ALIGNING FACTORS THAT IMPACT DIRECT AND ONLINE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION TO EXTERNAL PREMIUM STAKEHOLDERS, TO INFLUENCE BRANDS’ VALUE AND REPUTATION DURING CHANGE

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THESIS SUBMITTED BY: LISA ANN WILLIAMSON
In partial fulfillment of requirements of the University of Bolton for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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ii. DECLARATION
This is a formal declaration that this work is mine and copyrighted, as completed only via The University of Bolton for the PhD award. I collected data by ethical standards, and did not claim other people’s work as my own. The interpretations and conclusions are a result of extensive independent review as well as guided consultations with supervisors, seminars with university staff or, general critics.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABA</td>
<td>Amateur Boxing Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>American Psychological Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AST</td>
<td>Auto-Poetic Systems Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAV</td>
<td>Brand Asset Valuator</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPS</td>
<td>British Psychological Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTEC</td>
<td>Business and Technology Education Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAGE</td>
<td>Cultural, administrative, geographic and economic (aggregates)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBBE</td>
<td>Consumer Based Brand Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIPD</td>
<td>Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMI</td>
<td>Caribbean Maritime Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNBC</td>
<td>Consumer News and Business Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNC3</td>
<td>Cable News Channel 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Communication Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVM TV</td>
<td>Community Television Systems, Videomax and Mediamix TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Direct Communication (Face-to-face or secondarily by phone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
<td>English for Speakers of Other Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTF(C)</td>
<td>Face-to-face (communication or networking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GST</td>
<td>General Systems Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>GT</td>
<td>Grounded Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>GITR</td>
<td>Global Information Technology Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>HARP</td>
<td>Heightening Awareness of Research Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMC</td>
<td>Integrated Marketing Communication</td>
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</tbody>
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IMR Internet Mediated Research
ISCO International Standard Classification of Occupations
JLP Jamaica Labour Party
NCU Northern Caribbean University
ND Negative Differentiation
NDA Non-disclosure agreement
Ofsted Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills
OST Open Systems Theory
PCT Personal Construct Theory
PEST(EL) Political, Economic, Social, Technological; Environmental, Legal
PG Postgraduate
PMFCM Postmodern Flexible Communication Model
PNP People’s National Party
PR Public Relations
QL Qualitative
QN Quantitative
REF Research Excellence Framework
SME (Micro), Small and Medium Sized Enterprise
SRO Saunders’ Research Onion
TMC Technologically Mediated Communication
UCC University College of the Caribbean
UG Undergraduate
UK United Kingdom
UNC United Nation Congress
USA United States of America
USC University of the Southern Caribbean
USP Unique Selling Point
UTECH University of Technology
VSA Viable Systems Approach
VSM Viable Systems Model
WABA Within and Between Analysis
WOM Word of Mouth
iv. MAIN ABSTRACT

Difficulties exist for brands undergoing change when they may also be transitioning between technologically mediated communication and networking (Caughlin and Sharabi, 2013). Corporate communication trends towards a digital diet, (Brabazon, 2013) which for many Fortune 500 companies Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) suggest, primarily suits information dissemination. Others (Saffer, Sommerfeldt and Taylor, 2013) indicate digitisation is tenable in dialogue with premium stakeholders. However, as implied by the latter writers, the proposition is not limited to traditionally low accessibility of corporate leaders in larger or transnational organizations; it may be appropriated in regional or smaller to medium-sized entities (SMEs).

Initially applying Grounded Theory and philosophical constructs of Constructivism, this thesis proposes tenets of a postmodern communication strategy for service and manufacturing brands. This is in an eclectic theoretical framework that maintains the content and mode of corporate accessibility and by extension, the accuracy and trustworthiness of corporate brand messages. This is achievable by a greater definition of the balance between online and network communication, establishing value and reputation while brands experience change. Challenges involve sustaining brand resonance, therefore narratives akin to change management theory, outline parameters for and of change. The narrative includes Schema Theory and Communication Theory (CT), which give boundaries for discussing resonance.
Select UK, USA and CARICOM brands are examined while acknowledging cultural or phenomenological control of epistemology and communication. Evaluation of relevant theories climaxes with incorporation of Systems Theory using leadership principles, supporting scientifically sound communication strategy. Successive stages of data collection involving ethnographic preliminary primary and secondary data, followed by forty premium stakeholders in a quantitative questionnaire, set a foundation for qualitative interrogation with decision-makers. Six case studies using dyadic associations, appropriated webometrics and meaning-making reflected by Personal Construct Theory, are contextualised by Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour Theory. With interpretivist foci, upon thematic, statistical, and content analyses together underscored by a discursive approach to findings, a theoretically and empirically justified postmodern corporate communication prototype emerges, providing sound principles for future triadic research.

Word count: 330
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
1.0 CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION: ABSTRACT

The process of communication is a fundamental component of societal systems. It is important not only for social relationships amongst human beings, but also wherever actionable information across business transactions between these individuals, and favourable reputations of businesses involved, are necessary. It will be a particularly valuable and positive occurrence when for-profit organizations can effectively communicate details of their offerings in a way that resonates well enough, to increase engagement with potential premium stakeholders, and lead to actual business transactions. Cornelissen (2017) defines corporate communication as: “a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent”. p.5. Using this broad definition, corporate communication will be substantially more important where brand reputation is concerned, as it potentially sustains engagement even during periods a brand is experiencing change. How well decision makers formulate communication strategy to relay to stakeholders the most valuable dependable information, is highly important.

While this will be crucial at such specific times in the history of the brand, communication systems within which the organization is culturally situated may also change over time. The relevance, applicability, effectiveness and pivotal components of these changing systems are introduced below. Subsequently, an exploration of issues arising from this initial account of change in communication, directly related to the topic of this thesis, will follow.
1.1 Background of the Research

At the turn of the century, how the human population proceeded to perceive communication, changed significantly from earlier generations. Essentially, there was a new communication narrative replacing what had been faithful to the meaning and the evidence-based theoretical paradigm of communication: a two way process wherein the message intended by the sender was fully interpreted, and possibly actioned by the receiver (van Dijk, 1998, 2014). Historically, the fastest communication methods had been previously confined to direct contextualised organic communication (DC) for example face-to-face or by telephone. However, this now seems to be superseded by the mere proliferation of online modes (O’Cass and Heirati, 2015) or technologically mediated communication (TMC) and, repudiation of the aforementioned theoretical paradigm. More specifically, with the advent of mobile and air flight technology in the twentieth century, communication incorporated the real time or active participation of those involved in the communication interaction. Organizational ethos, as would be outlined at the corporate level in communicating the organizations’ vision, mission, and modus operandi in conversations with premium stakeholders, was directly relayed. On the other hand, in the twenty-first century there was a rapid and drastic change with cultural shifts in technology use, to burgeoning textual online communication modes involving mostly only token human elements. A result, postmodern scholars Caughlin and Sharabi (2013) explain, is a negative impact on degrees of trustworthiness assigned to an organization.
In general, globally and historically established entities such as Coca-Cola and McDonald’s will have little difficulty building trust with stakeholders due to the brands’ recognisability. However, many entities do not currently fall in this transnational category; in contrast, they also may not have such expansion plans for example, as for SMEs and even some larger organizations. So seamless transitions between TMC and DC can prove challenging, difficult and protracted, as intimated by Caughlin and Sharabi (2013). This may be exacerbated if the organization or a part of it that reflects its overall purpose and goals at that time in its life cycle is experiencing a significant change. Inevitably, brands’ claims of authenticity are tried and tested by stakeholders.

1.2 An Exploration of Key Terms

Brands of all ages must respond appropriately to internal and external changes, creating paths to success via the value and reputation they portray to their premium stakeholders. When an organization is undergoing changes that are likely to influence its credibility, and widening scope of offerings, potential stakeholders assign a degree of worth to the brand (Young and Rubicam, 2003). This is regardless of how recognisable the brand may be at that stage. The writers intimated that it is here that decision-making processes about entering into transactions begin. Factoring available information and the extent to which communication is engaging, would result in a business decision in favour of the brand. The outcome is the brand’s growing reputation: the brand becomes better known for the level of quality it projects. Campbell (2002) highlights that brand reputation is the best mediator of impact of other factors such as brand advertising, brand familiarity, and brand uniqueness as well as
brand attitudes on brand equity outcomes. Therefore, reputation is a factor that acts as a suitable bridge between communication strategies that reify brand value. Further, it is an indicator of brand equity and into what content the actual or potential premium stakeholders would invest.

Yet brands occasionally undergo change, so brand recognisability via brand resonance must be sustainable. Stakeholders potentially align with products or services, looking futuristically as to whether they will assign value to what the identity of the brand represents. This perceived value is determined by the brand message, which combines trust, credible communication regarding desirable qualities, and evidence that distinguish the brand or separate it from competitors. At this point, organizations will potentially thrive, to surpass baseline expectations of revenue, or survive by breaking even or float with some profit. Alternatively, it fails and is no longer able to support its existence. Therefore how well brands communicate core brand messaging is critical; questions of whether there is a flux between what enables survival at minimum and what the public perceives is credible and trustworthy, are relevant. This may be distinguished by integrated communication, which as described by Chu, Hsu, and Li (2010) operates cross-functionally. Equally crucial, is how previous writers Duncan and Everett (1993) proposed IMC to be a sum of theory, strategy and tactics: “all coordinated messages and media that influence brand value”. So this is not instantaneous, but takes time to extend its impact, albeit in the context of periods of change as well. As intimated by Pels, Moller and Saren (2009), stakeholders’ corresponding initial then further in-depth trusted understanding of the brand comes via communication channels embodied by
alignment of the channels. So knowing further details about how communication is defined, and what influences its channels is significant. Discourse analyst van Dijk (1998, 2014) writes about the meaning of communication being embodied by whether the message intended, is correctly interpreted by and for whom that message was intended. Accordingly as the focus of this thesis, corporate level communication is approached via its almost self-explanatory definition that it requires a complete shared process of understanding information. The process is underscored by theorising about what communication could be, how communication occurs, and what affects it. Over generations, communication has been undergoing changes. These include its content, the mode and the growing variety of influencers on the process of communication; today, there is increasing relevance of such changes in expanding business environments.

1.3 Problem Definition

1.3.1 Summary

Internet intensive modes though widespread and accessible, presented specific challenges for the aforementioned stakeholder testing period of brands undergoing change. The likelihood to discuss associated brand ethos, exchange ideas about offerings, gain reassurances or check understanding, was potentially compromised (Caughlin and Sharabi, 2013; Shin, Pang and Kim, 2015). Reliance on online interfaces misaligned with what more direct communication interaction achieves, plus for example time zone variances between communication participants, mean that even the advent of video-conferencing platforms (Sedgwick and Spiers, 2009) would not necessarily
logistically or culturally give fully desired effects (Shin, Pang and Kim, 2015), especially if sensitive information is to be shared. Further, in the absence of using the platforms, risks may be taken during direct communication, based on assumptions of a brand, rather than a more accurate degree of believability. Beugelsdijk, Van Shaikz and de Groot (2004) imply believability affects the value that a potential stakeholder assigns to a brand and, by extension how reputable and economically viable the brand is.

