to encourage students to explore knowledge and ideas such as *'trust and approachability'*. LF4 and LF1 both had values that concerned a *'strong sense of justice and fairness'* that were important to harness when working with colleagues and students. AF3 referred to the staff as *'making the job come alive'* and that this encouraged the students to *'create their own ideas and philosophy….because it's them that are going to change the future'*.

6.8.5   Shared values: students

The values that the ITT staff portray were clearly benefiting both new and existing students and, as Harris and de Chernatony (2001) imply, these values appear to resonate with those that students hold. Open days were felt to be very popular and welcoming (AF3, SF3, SF2, LF4), with a good deal of positive feedback cited (LF5, SF3) which LF5 associated with the uniqueness of the Faculty. SF4 and SF3 viewed the open days as *'the strongest part of our brand'* (LF4) and that it was the staff who were responsible for the high conversion rates on open days (SF3). LF1 emphasised :

> *Corporate branding isn't just about glossy brochures….what are the staff like….it might look fantastic in the brochure but what happens when they get here?*

This was supported by the students, particularly one of the MA students, who had had such a positive experience at the Faculty's open day, primarily through *'talking to staff and tutors'* that she came away from the University feeling *'enthusiastic and engaged, ready to make a decision'*.

Document 4 highlighted particular values that students held but it was suggested that these more personal values were attached to the values of the University, as described by Gutman and Miaoulis (2003), rather than to the Faculty of Education. In this study,

although students were not asked directly about values, very positive comments were received that linked to the values of the staff and as posited by a number of authors in the literature, to the emotional needs of the students (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Chapleo, 2010). SEC1 did not *'feel like a number'* when asked if he felt valued by the University, as it was the programme leaders who told the students they were important. SEC2 agreed and definitely felt valued by the Faculty, not the University. Another MA student highlighted lots of meetings and sessions that were held to support the students, which she felt was important to the Faculty as staff liked to ensure that the students are *'finding value'.* SEC1 put this down to the programme leader who he viewed as *'proper visionary…the whole ethos of his is quite crazy'* but could not relate this modern approach to the University. These 'personal values' (Lages and Fernandes, 2005: 1564) are those 'that underlie important goals of students…'. The MA students also praised the Faculty staff *'they're very knowledgeable and encouraging, enthusiastic…'.* As suggested by several authors (Jevons, 2006; Balmer and Liao, 2007) the students are less likely to drop out if their values match those of a university. However, in this case the students' values appear to align with those of staff and the programmes.

6.8.6   Relationships and values

As evidenced in Faculty documentation relationships with schools are clearly paramount if the Faculty is to maintain and develop its teaching training provision (Faculty of Education, 2013). This was also a key finding, and unanimous among the staff interviewed (SF4, LF4, LF5, LF2, AF2). This included the quality and importance of the partnerships and the fact that the Faculty is *'viewed as something slightly different'* (SF4) to that of the University by the schools and colleges. When LF3 and AF2 were asked about the University's values, reference was made to the importance of partnerships in the Faculty and that Government changes had compelled the Faculty to think about developing these relationships further. Referring to the changes and the reputation of the Faculty, LF5 said that many of their partner schools, despite being given the choice to partner with a local competitor (grade 1), had remained with the Faculty which she felt said *'something about the branding'.*

This aligns with Chapleo (2010) and Harris and de Chernatony (2001) who maintain that a corporate brand will be more successful if the values created correspond with the

emotional needs of their stakeholders.   However, LF5 who spent a lot of time *'brokering relationships',* said that essentially the Faculty was asking schools for support in training teachers while the schools were also under a lot of pressure from the Government.   This fact did not seem to be recognised by the University (LF5). Conversely, in document 3, partnerships did not arise but a key finding was that the University was keen for its employees to network with external stakeholders.   An interesting comment from one member of staff interviewed was that partner organisations would draw on different models of car for different programmes, for example: *'Some of our partners may now be seeing us as a hybrid…new technology…quite ahead of the field'* (SF4).

This demonstrates the depth of the relationships with partners and, as mentioned by Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006), the confidence they place in staff to ensure that trainee teachers are fully prepared and able to cope with a changing environment. Positive feedback from partners provided evidence of this and the high employability levels that are contributing to those of the University.   These points appear to align with the values of a teacher, not the values of the University.

The importance of values in relationship building is mentioned by several authors (Durvasula *et al*, 2011; Alves and Raposo, 2010; Timmor and Rymon, 2005) and interestingly, was not a key finding in documents 3 or 4.   In this study, the values of staff link strongly to the relationships they hold with the students which is evidenced by the positive comments received concerning the staff.   One of the primary students (male) described the staff in the Faculty as *'family'* because the students are treated as individuals and *'you feel on a level with them'.* In addition one MA student, who had completed a first degree at the University, found the experience of *'coming back a very personable one'.*   SEC2 commented that the staff take time to get to know the students individually and that *'good relationships'* had built up almost immediately.   This links to the highly emotional involvement described by (Balmer and Liao, 2007) that students can have with a university and hence gives them an important feeling of identity.

LF2 said that the relationships held by staff with students were part of the Faculty's culture.   AF3 stressed that the Faculty was worthy of the GTI version of a Golf and thought *'...our teachers here are as good as anywhere I really do'.*   LF2 emphasised

that an organisation's most important resource was its staff and feedback from partners was positive about the lecturing staff (SF3). This research provides evidence that it is the staff who provide prospective and existing students with positive perceptions, outlined by Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) which in turn is leading to positive WoM recommendations, as found by Dowling (1993).

6.8.7   Image of programmes

Very few comments were received about the Faculty's image. This was partly explained by SF5 who thought the University's image was young and vibrant but that in the Faculty there were quite a few mature and part-time students which portrayed an image that was more serious. However, a number of participants linked image to the Faculty programmes, for example, when SF2 was asked about the Faculty's brand she thought it was ITT which had strengthened the Faculty's brand image. SF2 referred to a particular programme which attracts *'niche students'* when asked about the Faculty's image.

These comments from staff were supported by the students interviewed. In effect a "gap" emerged, as a number of the students who were particularly unclear as to the University's image, expressed genuine happiness once they had joined their programmes. For example, SEC1 and SEC2 did not think the University had an image, in fact, SEC1 felt that when he joined the University *'...I was left to interpret it [image] myself'*. However, since joining the Faculty SEC1 felt that the image was very much a *'forward thinking institution'*. A number of authors (Dowling, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2001) maintain that organisations need to ensure that internal and external images are compatible to avoid the emergence of what Roper and Fill (2013) describe as potential gaps which can damage an organisation's reputation.

6.8.8   Reputation of programmes

Although a senior manager, external to the Faculty, felt that it needed to be *'the whole that works'* (MMU1)*,* in-depth analysis revealed that reputation appears to rest with the Faculty's ITT programmes. MMU2, LF4, SF4 and LF1 felt that the reputation of individual programmes was important to prospective students and SF5, LF3 and LF6 highlighted particular programmes with *'very unique features'* (LF6)*.* In addition, AF2 and LF3 emphasised that on completion of their programmes graduates made WoM

recommendations.   The Faculty had been recommended to both SEC1 and SEC2 but again further probing revealed it was more related to the course and the staff.   Many examples were given of the programmes, and their reputation.   For example, one programme was referred to as being the only one out of three in the country, and was positioned as a niche product (SF4).   One of the secondary students (SEC2) fully acknowledged the changes that were being made to programmes as a result of Government reform and praised the development of the MSc Computing in Education (section 4.5).   Therefore, the 'sub-brands' posited by Chapleo (2007:29) extends to different programmes, some of which operate in niche markets.   This is also evidenced by different cultures (discussed in section 6.8.2) within the Faculty (Balmer, 2001[a]) although this was not an area particularly addressed in this research.

Making reference to a model of car SF4 thought that applicants for teacher training programmes would see the Faculty '*as top of the range and actually quite an exclusive model'*. This is evidenced in table 11.

Table 11:   **Students' perceptions on securing a place on their programme**

Quote	Participant
'I felt honoured…I was really happy and felt that I had succeeded'.	SEC1, SEC2
'nailed it'	Primary student (male)
'It boosts your self-esteem, you feel a bit special'	Primary student
'It's amazing!'	MA student

A number of students expressed complete happiness after joining their particular courses, such as one MA student who felt that although she had not been on the course long she had already learned so much *'...it's been brilliant….'*. Another MA student emphasised *'it's certainly surpassed my expectations'*. This was supported by SEC2 who stressed that the course had *'exceeded'* her expectations and is *'just fantastic'* and everything that is covered as being *'relevant'*. As suggested by Lages and Fernandes (2005) there is evidence that students use their values to evaluate the quality of a service

by aligning their expectations and perceptions to that of employees' behaviour which is explained by a number of authors in the literature (Edvardsson, 1998; Grönroos, 2000; Santos, 2002; Canal and Fletcher, 2001).

6.8.9   Reputation of students and graduates

A key finding, unanimous among many of the participants (LF2, SF4, AF3, LF6, SF3) was the quality of the Faculty's graduates.   LF2 and SF4 maintained that the partners were far more aware of the Faculty's brand than that of the University and recognised that even at the start of their training, teacher trainees had been well prepared (LF2). AF3, who had mentioned the importance of quality attributed to a brand, revealed that he had received positive feedback concerning the graduates '*who could always hit the ground running…'*.   Referring to the Faculty's image LF6 and AF3 said it was the teachers provided regionally who also tended to stay in post for a number of years (SF3).   SF3, when asked about the Faculty's reputation, stressed that many employers *'really rate our students…that for me is what I'm about really'*.   LF6, who had been in post for a comparatively short time, was sure that the Faculty had a corporate brand and that she was *'really excited'* at joining a Faculty where teacher trainees were *'held in such high regard'*.   LF6 thought the "Faculty car" would be *'a high-end Honda'* because there is an emphasis on producing innovative and creative teachers.

The fact that partner organisations are pleased with students and graduates, evidenced from feedback that staff have received, is a key finding. Not only does this satisfy the requirements of a number of different stakeholders, not least the schools and colleges, but it also contributes to employability levels in the Faculty. This suggests that students and graduates also become "brand ambassadors" or 'walking representatives of the brand' (Kotler *et al*, 2009: 452) and are the very source of WoM recommendations. This, in turn, can enhance the reputation of the Faculty which, Abratt and Kleyn (2012) suggest, can create a competitive advantage for the University which, according to Dowler (1993) and Firestein, (2006), is an organisation's most valuable asset.

6.8.10 Summary

The changing environment has resulted in a shift in the Faculty's identity and the way in which staff work in terms of programme design and delivery. This has resulted in the Faculty embracing different cultures, within different programmes teams, and a Vision

which is specific to teacher education. Far more importance is attributed to "true" values, rather than impartial marketing values, which are teacher-specific, far-reaching and something to which students can relate. The Marketing team does not necessarily understand these needs and priorities. The importance of building relationships with key stakeholders is vital to not only the survival of the Faculty, but their alignment with those of the University will contribute to the success of the corporate brand.

It is the employees that not only represent the University corporate brand but are a source of competitive advantage for the University. Evidence suggests that the ITT programmes hold a distinct image rather than the Faculty, together with a strong reputation, and what is emerging is product brands for each of the programmes. The quality of the students and graduates is enhancing the reputation of the Faculty and University through their role as brand ambassadors providing word-of-mouth recommendations.

6.9   OVERALL SUMMARY

The empirical research for this document demonstrates that the University's identity is unclear to its stakeholders which has led to a middle-of-the-road position in the marketplace (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Kay, 2006; Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006). The key point of alignment with the Mission statements is employabillity (Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana , 2007). Communication in the University has not helped the current situation, as it is generally viewed as top-down and hierarchical (Hariff and Rowley, 2011; Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana, 2007; Keene and Fairman , 2011), while the values of the ITT staff are not congruent with those of the University (Chapleo, 2010; de Chernatony and Cottam, 2006; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) but rather with those of the students and partner organisations (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). What is emerging is "sub-brands" within the Faculty (Chapleo, 2007; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007), brought about by ongoing changes in the teacher education sector and differences between cultures (Balmer and Gray, 2003) in the University, the Faculty and within the Faculty.

These sub-brands are the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes which appear to have their own identity, values, image and reputation. It is the concept of reputation that has added particular importance to the sub-brands (Chapleo, 2007), in terms of the

staff that design and deliver the courses, and the relationships they hold with different stakeholders. It is also the creative and innovative graduates that are acting as brand ambassadors for the Faculty and contributing to its reputation (Kotler *et al*, 2009) and hence its position in the marketplace. More importantly is the fact that these distinct pockets of specialities may provide the very source of competitive advantage required for a post-92 university seeking to hold a corporate brand with a competitive edge (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012). Some of these issues are similar to the wider service sector, particularly in terms of the important role that staff play in representing the brand. However, for those organisations operating in a political context, this may bring about the likelihood of sub-brands. This is further evidenced in the conceptual framework discussed in the next section.