Due to the polarity between the two identified modes of communication, the inherent problem is manifest as limitations or a concession on the degree of trust and credibility placed in an organization (Caughlin and Sharabi, 2013). Leading communication specialists Young and Rubicam (2003) corroborated by Ayyagari, Beck and Demirgüç-Kunt (2003) and Chahal (2013) imply there would be consequential questions surrounding brand value; and sizeable expendable resources continue to be spent by businesses on their communication strategies. Where errors may have occurred, organizations will be in damage control mode. Either way, wary stakeholders necessarily invest a significant amount of time in determining whether the organization is worth the investment. Together, these influence or impact brand reputation. Feldman, Bahamonde and Bellido (2014) propose eight readily recognisable measures of corporate reputation. These include having a good business relationship, demonstrative of a customer-centred orientation, ethics, leadership and innovation, commendable products and services, ability to generate positive feelings in people, social responsibility paired with active practice and a good work setting. Real or likely premium stakeholders - high value clients or
suppliers (Porter, 1979) - can, as intimated in Lopez (2011) recommend a brand, based on consistency reflected in these elements of reputation. Further, they remain willing participants in the business. So, it is prudent to refocus communication narratives by a reset of how this is viewed to optimise the impact of brand communication strategies.

1.3. II A Preliminary Narrative of Communication

The disconnection between both communication emphases (DC and TMC) at different points in history, potentially sums up the splintering of modern communication theorising as put forward by US-based Boromisza-Habashi (2013). Knoblauch (2013) reviewing postmodern communicative constructivism and mediatization, analogous to the emphases above, found a similar disparate approach. Corneilssen and Thorpe (2001) had recognised several years earlier, that there was a lack of organization of external communication for companies in the United Kingdom (UK). This attitude to communication narratives seems to be more apparent in Europe (including the UK), but is less evident in the United States (USA) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

It is for example, implied by the lack of categorisation of communication-related academic disciplines within British university league tables (The Guardian, 2015). Further, according to Knoblauch (2013), social sciences in traditional European socio-ethnic structures seem to have abandoned its focus on communication, in comparison to being embraced in the USA and CARICOM. Regardless however, in any of these three contemporary geographical trade regions, with similar rates of ICT introduction (GITR, 2016), it appears as also intimated by Knoblauch (2013) that the existing dichotomy or complexities
involved in current communication strategies can be disconcerting. This involves the inherent process of finding a trusted equilibrium between TMC and DC. For premium stakeholders, with whom resilient liaisons, information or directive discussions may be sought with organizations, this situation is pronounced. Caughlin and Sharabi (2013) explicitly highlight that wherever technologically mediated communication (TMC) has all but effaced human interactions, if there is no smooth transition between TMC and DC, mistrust results. This is more noticeably so, if credibility is to be upheld during change. Expectations of observant stakeholders is that through these changes, a brand’s integrity and credibility is either established, or maintained as relevant to the stage of development of the organization to which the brand is assigned.

Ultimately, premium stakeholders seek truth for an organization’s corporate communication to be fully effective. This search includes some reference to the validity of previous DC and TMC experiences: on one hand, Watson (1997) states “management is talk”, implying more DC would be useful. Yet on the other hand, as outlined by Koch and Zerback (2013), disproportionate frequency and intensity plus increased multimodality as in TMC, do not ineludibly equate to effectiveness. Campbell and Keller (2003) had also explored this ten years earlier, albeit in an advertising context. In their review of literature regarding general communication effectiveness of the brand message and repetition, they found that there is no clear answer about the degree of repetition; this is in comparison to greater relevance of factors such as the complexity of the message, if attention was immediate and the ease of processing the message. While former writers Koch and Zerback (2013) clarify
that any sources of the message being communicated must first be credible, the latter focused on the importance of prior brand familiarity. This altogether suggests that a much more conscious process of building awareness and reputation was paramount. Some media industry professionals (CVM TV, 2014) suggest for example, that only after at least fifteen (15) mentions do persons actually become sensitised and cognisant of the brand being promoted. Otherwise, repetitions of a message beyond the frequency and intensity of a certain threshold, has a negative effect. The outcome potentially is a shift from truth to reactance or extreme risk-taking.

In the final analysis the receiver can feel persuasion pressure and reduction of freedom, so may react negatively, or otherwise act unwisely in making poor decisions. This prognosis as supported by McGuire’s 1968 Yale Persuasion Approach, and crucial to assigning brand value, means decision-making is compromised. Furthermore, when the components of Young and Rubicam’s (2003) brand asset valuator - knowledge, esteem, differentiation and relevance - are applied and synthesised, an organization appears to need more than basic TMC to achieve stakeholders’ optimal desired valuation. These two considerations bring into sharp focus, the contested topic of this thesis: how effective well-aligned communication enables the ways by which organizations disseminate value-driven information about a brand going through change. For example, the online landing webpage building process (Figure 1: Google, 2016) involves quickly sustaining attention and conveying key proven information.

Figure 1: CONVERTS acronym (The Digital Garage, Google 2016: see Appendix 8)
This supports Keller’s (2009) brand resonance framework, which also shows that to maximise revenue and corollaries of brand reputation, processes involved in communication, require details about a brand; and they will affect resonance about that brand. Therefore, a burden of conceptually comprehensive social proof (Google, 2016) to demonstrate that a communication mechanism is actually working is implied.

Since resonance is a conceptual emotive object, the importance of applying relevant sound theories in this investigation, elucidating processes whereby the impact of resonance is felt not only online, but also via human elements, must be highlighted. By extension, leveraging relevant theory to guide how this might be best applied for the purposes of assigning value and reputation to a brand is key. However as stated previously, theorising is fractured; so imbibing the “how to” of theory at stages of praxis (Boromisza-Habashi, 2013) most relevant to decision makers’ communication, remains imperative. Importantly, at the corporate and managerial level as implied and supported by the systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1956; Mele, Pels and Polese, 2010), this incorporates a series of many interwoven integrative theories, as introduced in the main abstract. These will be discussed in the literature review. They include social, leadership and cognitive theories, that together bolster or elicit clear communication; such well-applied theories impact the degree of commitment of premium stakeholders.

At the operational level, the other end of business communication where all stakeholders (not only premium stakeholders) will be involved, it is useful to mention here, that impactful observable outcomes could be reflected in the
marketing mix. It does give insight into what should be considered at the endpoint of communication inside and outside an organization, that is both a wide range of staff and those with whom the organization will do business respectively. Essentially the brand is taken publicly via the 8Ps: price, promotion, people, place, product, process, physical evidence, as well as productivity and quality. But once critiqued, or as Pels, Moller and Saren (2009) implied, traditional application of the mix, trending to relationship building, may not clearly support online processes and networking as a unit. In essence, the aforementioned study showed how relationships between stakeholders were used as building blocks to social environments as settings for transactions to occur. While this may have served a purpose, it did not certainly reflect multiple fluid representations of reality, nor did it account for specific firmly effective communication practices to focus on trustworthiness in business.

Rather this incited relational closeness, which requires a considerable amount of invested time, versus categorical emphasis on quality succinct interactions saturated with key information that assists stakeholders’ decision-making processes. Yet still, Jin et al. (2017) intimate that current trends in expected outcomes of communication, in particular the most popularly used TMC, are toward consumptive emotions, not long-term brand resonance or reputation. Any emphases on closeness paired with temporal gratification are distinctly different from the desired approaches under investigation in this thesis, that is, more refined balanced organic networking in addition to online modes. As Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) indicate, online modes appear not to have received equally detailed and robust attention in recent research literature, but rather as
clearly indicated in discussions thus far, are taken for granted in their unfiltered and unharnessed use. Writers such as O’Cass and Heirati (2015) do not clarify how the multiplicity of current technological advances in online modes align with DC as part of interactions or with information critical to arriving at decisions within said interactions. In this modern era of technological advances, many entities might have been conditioned to believe that TMC is the most effective and credible means of communication. Subsequently the decision-makers may adopt this technological culture indiscriminately in the broad application of organizational theory (Hatch and Zilber, 2012), and what they are convinced will work to achieve organizational goals.

In contrast, it can be testament to the proposal, that corporate communication, which essentially embodies what a business represents in value and reputation of products or services, should be reset to embrace the original meaning of communication. Young and Rubicam (2003) advocate strategies reflecting how to gain the best odds of achieving what communication can do for an entity to thrive. Similarly, as Ross and Vitale (2000) vitally conveyed, alignment of TMC has positive returns with better responsiveness by stakeholders, and decision-making capacity by its corporate leaders. The desired outcome is that the brand messages exchanged between them, have high a impact on brand resonance. Crucially, the status of interaction quality during business cannot be ignored.

**1.4 Research Rationale**

Corporate communication is centred on company values, vision and often its mission. This communication is crucial to the trust that various stakeholders
place in the company brand. According to the Financial Times (2016), corporate communication extends as a management function, or to other departments, which may include finance, operations and marketing. Credibility and how well organizational mission and vision are relayed, not only depict the essence of brands but also create a foundation to all these management functions. So corporate communication is a necessary prelude to the transfer of brand messages across key associations with premium stakeholders as essential components of those functions. The unique business-centred closeness, of which Caughlin and Sharabi (2013) speak, can be traced back to such associations between stakeholders at the corporate level, which ultimately drive trust. Traditionally this closeness was compared with relationship marketing; as previously cited in this thesis, Pels, Moller and Saren (2009) outlined this primarily led to high quantity and sub-standard quality of associations. The resulting drive towards quantity may have been exacerbated by steady introduction or proliferation of TMC as a communication and marketing tool in the past generation, resulting in a less than ideal symbiosis with how business and stakeholders interact.

The important point remains that this does not necessarily translate into sustained value and reputation with premium stakeholders. Reciprocally, it follows that considering value and reputation in the process to gain trust is crucial. Trusted relations according to Caughlin and Sharabi’s (2013) description, can be enhanced with integration of TMC and DC. In particular, progressive organizations experience change at some point during their life cycle; it is crucial that corporate communication creates and disseminates clear
brand messages to relay critical information internal and external to the organization during times of change. So, the scope and impact of corporate communication warrants meticulous attention. Later discussions contribute to refined corporate communication strategies to establish value and reputation.