6.9.1   Conceptual framework

Overall the findings in this study reinforce the literature review conducted in chapter 2 and the fact that corporate branding, and its related components, is a picture of complexities and nuances. Hence the metaphor 'fog', coined by Balmer (2001: 248). In light of the findings in this study a new conceptual framework has been developed (figure 4) in the context of a university. Some of the findings clearly demonstrate that the concepts of a corporate brand are similar to the conceptual framework produced in section 3.4, figure 3. For example, figure 3 clearly illustrates that the success of a corporate brand is reliant on the alignment of a corporate identity and corporate image (Temporal, 2002). However, figure 4 highlights that the turbulent external environments in both HE, and teacher education in particular, have led to a number of misalignments between the University's corporate brand and that of its internal and external stakeholders.

While figure 3 highlights the importance of total corporate communications (Balmer and Greyser, 2003), figure 4 demonstrates that communications are top-down and the marketing team does not necessarily understand the Faculty's needs and priorities. This has resulted in unmet needs for some target markets. The broken lines in figure 4 highlight the gaps that have emerged between the University's corporate brand and its related components. Gaps 1, 2, 3 and 4, which shape the University's internal identity, have led to gaps 5 and 6 and a misunderstanding of the University's external image and its reputation.

What has emerged as a result of these misalignments is more focus on sub-brands, which are reinforcing the identity, image and reputation of the corporate brand. The red dotted lines highlight the surrounding province of emerging sub-brands, ie the programmes, and within this the particular antecedents (A – G) that have preceded this evolving concept. The purple lines emphasise the values that have permeated the staff, to other areas within this paradigm. The green lines represent co-creation of the brand as a result of input from partners to the Vision for a teacher, the resulting values, and the programmes. Co-creation is therefore more clearly linked to a number of different elements within a Faculty in figure 4 than that highlighted in figure 3 which focuses more on corporate image (Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana, 2007; Rindell and Strandvik, 2010). The brand ambassadors are contributing to the employability levels as well as to the reputation of the Faculty. It is therefore the Faculties, or specialist areas, that contribute to the competitive advantage of the University.

Figure 4   Revised conceptual framework of corporate branding in a university
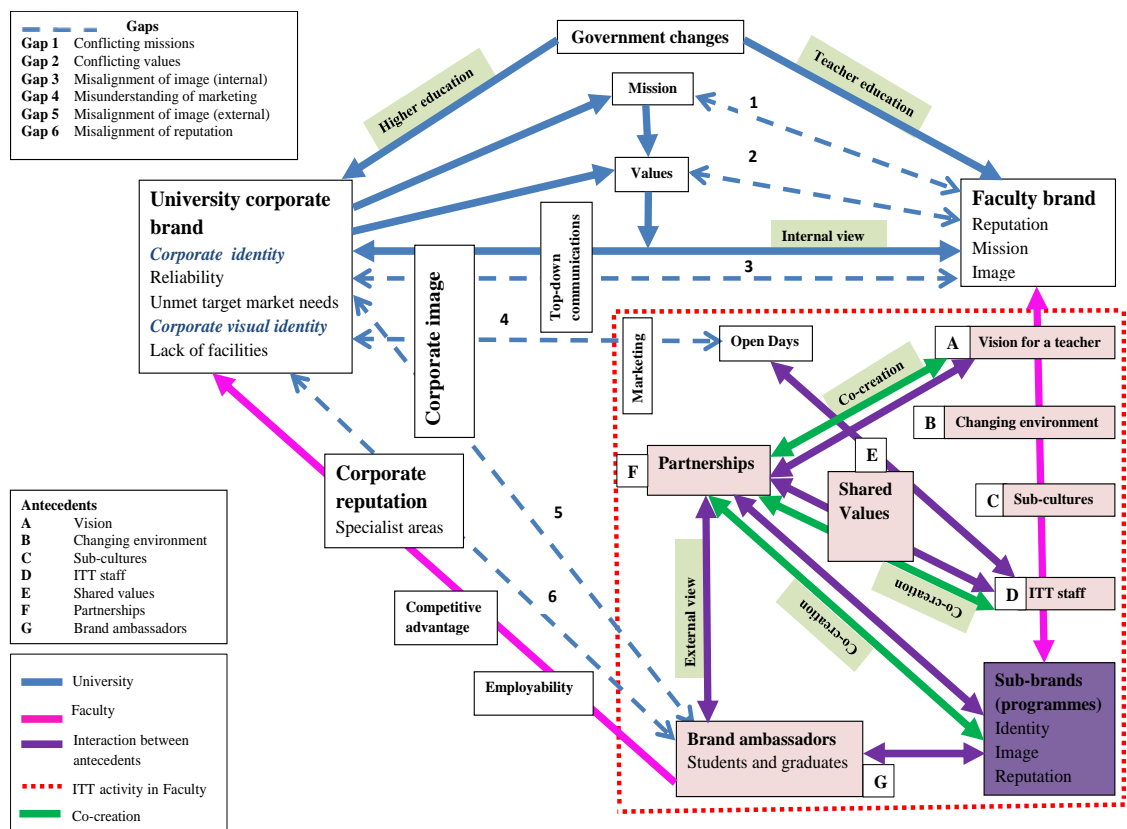
CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION

7.1   INTRODUCTION

At the start of this study a literature review was conducted which evaluated different key components of corporate branding, together with issues associated with its management and implementation, but there was very little empirical research within the context of the HE sector. The research conducted in this study took place at a University in the Midlands and more specifically in a Faculty of Education, particularly in relation to its teacher training provision. Due to the unique environment in which teacher education operates, programmes are emerging with their own unique identity, referred to as sub-brands (Chapleo, 2007), which appear to have their own related image and evolving reputation.   While the context is an important consideration, this study has identified seven key antecedents that have contributed to this situation, these are: the changing environment, subcultures, vision for a teacher, ITT staff, shared values, partnerships and brand ambassadors. These points are discussed further in section 7.2 together with theoretical contributions that this research makes to the existing literature on corporate branding and in education more generally in section 7.3. This is followed by implications for managers (section 7.4), limitations of the study (section 7.5) and areas for further research (section 7.6).

7.2   THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of this study was to explore different interpretations of corporate branding, and its implementation, in the context of a post-92 university in England. Having provided a discussion of the data and results, this section turns to the central research objectives so as to ensure that they have been fully achieved.

Research objective 1

To explore and deconstruct the different components of a corporate brand, and the interconnections involved in its formation in a university

The literature suggests that corporate identity is still associated with graphic design (Balmer and Gray, 2003; Curtis *et al*, 2009) and the research did uncover a clear link to the more visual clues (Dowling, 1993; Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006) of the

University's identity which are clearly important to students hence the comment *'a sense of place'* from a staff member. This aligns corporate identity and corporate visual identity as the University is *'trying to do everything for everybody'* and it is therefore not clear what the University is (Kapferer, 2012). However, this is also due to the University being made up of multiple identities and values (Waeraas and Solbakk, 2009). This is clearly the case in the Faculty of Education but more in terms of the programmes which appear to have developed clear identities of their own.