Whether these strategies leading to reputation are defined only by the presence of and access to detailed information as is trending online, is a crucial question. As noted by Brabazon (2013), ICT for the purposes of information retrieval appeared to be overridden by sensationalism. The writer describes a digital diet, which might be compared with previously mentioned studies by Jin et al. (2017). These revealed gratifications and consumptive emotions theories, plus a temporal orientation framework to all drivers for social media use. This supports the concept that social media can be unfiltered and engaged spontaneously as a necessity in and of itself, rather than planned use as a tool to secure the desired outcome more reliably. Furthermore, O’Cass and Heirati (2015) suggest there is no explanation of a construed need for the multimodality in a technologically advanced world. Indeed, there may be a disparity between information published online versus direct communication, or in contrast, there may ideally be alignment of the two. The title of this thesis concerns a clear and effectively communicated summary of attributes that a brand espouses, and overall value stakeholders assign to the brand. Therefore, in particular, of utmost importance for the benefit of the brand, is that during periods of change, well-structured corporate communication assists the process of managing change. So instead of following TMC in principle, as a standard or as an assumed practice, greater details of what is involved in different forms of
communication for building trusted, tenable, and sound business relations is investigated in this thesis.

1.5 Importance of this Research

1.5.1 The Postmodern Business Communication Landscape

Efforts at business growth and entrepreneurship alongside branding have spiralled upwards (Ayyagari, Beck and Demirg"uc-Kunt, 2003). Established, new and upcoming moguls aim to manage resources, and may expand locally, internationally, or online. In any instance, they hope for a sizeable impact that stamps their quality, on previously known brands as the case may be. So change and the ability to manage change, is vital to the experience of modern businesses. Additionally, anecdotal evidence via researcher observations prior to beginning this thesis indicates that in comparison with the growing numbers of businesses, there are now similarly numerous business competitions, television programmes, expos or seminars. They speak to strong brand efforts for newer and organizations experiencing; efforts include engaging with premium stakeholders via DC in order to forge deals that enable survival then a thriving business. Organizations may not have easily identifiable brands at the time of change. So how they are perceived while undergoing this process can come under immense scrutiny. Often, this is based on how well accurate information about the brand is disseminated (Shin, Pang and Kim, 2015); however, the writers suggest there is room for further study into how this optimally takes place. More specifically, efforts during such growth and changes, tend to advocacy of online methods which can be costly, embodied by viral marketing (Berger, 2014), or saturation of communication material; this
as intimated by Brabazon (2013) may occur haphazardly. It contrasts with actively engaging decision-makers behind a brand, practising financial prudence in communication strategies and, ultimately ensuring a greater semblance of order by which clearly decipherable outcomes of value and reputation are met. With the advent of TMC, it is common knowledge that branding is no longer limited to DC. Yet the proposed contemporary communication narrative of this thesis claims that DC via real time strategies should be integral parts of communication strategy.

1.5. II Area of Concern: Research Gaps, Problem, Rationale and Importance

Although Watson (1997) implies that well-constructed “talk” with others, defines management, its disparate inclusion plus the potential effects of increased multimodality, do not guarantee efficacious communication. O’Cass and Heirati (2015) also do not divulge how a multiplicity of online modes may be united across networking as part of those “talk” relationships, by engaging the technology itself. So in addition to the obfuscation of multiple TMC methods, it may also be asked, whether companies have been using relational closeness as a surrogate for well-defined multi-modal communication strategies for branding. This fuels notions that a disconnection between both communication emphases creates a gap in modern theorising (Boromisza-Habashi, 2013). The outcome potentially renders the Yale persuasion approach (McGuire, 1986) ineffective for premium stakeholders to be involved with a brand, though it is crucial to brand value. Stakeholders seek truth; this often includes reference to validity of previous TMC and DC experiences. Yet, as previously explained, Koch and Zerback (2013) assert that sources of the messages being
communicated need to be believable, and there is a negative effect when the message is excessively pervasive. Ultimately, the receiver may succumb to the associated pressures, or in the worst-case scenario, refuse to engage with the brand.

It cannot be overlooked that an existing dichotomy and complexity in current modern communication can be disconcerting for premium stakeholders (Porter, 1979), as believability is key over the course of change. In fact, in a world where websites are standard regardless of how developed organizations may be, and since 1994 over 200 different social media emerged, wide-scale integration can be challenging, and trust is a tedious process. Rather, a theoretically bound set of guidelines to align the modes, seems most useful, as they would be broadly applicable to whichever form of TMC and complementary desired human interaction. This thesis potentially alters this current reality of mass TMC, by targeting a clearer strategic communication model. It brings into sharp focus how communication enables ideal ways organizations disseminate value-driven information about a brand. The process remains about getting the attention of stakeholders and passing on the most trusted information to them. To maximise on profitability and implications of reputation, this should be in the shortest space of time and have the most impact on brand resonance, while a brand is still part of change. For the area of concern in this thesis, data about influences on and tenets of communication are gained by methods to elicit primary and secondary empirical positivist data and qualitative subjective data, through which a more sound set of guidelines for multidimensional strategy is developed.
Considering the scope of geographical regions investigated in this thesis, Knoblauch’s (2013) exploration of communicative constructivism and mediatization as previously indicated, is very relevant. It showed that communication science is embraced to be especially North American based and it is not as widespread as in European circles. It implies a less than satisfactory approach to communication in this millennium given the pervasive global technological trends. So, this fact is conveniently viewed as a unique point of departure in helping to formulate an aim and objectives for this thesis.

1.6 Research Aim

This thesis aims to determine factors that affect technologically mediated and direct corporate communications for perceived value and reputation of brands while experiencing change; this body of work does not necessarily address a whole brand that is changing.

1.7 Overall Objectives (OBJS)

1. Examine factors relevant to change, required to balance direct real time communication and online communication leading to brand reputation.

2. By way of their development, compare dyadic case studies in service and manufacturing in the UK, USA and CARICOM to investigate effects of TMC and DC on brand resonance

3. Define an empirically reinforced theoretical framework for integrating technologically mediated and direct corporate communication by aligning key factors that result in the brands’ optimally perceived value.
1.8 Fundamental Research Questions

Communication research has been wide even if splintered across the geographical regions used for this study. So for this thesis, the research questions addressed are essential for creating some boundaries to the research. However as Koro-Ljungberg and Hayes (2010) claim, when speaking about ethnographic and qualitative research, the research questions which define those boundaries, are not expected to be technical. Yet at the same time, the questions are not separate from research design. On the other hand, the writers explain, with adequate cultural, theoretical and epistemological contextualization, the questions when addressed, enable the researcher to gain required knowledge as prefaced by objectives. Further, research questions can guide the overall research process as shown in Figure 2 (Maxwell, 2009) below.

This is similar in formulation of the FMA model (Checkland and Howell, 1997): that is concepts/framework (F), methods/methodology (M) and goals/area of concern or application (A) discussed later in this chapter. The main difference however, is the matter of validity: research is not valid and therefore not successful, if the processes involved in the research, do not or cannot achieve what was embedded in the research aim, objectives and supporting questions.
1.8.1 Major Research Questions

(1) If TMC is an easy mode to engage premium stakeholders, what would justify only moderate effort placed on refining its use for this corporate purpose?

The converse it might be said, is that the business world is indeed accessible or “flat” due to the immense capacity of internet technology, and the exponential potential of communicating online cannot be underestimated. This gives rise to three more critical research questions.

(2) What would be in online entries that could initiate or help to create corporate communication strategies?

(3) Does online detail makes a significant difference in the ultimate decision making process?

(4) While acknowledging that both TMC and DC require attention, is TMC less important than non-computer mediated communication?

These four questions are later in the final chapter 7, mapped with the research outcomes to give greater depth and breadth of understanding of the overall aim or goal of this research.
1.8. II Subsidiary Research Questions

Questions in this section provide avenues to understanding further detail to the major research questions, potentially filling gaps in the explored communication narrative.

How relevant is using a variety of methods to communicate, and is convergence of modes more important? Is there an optimally interactive, structurally aligned way in which senders should transmit material?

Other related questions in understanding the capabilities and detailing of communication, are regarding what makes any organization’s corporate communication methods differ from those in another organization, with respect to the success rate of these strategies. Preliminary literature suggests that the size of the organizations may not be the deciding factor in these differences.

So a follow-up subsidiary question is based on whether internet technology and its many variations has traditionally or by default, been engaged by smaller and newer companies that needed to build a cadre of premium stakeholders.

In contrast, have historically established larger organizations in building their stakeholder numbers recognized and implicitly provided information via their branding machinery regarding what can be akin to traditional relationship marketing? As previously advocated and explored in this thesis, the latter has a viral component, not fully necessary for gaining a good reputation, as boasted by larger known organizations. For the same reason however, how do smaller
growing businesses efficiently and effectively get beyond the steps of just gaining customer numbers to being secure with an expanding brand in a wider cross-section of premium stakeholders?

It may be argued that bigger transnational businesses perhaps have existed much longer than social media for example, has been around. So at the micro level with premium stakeholders, there is no dependence on this media. Yet, is there a compendium that encapsulates what larger entities achieved previously when there was less technology with more direct communication and now, what technology can add for branding of less known entities in postmodernity?

1.8.III Summary

Can premium stakeholders on the receiving end of communication be better enabled to engage confidently with an organization, and elicit the desired actionable outcomes of perceived value and reputation? The embedded action is a process that results from accurate and resonant information about the sender, as derived from conveyed material messages. This thesis postulates that if effective communication is expected to elicit action, how brand messages are relayed, cannot be latent but aligned intertextually. Stated alternatively, different modes of texts - in this case, TMC and DC - which are utilised to create meaning in the culture at large, are interdependent or interrelated. Communication becomes cohesively configured in ways to serve an active directive purpose for premium stakeholders involved.
To address the research objectives, with sufficient information to answer the primary and secondary questions, configuration of communication is subject to focused applicable theory. Since theory is a system of ideas sometimes external to the object of investigation - communication - it must be guided by philosophy. Further, as there is a dichotomy of communication modes, this theory-building process, needs an initial philosophical input. Herein, partly by a process of elimination, selected usable elements of relevant theory found during the investigation create the theoretical framework. This is steered by heuristic guidelines derived via robust data gathered via sound methodology. Therefore, a tenacious perusal of philosophy and by extension its relationship to firstly the literature review of communication, theory and brands and secondly the later detailed methodology is outlined next. So this binds together important stages of the thesis that lead to and define a suitable communication strategy.

1.9 Philosophical and Theoretical Development of the PhD

Using Bristow and Saunders’ (2014, in Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2019) ideas in the HARP (Heightening Awareness of Research Philosophy) reflexive tool as below, this is viewed as a rudimentary but useful part of organizing thought processes during the planning of this thesis.
HARP indicates that philosophical approaches as understood by the researcher and relevant to the topic under investigation, must be chosen to frame how beliefs and assumptions (ideas), will determine the research design that elicits outcomes relevant to the research topic. The tool does not explicitly state where these ideas may come from, however, in academia they are most often supported by the literature as shown in sections 1.1 – 1.5, later in Chapter 2, and to some degree by researcher experience. At the same time, this planning process may also be guided by subject specific mandates as intimated by Stanfill’s work (2012), aptly entitled “Finding birds of a feather – multiple membership and diversity without divisiveness in communication research”. Communication research it would appear is still not nearly as straightforward as the writer would hope (Boromisza-Habashi, 2013; O’Cass and Heirati, 2015; Jin et al., 2017). However, Stanfill’s approach which proffers analysing similarities and differences in scholarship along axes of methodology (as shown in the research design) and three major philosophical positions - ontology, axiology and epistemology - are considered here. From preliminary information provided in this chapter, and in the context of the emphasis of this research into communication strategies for organizations undergoing change, this alignment of philosophical approaches is appropriate and necessary.

Methodology is a set of intentional processes designed to elicit certain information. Accordingly, ontology is the search for the truth or about the nature of that knowledge, and seeks to answer queries that relate to the content or “what” of truth. On the other hand, axiology is concerned with how the values espoused by an object of truth are derived, primarily via the ethics and
aesthetics involved in creating the values. Finally, epistemology refers to three things: the theory of knowledge construction, the way knowledge is justified and its innate truth. The definitions are superimposed on Stanfill’s (2012) propositions for communication research; and a desired outcome would be a flexible responsive way of viewing what the writer calls “commonalities and tensions between scholars and approaches”. This might be interpreted to mean the anticipated success of factoring established positions and theories in the literature relevant to communication research, as well as known approaches outside of academia. That is essentially using productive combinations in which relevant parts of research flock together in creating a communication strategy.

As later indicated in further detail in the literature review and methodology chapters, interpreting and aligning data is done in contexts of constructivist philosophy (Jonassen, 1994). It continues to include social constructivist theory as an extension of how the creation of knowledge is dynamic, and requires input of multiple parties to determine tenets of the desired communication strategy. Generally, this current thesis finds critical parameters to communication, via qualitative secondary information by initial review and analysis of theory and how via epistemology, knowledge may be constructed. Then complimentary quantitative data in closer reference to what is empirically sound in the journey of ontology, and as outlined in the methods, is analysed and interpreted. Subsequently results are applied in penultimate and ultimate stages of this thesis, which bring to bear on axiology or values the organizations embraced, and how they aim to perpetuate values through their communication strategies. Some emphasis will be on how change that the organization is undergoing can
be managed so the communication strategy is at the helm of traversing that change, while maintaining organizational values. For intended purposes of the specific geographical range for this thesis (CARICOM, South-East USA and the UK) the latter needed to first reflect and factor two perspectives:

(a) The emic perspective via ethnography and extensive cultural immersion which espouses an eclectic, yet theoretically influenced (Wilson and Chaddha, 2009) insider view.

(b) The etic perspective, which incorporates the researcher’s external view combined with ample secondary data analysis. Further, the etic involves a reflective account of communication strategies that imbibe theory development and newer explanations of issues that previously existed.

1.10 The Contextualization of Theory Application

Specifically, in the context of brand emergence, Boromisza-Habashi’s (2013) suggestions that the future of post-modern communication research lies at intersections of theory is paramount. Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) suggested further research into how people respond to the effectiveness of feedback factors in technological communication. Factoring the way communication evolved over the last century was impacted by culture, it follows that how theory is applied to feedback factors can translate into how culture affects TMC engagement. If for example communication was assessed via semiotics as proposed by early writers Saussure and Peirce (1907-1911), it is probable that what technology represents surrounds the use of technology for communication (TMC) as a culturally symbolic artefact of currency. Yet further, it is deemed necessary for its speed and scope that has become the norm in modern times.
On the other hand, it could be that mostly DC or real time networking as a source of the required and most trusted information via direct access to decision makers is crucial. It might also be viewed by some as a preferred artefact, with regards to being the more traditional method of information gathering. However, this thesis proposes the third possibility: a theory-bound efficient balance between TMC and DC. From the literature, the latter scenario is considered as the most relevant and credible, thus is due further detailed investigation.

Particularly useful studies such as Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) recommend in-depth interviews with corporate communication staff in case study organizations. This is to determine or establish if feature differences in online communication platforms are influenced by active decision-making. It is opposed to reliance solely on a TMC interface, which implicitly conveys that TMC could be a distraction or hindrance in some cases rather than necessarily an advantage. So furthermore, this line of investigation and questioning opens discussions around concepts of noise (or distractions), negative differentiation (what is selectively excluded), and what forms they may take when they occur.

Although the process of creating theoretical propositions that align TMC and DC is extensive, the relevant and governing theory serves another critical purpose to align variables that influence configuration of the two. So theory can also provide a backdrop to empirically based discussions while investigating those variables. Further, the advanced application of theory can also filter dependent and independent variables, highlighting why considering them will be helpful. From discussions above, it is probable that key theory appropriately
contextualised and merged, will begin to unearth previously unexplored information. This will involve what appears to be buried in the literature. It is inclusive of both archived online communication data, and traditional secondary academic data, or appropriate sources such as corpora. This thesis suggests that ideally, they should be activated, or used in new ways at different times.

Case studies, as proposed by Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) as later discussed, provide a fertile ground for investigating this; and Yin (2014) explains that theory is very important in designing case studies. Theory can afford a realist stance, and it creates a reality separate from the observer’s existing one. In this thesis, a synopsis of the proliferation of TMC plus implicit and explicit juxtaposed substantiated assumptions, suggests this platform by itself is the primarily seemingly exclusive method to effective communication, which creates the currently existing reality. It is in this context especially since the turn of the millennium, that sufficiently relevant factors traditionally were not considered in more completely effective communication strategies. The thesis is specifically about using communication well, in such configured ways that will relay a brand message, which persuades premium stakeholders to accept the message. In addition or otherwise, this configuration will soon thereafter, elicit stakeholders’ actions that should lead to engagement and an equitable relationship with the brand. This would be as sustained value is assigned to the brand, and a good brand reputation is further maintained. This configuration is guided by the application of theory and how theory can connect variables identified in the literature review, and during earlier stages of data collection. Broad viable systems concepts involving communication configuration between
sub-systems (internal) and supra-systems (external) to organizations, lead to heuristic management guidelines, with a view to good brand reputation.

1.11 The Specific FMA Model and the Organisation of the Thesis

An in-depth narrative of change in communication theorizing is important, as it became relevant to how corporate communication in postmodern times positively influences brand resonance. A relevant model is the FMA as shown in Figure 4 (Checkland and Howell, 1997) below: Framework of Ideas – F, Methodology - M and Area of Concern (or Application as the case may be) – A the latter already indicated in section 1.5.II.

![Figure 4: Elements of Research (Checkland and Howell, 1997)](image)

The FMA is a structured encompassing model that indicates that a broad “F” outlined in the literature review (Chapter 2) governing the impetus for the research and its arguments, is established before progressing the research “M” process. The framework is further elucidated via said methodology. Similarly, methodology elicited data and outcomes usable to address “A”; most elements of “A” as presented previously this introductory Chapter 1 are explored in depth in the Literature Review of Chapter 2. All areas of concern were deemed as benefitting research or explicitly requiring attention as the research progressed. Importantly and more specifically, the Framework of ideas of the FMA is not equivalent to one desired outcome of this investigation, that is a theoretical
framework that demarcates communication strategy and implementation. Rather, Checkland and Howell’s (1997) total framework of ideas refers to both literature in the broadest sense of contextualising the area of concern, and some specific theories that contribute to the aim. So “F” also should ideally be robust enough to contribute to giving definition to a final theoretical framework.

The F in the FMA might in one instance, be considered as a sound recognizable boundary to the ideas common to the history of communication theorizing, and the shift in the communication paradigm, as discussed in further detail in Chapter 2. These are the first building blocks to achieving the aim; they preface a detailed evaluation in the literature review of a range of theories and approaches to their configuration to lay a foundation for a feasible postmodern corporate communication strategy for branding. Subsequently, a necessary discussion of various dimensions to branding paints a picture of the reasons, stages, and contexts relevant to theory application, and important variables. The physical contexts of the thesis encompass three specific areas in the transatlantic region as mentioned earlier, where there are not only physically accessible routes, but also bilateral trade agreements. Additionally, DC and TMC are similarly accessible (GITR, 2016) as are the researcher’s informed experiences within these regions. Importantly, a culturally relevant picture of how communication exists, or is enabled in these areas is key. So recognisable exemplars, their challenges and successes are also documented via a review of electronic and broadcast media sources. Altogether, these avenues in the literature review make the research authentic as related to relevance, accuracy and meaningfulness of anticipated results. The details of the areas of concern
and the gaps in the literature review Chapter 2, to a great degree will determine the methodology used to fill those gaps. This closes the framework (in FMA), as it fuels research questions to drive research design and meet objectives.

1.12 Outline of the Complement of the Thesis

The Methodology Chapter 3 outlines and critiques the approaches to mixed and multi-methods involved in this research, justifying why the adopted model of designing the research was used. Chapter 4, presenting Results and Findings, lays out quantitative and qualitative data to include primary and secondary sources. These interrogated Areas of Concern and Application outlined in the Data Analysis Chapter 5, which answered research questions about content, mode and effectiveness of brand messages ultimately to enhance perceived value and reputation. Discussions and Conclusions in Chapter 6 posit clear routes to sound communication strategy and the associated outcomes of the research. While Chapter 7, Future Directions and Recommendations categorically outline how the development of theory, methodology and practice as the outcome of the FMA can shape future research. The chapter suggests ways forward for new research and refining indicative communication strategy.
A review of literature on corporate communication and relevant theory as implied in the introduction, leading to the subsequent methodology chapter, begins the identification and alignment of variables to be queried. Essentially, communication had traditionally been definitively linear with an element of human-to-human interaction, for example face-to-face or by telephone. However as technologically mediated communication spread in use and influence, communication processes became significantly decentralised, intertextual, and multifaceted. Together, these two divergent positions have brought focus to the changes in how communication takes place and laid the foundation to parameters of a historical narrative of communication theorising. In some instances, these parameters are clear while in other instances, only the latent inclusion of technologically mediated communication is obvious. It is felt therefore that the superimposition of several separate theories as discussed in this chapter, and also interspersed throughout the methodology and analyses were critical. This meta-theoretical paradigmatic position facilitated discussions regarding how direct communication (DC) or networking by extension, and technologically mediated or online communication (TMC) are activated. This would be in an apportioned way that benefits brand resonance. The literature review also points to clear routes by which brand reputation might be created, sustained and measured, hereby providing some boundaries for analysing data collected. Finding these routes included iterative processes; so as intimated above, there is noticeable necessary overlap across the literature review, methodology and analyses, yet with the same aim to draw sound conclusions. All sections 2.1 – 2.8 contribute to the FMA framework that guides this research.
2.1 A Broad 100-Year History of Communication Theorising

During the early 20th century, discussions on meaning derivation from the environment where communication occurs were centred round Saussure’s and Peirce’s signification theories (1907 – 1911). These are what later writers summarise as semiotics; as described by Yakin and Totu (2014), semiotics appeared to be remnants of symbolism or signs as artefacts within precepts of social constructionism and specifically culture. Thus, semiotics is representative of meaning during interactivity - but not necessarily of active communication during interactions in a postmodern world. So to highlight the essence of this thesis, it is noted that influencers of communication channels or messages going via the channels, became increasingly complex over time. It follows that though semiotics had a place in the evolution of meaning, semiology cannot be used independently to discuss the nature of the channels by which communication takes place and how messages are received. Further, while preference of stimulus (Azjen and Fishbein, 1980; Azjen, 2001) including signs, may be relevant to the modes of communication, there may be some situations as relevant to phenomenology, and as described by Hegel, that have an almost overriding effect on any innate preference that may exist. The complexity of channels reflects not only the influences of human interaction, but technology and knowledge development. These are often culturally situated and therefore cannot be discussed in isolation. That they were combined in the past, as indicated by records of early modern communication, to suggest separating them as indicatively done at the turn of the millennium, is erroneous. It is vital to reflect to when general technology first had a role in communication.
A generation after the emergence of semiotics, Shannon and Weaver in 1948, conceptualised a mathematical theoretical communication model, composed of a sender, receiver, and processes of encoding and decoding worded messages via a channel. This channel or medium could be impacted negatively by noise - otherwise referred to as interference, which at the time of the model’s development, was limited to what interrupted a technologically mediated message. This model appeared to offer an early accessible working definition of communication, and it gained traction in other disciplines over the next generation. Yet, on closer examination the model seems to omit some human aspects of communication regarding what may benefit communication, versus what interferes with or creates communication barriers.