The gap highlighted in section 6.8.7 clearly demonstrates the relationship between the internal view (identity) and the external view (image) and shows the lack of identity that both staff and students feel with the University (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991). From the employees' point of view this takes into account the way in which the University presents itself symbolically (Christensen and Askegaard, 2001), see section 6.6.1, but it is apparent that without a clear identity the University cannot project a clear image (Kapferer, 2012). Further, this is affecting the University's corporate reputation (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001[a]) and therefore suggests a flow of causality from corporate image to corporate reputation (Gutman and Miaoulis (2003).

The Faculty has secured its reputation, in the eyes of its external stakeholders, through the delivery of a clear corporate identity (Herstein et al, 2007) and hence its image (Kapferer, 2012). It would seem that the network of linkages posited by Gutman and Miaoulis (2003), or the holistic experience (Kotler et al, 2009), are being met by the physical and emotional elements of the Faculty staff as opposed to the University. This is due to the Faculty possessing a different culture, priorities and values to that of the University – the very source of a brand's identity (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2001).

Research Objective 2

To compare perceptions of a corporate brand by relevant employees and students in both the context of a university and that of a university faculty

All participants demonstrated quite a good level of understanding of "branding", and most were actually describing "corporate branding" although they were not aware of this. However, applying the concept to the University and Faculty appeared difficult.

One participant, external to the Faculty, was more positive about the University's identity while most felt that it lacked differentiation (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Kay, 2006; Melewar and Karaosmanoglu , 2006).

Evidence suggests that although Marketing staff are clear about the University's Mission this was not the case for most of the Faculty staff (Chapleo, 2011). Faculty staff thought the Faculty's Mission and Vision were much clearer and harmonious (Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana , 2007), while one of the marketing staff did not understand the Faculty's Vision for a teacher. Similarly, the University's values were understood by Marketing staff, who viewed them as being intrinsic to their roles. This reflects the roles that marketing staff hold in that they are more exposed than Faculty staff to the University's strategic policies. Faculty staff had very specific values (Balmer and Gray, 2003) to which both they and the students related (Gutman and Miaoulis, 2003).

Corporate image was not understood by some members of staff, including those external to the Faculty, and linked it more to the physical signs rather than unique attributes (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) of the University. However, a small number of Faculty staff felt that the image the University projected was not how it was perceived by external stakeholders; this was supported by some of the students and again suggests a connection between image and identity (He and Balmer, 2007). Similarly with image, reputation was a little confusing for some participants, who had trouble separating the concepts for the University and the Faculty, including a senior marketing manager who thought they were *'one and the same thing'*.

The marketing staff felt that certain specialist areas in the University had a reputation but believed that the Faculty had more of a "local" reputation. A few of the Faculty staff felt that the University certainly had a more wide-reaching reputation within which the Faculty's reputation could be built. However, some Faculty staff thought that reputation lay with the Faculty and, more specifically, its ITT programmes (Chapleo, 2007; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). This was supported by a number of the students. This may be to do with the strong loyalty that is obviously held within the Faculty; this is their "speciality" subject, an area with which they can identify.

Research Objective 3

To provide insights for professional practice on how best to fulfil a university's brand promise through the implementation of a corporate brand

It is the values (Temporal, 2002) and the Mission statement (Chapleo, 2011) that were of particular importance in this research as both are pre-requisites for a successful brand. The findings demonstrate that the University's launch of a new logo, strategic plan and values was not a fully-inclusive process (Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana, 2007; Hariff and Rowley, 2011; Keene and Fairman, 2011), nor were they delivered by senior management (de Balmer and Gray, 2003; Chernatony and Cottam, 2006; Hatch and Schultz, 2003). Views concerning the Faculty's Vision statement were very positive and something to which teacher trainers, and their students, could relate. This close association appeared to be due to the fact that they reflected the values of a teacher (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2003; de Chernatony and Cottam, 2006; Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006) and had been co-created with partners (Payne *et al*, 2009; Rindell and Strandvik, 2010).

The University's values were generally viewed as negative, particularly the language used (Chapleo, 2007; Chapleo, 2010; Hariff and Rowley, 2011; Chapleo, 2011), and a number of staff had not seen these documents. Dowling (1993) stresses the importance of displaying a mission statement so as to inform internal and external stakeholders as to the direction a company is taking. The status quo is not helped by the fact that communications in the University do not fit well with the philosophy of a brand which is more consistent and beneficial if staff are engaged in the development of key branding documents (Hariff and Rowley, 2011; Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana, 2007; Keene and Fairman , 2011).

It is difficult to see how a corporate branding strategy might be implemented successfully when teacher education appears to be working to a number of different agendas; that of the University, the Government and to other professional bodies. Currently it appears that the University's "priorities" clash with those of the Faculty and yet it is a Department with the highest level of employability. It would therefore seem imperative that a pre-requisite to the establishment of the University's corporate brand is employee buy-in (Chapleo, 2010) from the Faculty.

Employees need values that they can understand and associate with (Chapleo, 2010; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001), particularly staff attached to a Faculty with a reputation of its own which they see as their own disciplinary community. These are the same staff that are the very source of competitive advantage and uniqueness required not only for a successful brand (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Boxall and Purcell, 2008) but can support the University in delivering what it has promised (Gutman and Miaoulis, 2003).

7.3 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The findings in this study propose a number of theoretical contributions both for the corporate branding and the educational literature. In particular theoretical refinement has added to the concept of corporate branding and its related components.

7.3.1 Contributions to the literature

In documents 3 and 4 the emergence of a sub-brand was revealed (Chapleo, 2007; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). However, this study has contributed to the academic knowledge by extending the idea of a sub-brand to the actual teaching programmes which, as far as the researcher is aware, has not been established in any other research. Furthermore, the programmes appear to have their own identity, values, image and reputation, which has implications for both the corporate branding and educational literature as this could apply to a number of different training establishments and schools. Although generalisation was not the aim of this case study research, the 7 antecedents identified in figure 4 could be applied to a different university setting so as to further understand how corporate branding might work in a similar context. This would be particularly useful for post-92 universities where there is little to differentiate offerings between competitors (Hemley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007), for example, most hold a similar position on the regional league tables. Application of the framework to these institutions may offer insights into how the corporate brand could be enhanced through the better positioning of their programmes. However, for those universities that hold a 'world-class brand' (Temple, 2006: 16) success may lie with the University or individual departments rather than the programmes. For example, Jevons (2006) cites the University of Cambridge where the identity of its colleges is much more distinct than the entire University. Nevertheless,

Figure 4 is still useful to these institutions as it could offer insights into different contexts or specialisms and in turn enhance their individual brand identities.