The aforementioned model was later refined to some degree by Schramm (1971), who considered overlapping sender and receiver “fields of experience”, via media, letters or words of communication messages. Subsequently, during the advanced technological age in the generation thereafter, when new and developing information became more easily attainable, concepts of co-construction of meaning via social processes emerged. Communication could no longer be limited to prior experience, rather experiences while they occurred. This also meant noise could be manifest via a range of forms or at varying times. Also Deetz (1992) and Mantovani (1996) purported shared meaning: communication participants can add unique perceptions of reality to a meaning pool, or a place of understanding or sense-making. This opened communication to unexplored proportions, albeit, to a degree, bound by a platform of new technology that as modern history showed, could attempt to define it.
The introduction of computerized services in the mid-1980s, which then expanded globally in the early 1990s, opened a wide array of opportunities by which, and within which information technology could be used. As previously discussed, the engagement of technology in the previous decades suggested that it was an artefact very much within a vacuum, and there was no theory that governed its existence. It appears that this would perennially be considered to be so, as technology then was defined by its centrality (Orlikowski and Iacono, 2001) in daily experiences. Its supremacy was founded on the premises of firm integration and being embedded into mainstream education, as well as the rapid rate at which increasingly modern technological developments took place.

Orlikowski and Iacono (2001), however, challenged this assumptive position, by extending discussions beyond social constructionist perspectives of technology, to embrace theory in the conceptualization of the IT artefacts as fertile ground for future IT research. This would provide insight into further applications of IT in the contexts within which it had been created, for example the sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts. Orlikowski and Iacono (2001) having reviewed the nature of all IT research in the leading journal “Information Systems Research” over the previous decade, sought to evaluate the nature of this artefact. Placing the research into identifiable categories of tool, proxy, ensemble, computational, and nominal, the writers asserted that the overemphasis on the tool and proxy views belied the actual nature of the design process and potential uses of IT. Given the range of social, cultural, economic and even political dimensions to how IT had originally been conceptualized, it is negligent to relegate this process when conducting IT research. Nonetheless,
using this context when technology is deemed more pliable for analysis, synthesis and comprehension, in contrast to presumed fixed paradigms, the mandate of true academic research may be more impactful and effectively accomplished.

Furthermore, as the 21st century progressed, the previously mentioned meaning pools of understanding, took a different form, as they to some degree, were more highly influenced by the internet. Information transfer, that was now instantaneous, also became routine. Adami and Kress (2014) went on to describe modern technology used to derive meaning, to be evolving as increasingly intertextual and multimodal. Today this TMC is less dependent on human factors. It could be argued that in fact, the increase of technology has created yet another dimension to the concept of “noise”. This is because there are even more methods of communicating, often on the premise that using them as far as possible is the rule rather than the exception. This approach as intimated by O’Cass and Heirati (2015) can be a hindrance to effective communication as opposed to creating a healthy ecosystem for it.

2.2 Traits of Visual Culture of Images and Instantaneous Written Posts

Where the baseline definition of communication remains theoretically standardized as a completed process of understanding involving two members (van Dijk, 2014), the new twenty-first century paradigm of communication may differ. Fraser (2017) in assessing the current predominantly visual culture for example, expresses that with this modern media culture, the impact of images makes for a very mobile landscape of communication and shift of visual culture.
It may be either by the use of moving images or the alacrity and accessibility with which still images might be disseminated across online media, for example via Instagram and Facebook social media respectively as later outlined. The narrative that accompanies these images the writer argues, can be enhanced by the quality of additional images, hence giving discourse greater depth and substance; subsequently there is a resonating influence on the viewer.

This is not to be outdone by the similarly instantaneous verbal posts that may accompany images or be posted by themselves, also common to the Twitter social media platform. However, the latter in November 2017, evolved to allow still and moving images, as well as double the word message limit from 140 to 280 characters. These technologically mediated and acute processes, which potentially replace real time human interaction, create a reality that may have both cultural and paradigmatic implications. Therefore, as implied by Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) it is important to look into the selected online platforms and media in greater detail, to establish an understanding of what they can achieve.

2.3 Detailed description of the online platforms explored

2.3.1 Twitter

Twitter is a social medium dedicated to microblogging on specific areas of interest and facilitates a number of functions such as “likes, retweets and follows”. There is an intended outcome to focus and keep the reader informed on the precise topics, individuals, or organizations, while using a limited number of characters. Although originally engaged for casual commentary, Twitter has
evolved into a rather influential tool, used by many businesses, and personalities, one of the most famous being Donald Trump, President of the United States of America. It may be argued that it is a means to redefine what communication can achieve, given the extent to which tweets have become customarily associated with very poignant and often controversial comments. Its short, incisive and driven modality piques readers’ interests; and strategically or purposefully, it can be planned to relay partial information of the whole topic at hand, hereby eliciting desired responses from the reader to continue the thread of the conversation, or complete the idea as the case may be. So by the same token, Twitter functions as an effective means of electronic word of mouth (Shin, Pang and Kim, 2015), as it achieves its primary role of passing on information and keeping a conversation going about a desired topic. Though limited to the lowest number of characters of all social media platforms, Twitter still seems to readily attract attention possibly due to its brevity and ease of uptake; so as Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) assert, it remains one of the most powerful forms of TMC.

Generally, as intimated above, rather than providing detail or multiple pieces of information at once, a Twitter feed can get attention or focus its readers’ thoughts on a particular thread of conversation. It potentially serves the function to summarise a much longer post as a taster, then make connections that direct readers to the full account of information that is to be made available. For example, there may be a link in Twitter for a Vlog on YouTube, or a video clip displayed in Facebook or Instagram. This of course relies on permissions of the social media platforms to allow such associations between these platforms. In
addition, a retweet can attract either more positive or negative attention to a topic. This aims to engage readers further to reply, act or comment in order to elicit the greatest impact, or as in digital marketing or communication jargon, go viral. Therefore, the current paradigm of marketing and communication (going viral) is to be contrasted with the paradigm of effective two-way communication that is being highlighted in this thesis. Importantly, the discipline regarding the industry about which information is to be communicated, and the purpose of communicating, helps to determine to a degree, how much TMC or DC is used.

More specifically however, according to creators of Twitter (2018), there are recommended guidelines used to capture what can be achieved, via the original intended modality and methodology of this social media platform. As with any platform, the aim is to engage the attention of the audience in the most captivating consistent way. So then, it reflects the creation of content that enables this process. They administrators (2018) suggest for example, four key points. Firstly, the length of the entry otherwise known as the tweet should be short and focused. It essentially will defeat the purposive function of this modality to focus its reader, if multiple messages are attempted at the same time, especially when the numbers of characters are already quite limited. However, as has been the growing trend in social media use (Internet World Stats, 2012) if there is additional crucial or relevant key information, it is quite appropriate to include a link to that item, within the confines of the tweet. This essentially gives the audience even further leverage in choosing what information to access, rather than as Caughlin and Sharabi (2013) explain,
being bombarded with information with such intensity or frequency that authenticity is initially challenged.

Secondly, the writers also propose to add to the tweet, a moving or still stage image. Up to the time of thesis writing, this had been a limit of four such images, which increases probabilities of readers attending to the post, by threefold.

Thirdly, the writers advocate using hashtags. This method of drawing attention to the post is ideally designed whereby readily identifiable keywords that are relevant to the post are affixed to the hashtag sign. They recommend no more than two key words at a time, again harking back to the importance of quality over quantity. The keywords can also relate to events that the populace at large will recognise and therefore gravitate towards.

Lastly, with any medium, which seeks to provide or solicit information, using specific methods of achieving these are recommended. Small quantitative polls to which persons are asked to respond, or simple qualitative yet open-ended questions that as Denscombe (2003) explained, elicit rich data, are useful. Not only will readers become more engaged as their opinions or views are solicited, but information required to drive the business is being garnered. Gathering the data is in a notably fast effective manner, especially if relevant questions items are well designed and become popularised.
2.3.II Facebook (FB)

Facebook as an online platform was launched in 2004. It was one of the first social media by which people could communicate in a more instantaneous, and multidimensional way, than was previously proffered by emails and similar messaging services. Facebook had been traditionally and exclusively, used as a means by which family and friends could keep in contact, give updates, reflect, and create an online history that mostly centred on relationships. Over time, as the scope of social media changed and competitors established their place in the worldwide web, Facebook responded strategically. For-profit organizations were now welcome to use the platform, but some features and recommendations were intentionally designed for supporting business. To preserve some of its exclusivity and keep clientele, Facebook also made the unprecedented move to buy one of its key competitors, Instagram in 2012. Instagram had pushed forward with video sharing, as opposed to still picture framing that Facebook had begun years earlier. While the brand names are used separately, and both also operate as different entities, they can legally make reference to each other. So now the users of Facebook will have a greater reach and access to wider audiences with their content, via Instagram. Although some business owners now opt not to use Facebook Business specifically, Facebook remains the platform most engaged by businesses, in comparison to other social media. This active use of Facebook, has been multiplied even further through the acquisition of Instagram, and later WhatsApp in 2014. These are two additional platforms by which information can be posted in real time; in the case of WhatsApp, direct audio-visual communication can be accomplished, provided there is an internet connection. Though costing
Facebook initially, this coalescing of media dramatically altered how easily communication occurs and captured a pool of additional stakeholders while minimising longer-term costs. It is shown in the data however that this does not necessarily translate into more increased use by the business, but rather appropriation of the TMC.