Related to the sub brands are the creative and innovative graduates which are satisfying the requirements of a number of different stakeholders. The graduates then become 'walking representatives of the brand' (Kotler *et al*, 2009: 452) and are contributing to a Faculty's reputation and hence its position in the marketplace. This appears to be a new topic in the literature and would be of particular interest to researchers in education or other training establishments. Underpinning both of these new contributions is the Faculty of Education's Vision of a teacher, which was developed with wider partnerships and underpins the ITT courses. This resonates with Rindell and Strandvik (2010) and their idea of co-creation of "brand image" but not specifically the vision of an organisation.   There has been some research on the idea of the involvement of staff in developing a vision (Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawardana, 2007) and values (Keene and Fairman, 2011). However, as far as the author knows, there is no evidence of research into co-creation of programmes with partner organisations.

Finally, He and Balmer (2007) claim that corporate identity and corporate visual identity share similar characteristics, particularly in terms of the values and philosophy of the organisation. Evidence suggests in this study that if students perceive the facilities offered by the University as less than that received by other students, this affects their perception of the corporate identity. This therefore suggests a stronger alignment between corporate identity and corporate visual identity. The author is not aware of any studies that have considered this particular aspect of corporate identity particularly in an educational context.

7.4   MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Implications for University policy is that managers require a more thorough understanding both of marketing and of corporate branding. The University is clearly seen as the "umbrella brand" but managers need to focus on what is distinct and unique about the University so that its identity can be understood through its image, by both internal and external stakeholders.   The results of this case study research have important implications for managers, as evidence suggests that staff are already practising corporate branding, but in the context of their own environments and, in the

case of this study, their own programmes.   It is therefore recommended that the University adopts the 'house of brands approach' posited by Hemsley-Brown and Gonnawarda (2007: 946) as this study clearly demonstrates that students identify with the Faculty rather than the University. This is particularly important for a post-92 university operating in a competitive marketplace where differentiation needs to be more than outstanding teaching and widening participation (Temple, 2006).   The partnerships held with external stakeholders and their involvement in co-creation of the brand is unique. This may provide the very source of competitive advantage required for a post-92 university seeking to hold a corporate branding with a competitive edge (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012).

For those universities wishing to be the corporate brand for the entire establishment (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007: 944) managers need buy-in to a clearly articulated mission from all staff (Chapleo 2011) for successful brand-building. Implications for professional practice are that there is a disparity between the students' views of the University and that of a Faculty. Attention therefore needs to be paid to the uniqueness of different disciplines, the particular external environments in which they operate and the diversity and demands of both their programmes and students.   It is difficult to overcome the different cultures that emerge as a result of these environments within which departments work. However, to avoid a vision-culture gap (Hatch and Schultz, 2001) there needs to be more integration across Faculties and Departments through the development of values that are collectively congruent with the brand, the University, the employees and external stakeholders (de Chernatony and Cottam, 2006; Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006). In addition, evidence of what the organisation is and how it expects employees to behave need to be displayed at every opportunity in the organisation (Dowling, 1993).

Consequently the University has a duty to ensure that organisational processes become an all-inclusive process, with multiple stakeholders, so as to differentiate the corporate brand and its position in the marketplace (Temporal, 2002; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). This should embrace the development of key strategic documents and the employment of far more participative management styles. The critical role that staff play in defining corporate values (Keene and Fairman, 2011), and the need for them to be involved in the brand development process (Hamsley-Brown and Gonnawardana, 2007), is

paramount.   They are the very source of the University's uniqueness and the means by which competitive advantage can be achieved (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Balmer and Gray, 2003; Boxall and Purcell, 2008; Abratt and Kleyn, 2012).   This all-inclusive process should also engage external stakeholders (Hariff and Rowley, 2011), as outlined in this study, and the Faculty's partnerships that supported the development of the Vision and programmes.   In other words, becoming Rindell and Strandvik's (2010) definition of an open-sourced brand and empowering stakeholders to co-create the brand and its related experience (Payne *et al*; 2009).

7.5   LIMITATIONS

This study clearly provides new insights into corporate branding in the context of higher education institutions but there were some limitations encountered in this study, particularly the representativeness of the findings and their application more generally. For example, this study only considered one university and the very specific context of teacher education (although documents 3 and 4 considered the same but in a different European country). While the problem of generalisability (Butler and Kisber, 2010) is acknowledged, the focus was on depth rather than breadth. As claimed by Yin (2009) the revelatory case study provided the researcher with the opportunity to explore corporate branding in a context that had not previously been researched and a phenomenon was uncovered that is considered to be revelatory in nature (Yin, 2009). The case study did take into consideration interviews, focus groups and documentary evidence which helped to triangulate the findings and provide a 'very detailed in-depth understanding' (Lewis and McNaughton Nicholls, 2014: 67). It is still felt that more research into this area would provide a more holistic representation, particularly if external schools and colleges, ie the partners were included, as they played a key part in the co-creation of the Faculty's Vision for a teacher and the programme sub-brands.

In this research study, it is felt that conducting qualitative research with a larger sample of employees (than in document 3) and students, has contributed to the body of knowledge on corporate branding as the comparison of different viewpoints has provided more meaning and substance to the findings.   However, the number of respondents in the focus groups was disappointing as understandably there was much dependency on the good will of students. This is an area which is reflected on in

document 6. Limitations also existed in the fact that the researcher could have prompted the participants more during the interviews as there were a small number of areas that required more clarity. However, due to the word limit in this study it would have been difficult to accommodate any additional data.

Finally much experience has been gained from this research process and despite the above mentioned limitations the research does highlight a number of important points and particular areas for further research. These are next discussed.

7.6   AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research study focused on different interpretations of corporate branding and its implementation in the context of a university, and more explicitly teacher education. The research has validated many points raised in the literature review but there are points raised that are more specific to education. If this research were to be replicated, the researcher would recommend the application of similar research to other universities, training establishments and schools to further build on this knowledge. In particular, future research could explore external partners' perceptions of the University, such as schools, colleges and even commercial links especially as the idea of co-creation was presented in this study.

This research also revealed possible gaps between the University's corporate image and that of the Faculty. The former was not clear to students, and yet once they joined the Faculty the image (of the Faculty) became clearer. Although this was found to affect the University's reputation (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012) in this study, was the situation specific to teacher education or would the same apply in other specialist faculties / departments? This may also go beyond the context of education to other areas of marketing / branding, for example, politics. This would fill a gap in this research and to the best of the researcher's knowledge this would fill a gap in the body of corporate branding knowledge.