It may also be argued that due to the extended process of building up relationships across Facebook and the adjoining platforms, the visual value of the details of the resulting business webpage has considerable currency. The historical (longitudinal) content as previously available, and now the current (cross-sectional) content (via instant messages), are useful to business owners for understanding the requirements and possibly habits of their stakeholders. This two-tiered access to data can then influence how the brand will design and execute its communication strategy. Furthermore, with multiple ways for stakeholders to give opinions, for example the “like” button, and 1 - 5 star ratings this means a direct stakeholder feedback is possible; so business owners find engagement with Facebook to be a tangible investment of time and resources.

Subscribing to FB means being at the heart of what the conceptualizers originally intended for the platform: strong links between people who knew each other and using that as a means to promote their business. In fact, in December 2016, when CEO Zuckerberg divulged major changes in Facebook, regarding its purpose and its clients, he relayed family and friends’ networks are key. Further explored by Fitzpatrick (2016), maximising on those networks, and how they snowball into further business opportunities, will be a next direction of FB.
2.3.III Instagram

Instagram is a social media platform, dedicated exclusively to the upload and sharing of visual data with what may be termed annotated comments both from the holder of the account, as well as viewers. This may take the form of either a photo or maximum minute-long video. Developed in 2010, Instagram has established a place in the social media landscape for several years. This does not make it the latest platform by any means, however it could be said that it is strategically placed between the more traditional ones that began over a decade ago, and other platforms birthed within the last few years. One of the noticeable features of the platform is the ability to encapsulate a narrative of the authors’ chosen topic. Through the medium of visual data, this is achieved with instantaneous posts, which remain on the site unless otherwise removed; they stay within collages of that narrative for as long as the author deems necessary or preferred. There are attractive features such as filters for visual effects of lighting or changing facial features for example, and other ways to create smaller collages of the author’s chosen best snaps. These are all designed with the purpose of expression, clarity, and often the persona of the individual or organization, which may then attract viewers to the holder’s account.

2.3.IV Other technologically mediated forms of communication mentioned

2.3.IV.i Email

Emails began in the earliest rudimentary form between 1969 – 1971, reaching its peak in the new millennium. They take the form of messages that are sent to specific recipients using a host domain that processes and transmits the messages to those recipients. There is no limit on the number of characters,
however, with attachments or embedded images, a significant load attributed to data size is often factored in this medium. At the same time, it does still achieve the function of sending business documents for example, and may in some instances, have permanently replaced hard copies of said information. However, its use fell and while it had been frequently engaged for communication between businesses, it now often shifts to communication within businesses via the intranet. This was due to social reasons (Mark et al. 2016), cultural shifts or, simply that other easier, more desirable and efficient methods of communication emerged to match the cultural shifts. Additionally, although unwanted spam and marketing messages delivered emails, have been reduced with the introduction of the 2018 Data Protection Act, there are still challenges which then might have converted the use of emails to a rather niche undertaking. That being said however, when relevant, the use of emails is mentioned in this text wherever the case studies place some emphasis on it.

2.3.IV.ii Websites

Formalised in 1991 (Ward, 2006) from the original idea of an information management system, websites have evolved and are broadly comprised of one or a series of webpages. Websites have a specific purpose, which in the case of business organizations, is to inform and educate the public about what the organization stands for and has established as its mode of operations. The website predated the instantaneous nature of social media; and so its purposes would appear to have a longitudinal or historical dimension to presentation and purpose, somewhat comparable to what Facebook will achieve.
2.3.V Summary of Broad Technology-Related Considerations

At various stages of this thesis, carefully selected samples and case studies with their brands, are assessed in different regions that were introduced to and adapted to technology, as given in the Global Information Technology Report (GITR, 2016). These were at similar times in history, notwithstanding in unique socio-cultural infrastructures. This distinctiveness implies therefore, that subsequent layers for theory application are relevant to both disaggregate differences, and bring similarities together. Existential phenomenology according to Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989) functions by fundamental theoretical principles, which displace customarily held paradigms that accounted for human behaviours and assigning value within those social-cultural infrastructures. As a substitute, this phenomenological approach provides a fresh alternative that the writers claim to be empirically sound, thereby complementing otherwise traditional empirical data, as would be found in online or technologically mediated information.

Any differences and similarities revealed via existential phenomenology within those cultures, in particular how they use technology (or not) can also elucidate in a streamlined way, what leads to brand resonance. It will be partly the superimposition of theory on empirical data that determines how the two - TMC and DC - might be integrated or configured so the perceived value of the subject of communication about the brand will be enhanced, and ideally lead to better brand reputation. This is an involved innovative process, which if only by the definition of communication, cannot be defined merely online, but should involve existential phenomenology in the methodological context of
ethnography. As shown in the literature review, this may eventually become an online ethnography; a business’ decision-makers determine boundaries of this ethnography and decide how to chronicle or communicate the brands’ journeys.

2.4 Ethnography in appropriating theory over history

When evaluating its parameters, Shah (2017) in discussing ethnographic research explains clearly that the key facet of participant observation renders this type of research as a bastion for revolutionary praxis. This is the meeting of theory and practice in new ways as encouraged by Boromisza-Habashi (2013). Even though academic research in the twenty first century is often mainly supported by access to a range of online sources, this does not negate the fact that the research may be equally hindered, if there is no actual handling of preliminary primary data. In comparison with other research approaches, this to a much greater degree facilitated by the ethnographic process. With reference to the theoretical position of existential phenomenology and to some degree, critical theory as applicable to large cultural settings, both can either challenge or substantiate long held ideology, systems or noticeable trends that were previously proven to have some truth. Yet, basic ethnographic research does not necessitate a rigid set of processes. While participant observation is essential however, there must be some specific theoretically based processes, within identifiable paradigms, that facilitate order in the investigations. This will be while maintaining contexts and truths that are fuelled by way of ethnography.

This accessible background path to theorising, potentially creates a more recognisable route to understanding and meaning during the communication
process. In addition, a reflection on major changes in communication theorising outlined, indicates that foci of this theorising changed in each 20-25 year period, or an approximate generation. It implies there may be a themed core narrative theory, as a function of generations and what they bring. So discussions of communication and meaning making could be approached in a way, which factors that a 20-25 year era is as crucial as major occurrences or changes in the generation. However, importantly in the present, it may be that TMC is best grounded in processes of interrogation of meaning and theory, which then facilitate critical enquiry and analysis of information to create that meaning.

2.5 Outline re: ensuing theory-based sections and research contribution
In approaching the rest of the literature review, information regarding the aim of the thesis, then the objectives as stated in the introductory chapter will be discussed separately. Initially, a summary of communication-related theory interspersed with philosophy, and how these potentially align research and communication strategy are given. Then, there is focus on organizations and their brands going through change, and what may be involved in modern communication that leads to perceptions of high value and good reputation.

2.6 Theory: an explicit role in F of FMA
2.6.I Theoretical underpinnings
A range of theories that function to contextualise the process of identifying factors in communication strategy, have been presented as they appear relevant to this research. Initial descriptions of theories applied in a framework of ideas (F), also drive data collection regarding the area of concern (A) and
justify methodology (M). After the descriptions is a summary of how theories interrelate sequentially, to help achieving the aim of this thesis.

2.6.1.i Systems Theory: the turning point

This theory as applied in modern organizations (Mele, Pels and Polese, 2010), refers to principles that are common to such complex entities, more specifically how each component within the organizational system is interrelated with others. Where one variable within the system changes even slightly, this may influence others in a disproportionately large way, and where the variable may change drastically there may be a small effect. Therefore, there is a significant degree of non-linearity embedded within this theory. Suffice to say however, although in its early rudimentary state the theory related to the physical sciences, Bertalanffy (1956) describes how it potentially provides an anchor to deriving more specificity to social science theories. This thesis explores several such theories below, recognising that the interrelatedness as contextualised by the systems theory creates further cohesion to these social theories.

Further, the systems theory advocates a mathematical model that potentially supports the associations found within the organizations as mixed entities. For this thesis, any model that emerges from the application of the systems theory will create a foundation for the proposed communication strategy. It is relevant to social contexts of corporate communication, and ways that communication may occur within and outside an organization. Bertalanffy (1956) also explores how systems respond to feedback both from sources known to the system or from environments external to it. Three approaches to GST given by Mele, Pels
and Polese (2010) are open systems theory (OST), viable systems model (VSM) and viable systems approach (VSA). But for this thesis, broadly matching interpretivism and specifically constructivism, viable systems concepts are most applicable.

2.6.I.ii Social Constructivist Theory

The preliminary theory engaged in understanding the content of this dissertation, and later in the processes whereby stakeholders in business learn about the emerging brand, is social constructivism (Jonassen, 1994). Although it is an educational theory originating in formal classroom learning environments, the knowledge acquisition in particular about emerging brands during change is adequately contextualised within this theory.

First, knowledge construction over time as opposed to knowledge reproduction using supposed artefacts (social constructionism) of the organization’s communication strategy is a critical dimension. Secondly, as implied by O’Cass and Heirati (2015), authentic experiences of stakeholders who negotiate that knowledge and reify its viability within a social environment, will be reminiscent of multiple expressions of that reality versus an oversimplified version. Jonassen (1994) emphasises the importance of this collaboration when engaging constructivist theory.

Comparatively, in the context of brands undergoing change, there still often will be a personal decision (Rugg and Petre, 2007) about them; yet it is expected that decisions are based on shared knowledge. Information from decision
makers in the organization would have involved stakeholder preferences in the first instance. It might also be argued, that multiple representations of reality as embodied by social constructivist theory are indicative of personal preference. Yet, as discussed by Pels, Moller and Saren (2009), there is no basis to suggestions that multiplicity is more important than alignment of multiplicity itself. So attention is better directed towards the management of the changes impacting the brands.

2.6.I.iii Theory of Change Management

Such theories are varied, but selecting those that evaluate parameters of different kinds of changes, and addressing changes with equal logic and robustness, in the contexts of industries under investigation, is critical. Early models of the theory such as Kotter (1996), Kubler-Ross (1960’s) and Lewin (1947) as noted in Hayes (2010), are based on management of change internal to the organization. The writers speak of recognising the change required, and going through a process of unlocking the behaviour, movement to a next level, and then refreezing the new behaviour at this next level. Lewin’s theory was validated in later years, for example by Ford and Greer (2006). They testify to the integrative nature of the theory and factors that affect change processes.

Of particular importance within the change process, was the need to incorporate feedback and management control, for change to be sustained. This is indicative of how crucial communication strategies are. The theory however does not focus on managing how organizations respond to change external to it. On the other hand, as discussed in the previous section on the
background to communication theorising, external changes in the trends of communication modes, can impact how an organization positions itself to better profile its brand. So, it is useful as this thesis can contribute new theory, that will simultaneously and appropriately position an organization to manage its change, by also addressing how to configure its response to new expectations of communication. The sum or suitable packaging of these two elements of this approach can then be transferred positively to stakeholders via corporate communication strategies, which translate to better business.

2.6.1.4 Schema Theory and Communication Theory (CT)

Schema theory claims information is always organized and packaged in units. However, although different pieces of information in a given domain may be learned separately, for example internal and external to an organizational system, there will be a recognisable way in which that data is interconnected (Mandler, 2014). In addition to prior discussions of the history of communication theorising, CT can be simply defined as the dimension of knowledge that is concerned with the principles and means by which information is transferred.

With multiple approaches to communication theory (Boromisza-Habashi, 2013) and preliminary empirical data garnered from initial investigations in this study, these together provide a guide to how the splintered nature of communication is located and discussed. Schema theory gives boundaries to using the aforementioned information related to wider discussions about communication; as this material is narrowed down to the most useful viable components.
2.6.I.v Foucauldian Theory and Reflection on the Marketing Mix Theory

Essentially, Foucault summarised that not all things can be referenced at the same time (van Dijk, 1998, 2014). This selection process of what is most relevant to the organization, allows more room for discussion of how change is managed over time. Simultaneously, stakeholders will be making decisions about the organization. Van Dijk speaks of the social discourse, which potentially analyses information available, with the objective of elucidating the expansive content under consideration. This then helps stakeholders to make these decisions; importantly, it involves more than one participant. In the context of this thesis where there are high stakes involved at the corporate level with premium stakeholders, Lacanian theory as later explored in relation to these corporate parties, therefore becomes relevant. So it will be clear that both Foucauldian and Lacanian theories are underscored by tenets of marketing mix theory: marketing is a subset of corporate communication and not the sum total of it. However, the marketing mix theory acknowledges, as discussed in Chapter 1, that marketing can reflect where brand message emphases will be. Marketing refers to degrees of pervasiveness and features of some outcomes of the branding message, that corporate communication is likely to achieve. Not limited to the mass market, these are applicable to the premium stakeholders as intimated in the next section.

2.6.I.vi Lacanian Theory

This theory establishes a sense of exclusivity of research and is in the context of the importance of desire and need of players in the communication process. Dickson and Holland (2016) explain that the four discourses within Lacanian
theory are always part of communication theory. They are in relation to who assumes what role in communication, whether Master, University, Analyst or Hysteric. This is where the unconscious or latent become recognisable, tangible, workable and applicable. As outlined by Beugelsdijk, Van Shaikz and de Groot (2004), it represents where trust is a precursor to economic growth of the organization: this understanding must be embraced from within the organization and equally so, from stakeholders on the outside. Then, there will be some mutuality amongst these players regarding the organization’s authenticity as a starting point to further engagements surrounding it. At the same time, to maintain the quality of these interactions, the approach to communication must be balanced.

2.6.I.vii Meta – Theory

Meta-theory outlines a paradigm in which selected theory are discussed, (Boromisza-Habashi, 2013; Pels, Moller and Saren, 2009 and Corneilssen and Thorpe, 2001). This is a point of departure from where lines are drawn between players in a balanced communication process, and systems in which these players exist (Bertalanffy, 1956). So, it does not exist as a theory itself, but as an opportune stance on how theory is approached and, at times which theories are included.

2.6.I.viii Leadership Theories: Transaction, Transformation, Contingency

Acknowledging that there would be some individualised approach that decision makers will have to corporate communication, it is believed that leadership and the discussions that bear on psychology embedded in leadership, offer further
insight on aligning overall theory. The discussion is not about personality traits of the leader, but about processes by which leaders may do transactions, or transform organizations during change. Even so, there is a limit to the use of leadership theory: Fielder’s Contingency Theory, sometimes discussed in tandem with the Situational Leadership Theory (Peretomode, 2012) proffer that no one leadership style is best, and the success of the leader will be dependent on the features of each given situation. It implies plural ideas on corporate communication teams, as would be in a mix of observable communication efforts that capture broader psychographic profiles for example, of internal or external stakeholders. Therefore, a theory such as the grounded theory below facilitates this exploration, while also providing bases of understanding the phenomenology in which the stakeholders will exist.

### 2.6.I.ix Grounded Theory

Developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) this is a means by which previously existing theoretical implications and unidentified theory is unearthed, or how new theory is generated. The process potentially finds a background to the importance of varied aspects of communication. Pulling on the theory as discussed for example by Ellis (2014) who recognized the value of the lived experience within a very defined cultural space, this theory is addressed in accordance with the ethnography and auto-ethnography executed. From these ethnographic processes, a wide background to what is involved in communication may shed light on similarly aligned theories of multimodality. It may be useful first to discuss semiotic theory: like grounded theory, it potentially gives greater context to the modes of communication.
2.6.1.x Semiotic Theory

There is some consensus in modern semiotic theory, that there should be a move away from the two earlier prominent philosophies of Pierce and Saussure. They appeared to study and model semiotics in a decontextualized way - semiology - (Wood, 2007) focusing on signification. Semiotics broadly is an attempt to model meaning in a formalised systematic way. Wood as opposed to earlier writers, feels it is usually based on an unsupported type of knowledge representation and measurement theory of typically binary values. Categories are often generated by the researcher with little or no reference to categories which are already in use by the subjects of the thesis. This implies how important grounded theory will be, and whether there is long-term evidence that confirms the researcher's propositions. Marsen (2006) relays semiotics is the study of signs and sign systems, yet concurs with Wood (2007) who extensively discusses contextualisation that entails a shift from this signification to cognitive semiosis. The writer refers to it as the evolution of the species and its culture.

There would have been much debate about culture, and how stable culture may be. For example, Hofstede's (1994) national and organizational cultures are relevant, as is linguistic relativity in relation to culture as embodied by the Sapir Whorf hypothesis of the early 20th Century. Nevertheless, communication is via a range of signs, cues, symbols, experience and perception, to name only a few contributors to the communication process (van Dijk, 2014). This fulsome cognitive approach may concur with Hegel's early philosophies of absolute knowledge in the phenomenology of mind (or spirit), as expounded in the 18th to 19th century. At the same time, communication at different stages in the
process of communication, can be influenced by or be an ‘outcome’ of other philosophies. For example, application of postmodern philosophies such as constructivism, positivism, and interpretivism are tangibly dependent on country, background or organizational culture that may exist and, any time lapses during which change may occur. Wood's (2007) relevant piece “Beyond Signification: the co-evolution of the subject and semiosis” gave further rise to semiotics today, as agreed by Marsen, (2006). The writers believe that cognitive semiosis is a sum total of inter-subjectivity and intertextuality, which will exist in the context of cultures outlined above. The intertextuality, at the very earliest recognisable stage, seems to concur with educational psychology propositions (Wine, Weis and Hantula, 2014) about points of stimulus. These include presentation, understanding, recognition, recall or evaluation in elements of communication in the semiotic process, and the occurrence of flux and dynamism between these points.

This semiosis may also be recognisable in Benjamin Bloom's 1956 taxonomy of learning domains, with particular reference to the cognitive domain. An underlying relevant factor in this current thesis therefore is the existing social and learning culture in and around the chosen pairs of case studies. This considers if there were recognisable cultural shifts over time, however long that time may have been. Culture itself is not deliberately investigated here; rather the broad cultural expectations of communication are taken into consideration. Yet, due to the existence of culture, at the point of collecting research data, internal consistency when determining questionnaire scale items for example,
would remain important. This is because it should reflect the required reliability in the subjects in the sample population, as extracted from the different cultures.

Kucuk (2015) alludes to negative differentiation in semiotics, which refers to when sample subjects by process of elimination, choose to be or not to be associated with a certain object within the concept of semiotics, in preference to another object. This at first glance, could be a result of phenomenology of mind, previous experience or a combination of both, which may translate into the latent information this research seeks to find. It might also be a point whereby the results from the sample connect directly: even before negative differentiation on an individual level, what is the referent or potential influencer on communication? What in communication processes cause the stakeholder’s response? Could decisions be made before factoring personal preferences? How can senders’ and receivers’ contributions to communicated messages be configured or aligned with alacrity and precision? This intertextuality implied though not limited by semiotics, gives rise to debates around multimodality.

2.6.I.xi Theory of Multimodality: two positions

Pels, Moller and Saren (2009), as previously discussed, offered different approaches to the corporate function of successful marketing as a function of theory; and this included a variety of media. The writers focused on mode but not much content of brand messages via these media. Also, O’Cass and Heirati’s (2015) later discussions centred round capabilities as another fundamental pillar to theory. From the corporate perspective of the promulgation of brand values, how these two positions may sensitisie premium
stakeholders, and elicit similar resonance as viral marketing (Berger, 2014), does not seem to be fully explored (O’Cass and Heirati, 2015). It is possible that a more aligned approach will be beneficial.

2.7.I.xii Theory of IMC Strategy, related to a business’ managerial levels

Duncan and Everett (1993) believed that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) enabled tactical manoeuvring by which messages and media act in a coordinated way that positively influences the value of brands. It cannot be altogether separated from the level of corporate communication, as it is applicable to an organization’s mission as well as at the operational level. Several IMC models (Caemmerer, 2009) operate in a framework unique to that model. In addition, IMC strategy tends to divert in a range of other tangents. For example Chu, Hsu and Li (2010) believe IMC is multidimensional, so it is not linear (comparable to overall systems theory) and it can achieve different goals. According to Caemmerer (2009) however, it is possible, that IMC is a support system of communication competence rather than a system itself. Altogether, these suggest the theory to a degree is as splintered as communication theory; accordingly communications and marketing teams may find themselves with costly budgets (Ayyagari, Beck and Demirgüç-Kunt, 2003). However, the corporate approach taken to communication strategy frameworks as proposed in this thesis are expected to maintain theory contributing to a streamlined strategy. The approach reflects corporate values, which do not get lost in the branding process or in other secondary, albeit telling functions, such as marketing.
2.6.l.xiii Personal Construct (PCT), Autopoetic Systems (AST) Theories

The PCT (Kelly, 2003; Rugg and Petre, 2007), relevant to how individuals will formulate understanding, is to be paired with phenomenology from the situational perspective of communication strategies being utilised (Wood, 2007). It engages a flexible grid to which the research subjects contribute in the process of first embracing the corporate message; and the flexibility may be re-applied in subsequent stages of the communication process.

This relates directly to the AST and how systems can regenerate, in this instance, concerning how knowledge may change while the brand changes. Phenomenology also helps to unravel issues of validity and reliability of the brand during this process, as it provides boundaries as well as a situational context and themes, in which theories are engaged or synthesised.