As highlighted in section 6.8.8, characteristics of services marketing emerged when students expressed not only delight at being accepted onto programmes but also delight that *'surpassed my expectations'* when they had actually experienced the programme. There is evidently a link between the quality of a service and the students' values which

is outlined in the literature (Lages and Fernandes, 2005). However, explicit connections between services marketing and corporate branding does not seem to have been explored in any great depth in the research to date, particularly those that relate to the educational sector. Studies in this area would therefore be recommended as this would add to the body of knowledge particularly for the service sector.

7.6.1   Impact of research to date

At the time, and since conducting the research, the researcher has been involved in a number of developments / events:

- Presentation at European Conference on Educational Research (ECER): Emerging Researchers Conference, 9-10 September 2013.

- Preparation and delivery of a lecture, encompassing corporate branding and its relationship to strategic marketing, for final year undergraduate students.

- Development of a new final year (undergraduate) module for strategic marketing and corporate branding.

- Invitation to the Faculty's Staff Development Day to present overall findings of the study.

- Development of research paper for a 3* journal proposed

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Appendix 1   Interview schedule – Employees (Faculty of Education)

Opening

Introductions, purpose of the research project

Confidentiality and anonymity (forms)

OK to record interview?

Biographical information [relationship building]

How long have you been at the [University] and what is your role?

What attracted you to work for the [University]?

What is a brand?

What makes a particular brand a success?

Middle

Do you feel the Faculty of Education has a corporate brand if so, how would you describe it?

Is this different/same as the [University's] corporate brand?

What are your views on the reputation of [University]/Education?

How do you think the students view the reputation of [University]/Education?

> [What do you think most influences students to select [University]/Education?]

What are your views on the image of [University]/Education

If the [University]/Education was a car what model would you say it was?

> [Give examples here of brands/cars]

Do you think the [University]/Education has a clear mission/purpose?

> [What is it, what does it do?[

> [What is it offering to the market?[

Do you think [University]/Education is unique, in what way[compared to competition]

> [If say no ask why]

How does the [University] communicate internally with staff? How effective is it?

> [How do you find things out: email, newsletters, management talks etc]

Do you know what the values of [University]/Education are?

What are your values – do they resonate in any way with those of [University]/Education?

How do you deliver these corporate brand values when, for example, you interact with students/clients/colleagues/organisations?

> [What might prevent you from delivering the brand promise/enacting the brand values?]

> [How do you feel about other colleagues? Do you tend to agree on most points? Relationship with other members? Are there any internal problems?]

> [Do you think employees project consistent behaviour in the way they interact with students?]

Closure

Is there anything else you want to add that we have not already talked about and you think is relevant?

Thank you

Appendix 2 Interview schedule – Marketing staff (University)

Opening

Introductions, purpose of the research project

Confidentiality and anonymity (forms)

OK to record interview?

Biographical information [relationship building]

How long have you been at the [University] and what is your role?

What attracted you to work for the [University]?

What is a brand?

What makes a particular brand a success?

Middle

How would you describe the [University's] corporate brand?

Do feel that some Faculties/Schools have corporate brands of their own, why?

What are your views on the reputation of the [University] - other Faculties/Schools?

How do you think the [University] is perceived by staff?

[Is this different/same from how you would like the [University] to be perceived?]

How do you think the students view the reputation of the [University]?

What do you think of the [University's] image/other Faculties/Schools?

[What do you think most influences students to select the [University]?]

If the [University] were a car what model would you say it was – other Faculties/Schools?

[Give examples of brands/cars]

Do you think the [University] has a clear mission/purpose?

[What is it, what does it do?]

[What is it offering to the market?]

Do you think the [University] is unique, in what way (compared to competition)?

[If say no ask why]

Do you know what the [University's] values are?

How do you deliver [LIVE] *the [University's] values when you perform your daily job and interact with colleagues/clients/other organisations?*

To what extent are the [University's] values communicated to staff?

[What communication/training tools are used? How effective are they?[

[What role does MARKETING have in this process?]

[Are there potential challenges to communicating a clear, shared understanding of these values to staff?]

Closure

Is there anything else you want to add that we have not already talked about and you think is relevant?

Thank you

Appendix 3   Interview Schedule - Focus groups (Faculty of Education students)

Opening

Introductions, purpose of the research project

Confidentiality and anonymity (forms)

OK to record interview

Biographical information [relationship building]

What made you go into teacher education?

Recently appointed as VC at the [University] what 3 things would you do?

Do you have any significant issues on your course in terms of the new changes being introduced by the Government?

What is a brand and what makes a successful brand?

Middle

Do you feel the Faculty of Education has a corporate brand if so, how would you describe it?

Is this different/same as the [University's] corporate brand?

What are your views on the reputation of the [University]/Education?

What are your views on the image of the [Univjersity]/Education?

What was it that influenced you in selecting the [University]?

> [Location, facilities, WoM, course, etc?]

If the [University]/Education was a car what model would you say it was?

> [Give examples here of brands/cars]

What does the [University]/Education stand for?

> [Strengths and weaknesses?]

> [Differences with other universities?]

When I think of the [University]/Education I think of....?

How did you feel when you got a place at the [University]?

> [As a person, career, friends, influence, power etc?]

What first attracted you to study at the [University]?

Has the [University]/Education lived up to your expectations?

[How do you feel NOW about studying at the [University]?]

Closure

Is there anything else you want to add that we have not already talked about and you think is relevant?

Thank you

Appendix 4:   Consent form

A study of corporate branding in Higher Education Institutions in the 21st Century

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

> This form will provide you with information about the research. One copy of the form will be kept by you and the other by the student. Please read through all the details carefully.

I am a student in the School of Education, Nottingham Trent University studying for the Doctorate of Education. As part of my studies I am required to conduct primary research. The purpose of this research is to examine *how corporate branding is understood and implemented within a Higher Education setting*. For this research, you are being asked to take part in an interview lasting approximately one and a half hours. You will be asked a series of questions about your own experiences and these will be recorded. During the interview, please let me know if you would rather *not* answer some of the questions put to you.

You have the right to withdraw without giving a reason to do so. If you wish to withdraw you should contact me and ask for your data to be withdrawn from the study by *1 July 2013*. Due to the nature of the research, extracts from the interview may be used in my work. If you would rather remain anonymous in this work, all names, places and organisations will be changed. A maximum of three people will read this work (one from Nottingham Business School, one from the School of Education and possibly an external examiner). All recordings will be destroyed after submitting my research to NBS and all information collected about individuals will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations).

Upon completion of the interview you are free to ask any questions you may have about the interview or the research in general. My contact details are provided at the bottom of this document in case you wish to follow-up any of the issues raised during the interview at a later date. Participation is voluntary and greatly appreciated.

Please read and confirm your consent to being interviewed for this project by initialling the appropriate box(s) and signing and dating this form

1.   I confirm that the purpose of the project has been explained to me and that
I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research   ☐

2.   I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I am free to
withdraw my participation and the data I have provided at any time without giving
any reason and without any implications for my legal rights   ☐

3   I give permission for the interview to be digitally recorded on the
understanding that the recording will be destroyed at the end of the project

                                                                                   ☐

4   I give permission for my organisation to be named in the study   ☐
         (This only applies to interviewees in a position of authority)

5.   I agree to being named in the study   ☐

6.   I agree to take part in this project   ☐

_____   _____   _____

Name of respondent   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Name of student taking consent   Date   Signature

Contact details: Louise Spry, email: louise.spry1@ntu.ac.uk

Appendix 5:   Transcript extract

(handwritten margin notes: COMMS CENTRAL; COMMS COLLEAGUES FACE TO FACE; COMMS TOP DOWN; COMMS; √ VALUES; VALUES)

Interviewee: We get a lot of communication centrally, so through e news and email, there's also lots of things on the website and the central website, on the education intranet, there's lots of internal communication that tells you lots of stuff, there's so much of it that some of that gets lost. I luckily have a good memory, I do read everything, I'm very diligent, I know lots of people who don't, but I read everything. But I actually think the most powerful communication is the communication you have with your colleagues either electronically or face to face. We do slightly over rely on face o face communication in the school of education, something that I feel that needs to be developed. The hierarchy and structure is clear, and things do come through that quite clearly. I'm not entirely convinced that we close the loop on that communication, communication can be from one place outwards, so it never goes out to one place (laughs) so we collect student evaluation data, but we don't real do that for staff very much. When we do it tends to be an opt in type survey. It's the nature of research I suppose in some respect, they are to answer definite questions, so we need to know about work place parking, we get people's ideas on that, or we need to know how people access IT resources, so we get things on that, and it tends to be more functional. And actually when the feed back goes the other way and communication goes from many different places back to the central source, or whatever it is, that doesn't tend to be bout the real nuts and bolts about teaching and learning, not the good stuff, the meaty stuff it tends to be more practical. For a particular purpose. We don't do a lot of collecting information and see what happens. We tend to do it with an agenda. With a direct purpose to solve a particular problem. And actually sometimes, you miss things in between.

Spry: As with the car parking.

Interviewee: WELL, YEAH. But there may be that if you collected general information about staffs working lives, you might find out actually there might be something in carparking could be improved. But if you only ever ask about car parking, you only ever get those answers, form those people who are interested and actually the relationship between time tabling and car parking might be an interesting one. When in term time it's really busy, I probably waste 20nminutes a day, finding somewhere to park and making my way here, when I could be working. So I think it has a knock on effect of thing, but I think that kind of joined up thinking, when you communicate on individual issues, you don't get that kind of joined up thinking do you?

Spry: No. That's a good point actually. Do you know the values of

Interviewee: No I'm not entirely sure, in terms of the nature of values, whether an institution can have values. A community of people can have values. Can an institution have values? Let me have a look

Spry: It's just those 2.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. No I haven't seen these. I don't know, values is something that people value, and people hold dear and people work from. I think values are people related. And not, I'm sorry the question wasn't...

Spry: Theyre open ended questions.

Interviewee: Yeah I know, I think people have values. And you can tell people their values. You can influence but you can't dictate value. Because values come through everything you do everyday, they embody through everything. You can have values on which your work is based, or values that we hope inform our work. But that's kind of different to the values we hold.

Spry: Yes, and is that your kind of initial reaction to those? Just out of interest.

INTERVIEWEE: That's my initial reaction to the word values. (Sniggers) When you look at something like this, you don't feel it's about people and learning. 'Be available to try and understand each person as an individual'. I don't want to 'try' and understand each person as an individual (laughs). That's beginning to, what a teacher r might write on a child's school report, it means that they're not. (laughs) I think they, are not, they don't seem to be very people related. 'Know who your customer is', that's the idea of people being consumers of education. Like people are deemed to be consumers of health and things like that. Who wants to identify themselves as a consumer? I don't think your students would identify themselves as customers. I don't think our strategic partners consider themselves customers. I think it's about partnerships and links, and it's not, yeah. And, I mean, in terms of values the university itself can't be 'open and honest', and the idea that people wouldn't be open and honest? There's something about expectations isn't there? I suppose it's about how you would use something like this I don't know whether other people in the university feel this or not, but I don't think I encounter these very often, so I don't know how supportive they are of what I do, doesn't mean I don't do them (laughs).

Spry: Do you think educations got values? If not written, is there something in the education that you feel...

INTERVIEWEE: VALUES
Yeah I think that isn't too different to educationalists generally. You know usually, people who are involved in education or have a passion for education, have some agreed kind of values. I don't think they are ever articulated in that way, and certainly as soon as you start to impose values on somebody you sort of have some kick back from it. I think it's something that there. Because in any discipline when you bring on the next generation of educators, which happens actually in all areas of education, and many area of health where you training the next generation of nurses with the nurses you have, and so I think values are passed on but not in a top down aggressive way. I think they are passed down in a more cultural kind of relationship. I think we do have values in education, and I also think we have different values and I don't think that's a bad thing, I think diversity in peoples values is a strength. So I don't think that we don't hold these, we all hold values in different ways, they are connected I n different ways and they have different emphasis and differences in strength and weakness between them, but I think that's good. That's not a weakness, that's a strength I think.

Spry: So when you say education, more generally, tends to have some of the lead values...

INTERVIEWEE: I think education list have values, educators have values.

Spry: And what sort of things is that around?

INTERVIEWEE: I think it's to do with respecting individuals and individuality. Being supportive but I suppose, being enabling. A lot of the time the values of educators are about, you eventually want whoever you are educating go of I the future and do it on their own. And then educate more people. You are always trying to spread outwards I think.

Spry: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: But it's never time limited to just your time with them. So I think your values are all about, I'm trying to make a difference, do something, going forwards whatever that might be.

Spry: I feel as though you're talking little bit about yourself now

INTERVIEWEE: I'm trying to think about myself in the context of all the people that I know who work in

education. I don't think that the ███████ education is distinctly different because I feel we are a group of educators first and foremost, and maybe ███████ education is slightly different to other ███████ in the university because everybody here has done something else in education before they get here, so they have all had some other relationship with education. So they come from primary, secondary, FE, they come from all different aspects of education, but they all come together and they all have different experiences, so they often embody the values that they had as educators generally. So it's very hard to say that the ███████ education has a very different set of values to educators generally, because I don't think they do, I think they are kind of formed by that coming to gather of people. There is strength by the coming together of a large group of people, from different aspect of education, with many shared values.

Spry: Just to clarify then, on some questions you have split them into 3 different levels, but I get the impression that you're that within the ███████ education there are nay shard vales?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes think so. But I think they come from (giggles) a different set of people, which I kind of the educators generally.

Spry: So when you are interacting with students and colleagues, do you tend to follow these kinds of values that are inside of you?

INTERVIEWEE: Personally, Yes. I'm very philosophically driven, that's what people keep telling me, and I also think this something that I believe. I never park0 my values, I don't think that any of us do, sometimes I always, there's a little give and take, there has to be compromises along the way, however there are some things that you will not compromise on because you r values are a certain way and you have a certain philosophy, and actually that's the very thing that drives us, and you should never ignore that because sometimes that's why you're here to start with. Most educators I meet are very similar in that respect. Sometimes there are other pressures, particularly in education there can be many other pressures, that can squash some of your values if you are not careful, but I'm not willing to let them be squashed. And actually if I felt they were becoming squashed, I would leave ███████ and it would be because felt that I couldn't holds onto my values and philosophy. Not car parking not money or anything else.

Spry: If you were interacting with students for example, what is it that might prevent you from delivering those values? You said that something would stop you and make you leave? What is that that would stop you?

INTERVIEWEE: If there were decisions which meant I couldn't then act upon those values, say if, this is hypothetical, if I was asked to put my students into ability related groups, so there is my top set seminar group, there's my middle seminar group and my bottom seminar group, I couldn't do that. And I would leave because I just couldn't cope with that. If we took all the practical elements to the ways that we teach. I try and teach, as much as I can in a practical, way, because I think that's how children learn and I think that's how adults learn. And I don't think the 2 are massively different in that respect although they are very distinctive in nature. At the moment we have lots of puppets, and light boxes and it resources and wet rooms and all sorts of, if, I was told, 'no you have to deliver those lessons in rooms and with powerpoint' I couldn't come to work every day because I don't think this how people learn.
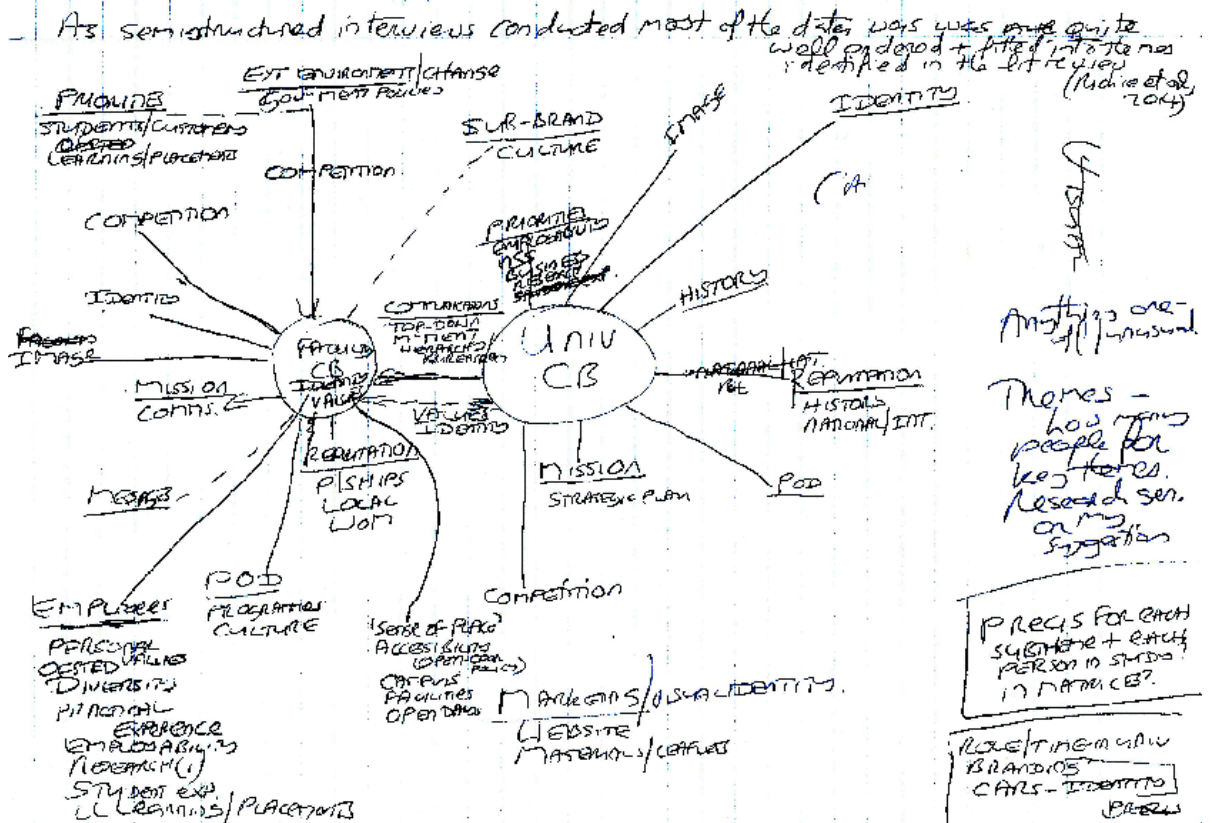
Spry: No.

INTERVIEWEE: And trying to do something like that, it just doesn't work for me. There are certain things, when you've got a little bit of room, but when you get to a point where you think that's just not right, if we

Appendix 6: Spidergram

Appendix 7: Initial coding

Category	Related Units	Actual code
Corporate identity (CI)	University	CI:uni
	Employability	CI:uni-empl
	Faculty	CI:fac
	Employability	CI:fac-empl
	Change	CI:fac-chng
	Staff	CI:fac-staf
	Sub-brands	CI:fac-sub
Corporate visual identity (CVI)	University:	
	Materials	CVI:uni-matl
	Facilities	CVI:uni-facil
	Faculty	VI:fac
	Materials	VI:fac-matl
Corporate reputation (CR)	University	CR:uni
	Post-92	CR:uni-92
	Faculties	CR:uni-facs
	Middle-of-the-road	CR:uni-motr
	Faculty	CR:fac
	History	CR:fac-hist
	Students	CR:fac-stud
	Partnerships	CR:fac-part
	Graduates	CR:fac-grad
	Programmes	CR:fac-prog
	Word-of-mouth	CR:fac-wom
Corporate image	University:	
	Internal	CI:uni-int
	External	CI:uni-ext
	Faculty (external)	CI:fact-ext
Mission (MI)	University	MI: uni
	Faculty	MI: fac
Management (MAN)	University	MAN: uni
	University	COM:uni
Communications (COM)	Faculty	COM:fac
Values (VL)	University	VL:uni
	Faculty	VL:fac

Adapted from Miles and Huberman, 1994