2.6.l.xiv Persuasion Approach to Theory

Carpenter and Boster (2013) write that memory based processing increases persuasion. This implies that the way forward in being persuaded of a brand, may be to find memory based processing contained in convincing messages as outlined by McGuire’s Yale persuasion approach. The process will include culturally and situationally relevant moderators of recall, attitude and relationship. The moderators may then be associated and engaged alongside online processing methods; the outcome is a likely increase in persuasiveness.
2.6.1.xv Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour

It is expected that this theory (Azjen and Fishbein, 1980) will account for buyers and suppliers together as premium stakeholders on the receiving end of organizations’ communication cycles, and significant decision-making. As this theory seeks to elucidate human behaviour, some processes of activating latent information are placed squarely in the remit of stakeholders. So the background to the actions that stakeholders take, why they would act in a certain way, and then the actual planned subsequent behaviour will all play a part in the communication process. These the theory states, are governed by intentions, attitudes or beliefs about a certain behaviour (Solomon, 2008), and subjective norms (beliefs about others’ attitudes to the behaviour). The theory developed over time to include perceived behavioural control or ability to execute a certain behaviour. Samples investigated in this thesis include premium stakeholders whose approaches to business are similar, concerning their interest in brand value and longevity of associations with brands. Together the latter are main contributors to brand revenue; accordingly with stakeholders’ conscious actions or contact with other potential stakeholders, the considered theory is relevant. This position diverges from that of Jin et al. (2017) who highlighted gratification as the impetus for many stakeholders engaging with information available about a brand, especially via online media. Here, there seems to be no specific steady plan of action and desire is merely temporal. However, with Azjen’s theory (2001) in this case as purposefully applied to premium stakeholders, there is constancy, as reasoning processes are more likely to be consciously activated.
2.6.II Interrelation and Activation of Theory

2.6.II.i Introduction

Boromisza – Habashi (2013) documented proceedings of an interview he had with Robert Craig, a prolific retiring academic. The author reports that Craig used a conversation metaphor to capture the characteristics of communication theorising: constant development is the new point of reference for the process. This is summarised as the basis for re-routing theorising to meet with empirical work, where communication theory and meta-discourse intersect. The theories when critiqued, should align in such a way that the main emanating themes will match other themes that emerge from primary data collection. It is with this background, that the methodology of this thesis is put into action, under the auspices of theory as explored below.

2.6.II.ii General Overarching Theory Application

General Systems Theory (GST) as conceptualised by Bertalanffy (1956), encapsulates concepts of viability where interactions across disciplines in an organization, contribute to its failure, survival or success. Approaches to GST given by Mele, Pels and Polese (2010) may be integral to an organization adapting in a new environment or regulating that environment. There, GST can also contribute to managing its brand while undergoing change by way of communication and understanding feedback factors involved in communication. Effective transition within that environment via consideration of the Open Systems Theory (OST) would involve two sub-levels. These are management (internal stakeholder) personal purposive behaviour which itself may factor internal plus external stakeholder preferences. Secondly, external
premium stakeholders’ engagement of social constructivism theory (Jonassen, 1994) comes into play. The latter theory elicits understanding of brand content and branding processes where stakeholders as clients and suppliers learn about the emerging brands.

As previously mentioned, O’Cass and Heirati (2015) imply that when these premium stakeholders create meaning and understanding about the organization and do so in a social environment, this will reflect more than one version of that reality. It may be argued that this, at least in part, is indicative of personal preferences, or preferences of stimulus (Azjen, 2001), for what the stakeholders will respond to. Yet ultimately, decisions that these stakeholders make, by way of interactions involving DC during networking for example, would also factor shared knowledge from staff within the organization. These staff must include decision makers who may be deemed to have information that is more credible. Particularly when change is taking place, the DC method is likely to be complementary wherever these decision makers incorporate the TMC requirements of premium stakeholders who are themselves on the outside of the organization. The overall effect is adaptability with intention to engage such persons actively, so they realise desired or expected outcomes; these are about organisational viability by appreciating brand value and building brand reputation. Here interactivity infers behavioural sequences for decision-making purposes; it becomes more relevant, even as TMC in tandem is also relevant.

While making reference to the communication narrative as discussed in the introduction to this literature review, it is likely that there is a communication
loop, which factors players in communication, feedback between them and ultimately how the most effective communication occurs between DC and TMC. This thesis proposes that the meaning making required for premium stakeholders to arrive at the best decisions during the time a brand is experiencing change, requires a strategic approach to the roles and effect that DC or TMC modes have in change management.

2.6.Iii How Change may be Managed

Literature on change management theory models does not altogether refer to managing how organizations address any flux between internal and external change. The latter, which involves increasingly more technologically influenced communication methods, potentially affects how the organization positions itself to best profile the brand to be received well by premium stakeholders. Earlier writers (Lauterbourn, 1990), and other literature appear to focus on marketing mix theory and spin-offs from this theory. The 4Ps (price, promotion people and product) which the writer outlines, though useful in less industrialised eras, have an internal orientation and lacks personalisation. Criticisms mainly focused on the lack of consumer interactivity. It implies high deflection rates likely reflected in “no preference responses” when consumers are given choices in a 4P context and, low trust. Reliability is also compromised, due to the lack of strategic elements: so this is not an ideal planning instrument.

Others such as Constantinides (2006) in his approach to 21st century marketing, identified traditional marketing areas to be customer, relationship, services, retail, industrial, and in more modern times, electronic. Sometime after, writers
including Pels, Moller and Saren (2009) re-emphasised these components, and showed how business marketing became equated or wedded to relationship marketing. Simultaneously, Jobber and Fahy, (2009) conceptualised the 4Cs of marketing communications – clarity, consistency, credibility and competitiveness. The collective 4Cs would be useful as part of the package called corporate communication as it relates to the authenticity of the brand messages, and how they are disseminated. Yet in postmodern times where Berger (2014) describes viral marketing trends and Brabazon (2013) highlights digital diet pitfalls, it is probable that overriding effects lead to a compromise of desired authenticity.

As these popular TMC approaches focused on calculable empiricism of quantity of interactions with stakeholders rather than necessarily quality of interactions, a greater focus on corporate communication theory could be warranted. Actual communication, where there is an exchange of mutually understandable ideas, will always be directed by a human entity. Therefore, this is critical to the point where more long-lasting espoused brand values would be relevant to premium stakeholders responsible for most of an organization’s success. When an organization is undergoing its own change and brand credibility is particularly important in a context of changing communication landscapes and modes, so too will be methods of how a brand message is disseminated. A new paradigm may be required for using theory to best inform how an organization that experiences change will manage its ultimate success by appropriate communication. In the midst of this paradigm, the truth of which Caughlin and Sharabi (2013) speak must align with an ethical approach to communication by
corporate management. They assume responsibility and accountability of the blend of ideas within any new communication theory or pivot of theorising as the case may be; this would be as leadership configures appropriate responses to change.

The act of appropriately factoring sound theory during the early stages of the communication process, if aptly contextualised, potentially translates into better business pacts. Premium stakeholders will find reason to assign value then reputation to a brand. This could be facilitated by engaging grounded theory, wherein previously unearthed theory, or new theory is brought to the forefront. As much as this is critical to the configuration of communication, Foucauldian theory summarised that not all things can be incorporated; and as van Dijk (1998, 2014) claims, nor can they be stated at the same time. Van Dijk however speaks of social discourse, which analyses available information, with goals to elucidate content for stakeholder purposes.

To support this new paradigm of engaging theory broadly, yet within parameters of GST and social constructivism during change, schema theory that claims information is to be organized in units is key. Communication theories relevant to information dissemination abound (Boromisza-Habashi, 2013); this reflects the splintered nature of discourse on communication. Pieces of relevant data in that domain may be learned separately, yet schema theory as Mandler (2014) clarifies, gives a framework for recognisable ways in which data is consolidated.
Where there are high stakes of premium stakeholders as communication players, Lacanian theory as part of the schematic framework, is relevant to the roles assumed in the communication process. What is done as a function of these roles will bear on the integration of the outcomes of some claims of marketing mix theory as perused in Chapter 1. Together the theories point to where the unconscious becomes conscious in stakeholders’ decision-making processes. A conscious choice to trust a brand potentially leads to its economic growth; this growth is a primary brand aim, during times of internal change.

The brand undergoing change may be increasingly considered as economically viable. Several writers at different points in history (Corneilssen and Thorpe, 2001; Pels, Moller and Saren, 2009; Boromisza-Habashi, 2013), postulate that meta-theory can demarcate boundaries in which selected theory relevant to organizational viability are discussed. This is a point of departure from where lines are drawn between the players in the communication process. Transactional and transformational leadership theories potentially provide greater definition to those lines and the communicative processes engaged in how leadership initiates transaction, or transforms the organization during change. Even so, there is a limit to using these theories as no single leadership style can be engaged. So, there will be plural ideas for example, on corporate communications teams although loci of responsibility still tend in the direction of decision makers. However, this thesis considers some shared responsibility at both the client or supplier level and decision maker level.
The process of applying grounded theory at different stages potentially finds a background to communication. Further, the information that ethnographic processes produce in shedding light on what client groups may desire, will also elicit other details of the dimensions of what is involved in communication. For example Pels, Moller and Saren (2009) as previously cited, offered one similar and related perspective of multimodality, where different aspects to marketing as a function of theory, focused on mode versus message content. Another view by O’Cass and Heirati (2015) highlighted capability or competence as bases to multimodality theory. An integrated approach to how the two positions meet, is useful as explained in the writings of Duncan and Everett (1993), that IMC is the totality of integration rather than the individual effects of the parts. It is possible therefore that IMC as a support system of communication competence, elicits a strong response to feedback factors in the broader cultural environment that the brand exists. The resulting communication loop competency will be evidenced in phenomenology, and then later matched with the autopoetic systems theory – AST. Then AST is expected to factor personal construct theory - PCT (Kelly, 2003; Rugg and Petre, 2007). PCT engages a flexible matrix to which this research’s subjects add content. It correlates to AST, and how knowledge will regenerate and change in the system while the brand changes. Communication about that knowledge at different stages in the message’s transmission can be influenced by or be an outcome of philosophies enacted by senders and receivers of the message. This to a degree, depends on phenomenological implications of the country background or organizational culture around those in the communication exchange, and time lapses during which changes occur. Phenomenology helps to unravel issues of validity and
reliability of communication theorising as it provides boundaries, a situational context and themes where theory is engaged. Ensuring research soundness, this process is conducive to memory based processing (Carpenter and Boster, 2013) in communication, referred in McGuire’s 1986 Yale persuasion approach.

2.6.IV General Systems Theory approaches reapplied

A VSM reflective of cybernetics, that is responding to influential feedback and adapting to self-induced change, applies to internal dimensions of an organization as the independently existing system. Here, phenomenology that includes culturally relevant moderators of recall, for example attitude and relationship, may be applied alongside TMC processing methods to increase persuasiveness. It is at this point that the communication loop (between sender and receiver) makes a complete cycle. The outcome of the theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour (Azjen, 2002) applied to premium stakeholders will demonstrate whether enacting the communication process and activating latent information works. Then the application of the concept of viable systems is a justifiable route to a theoretically sound communication model for corporate leadership, aiming to maintain positively perceived brand value and reputation.

2.7 Brand

2.7.I Brand Value

Since the matter of company viability is dependent on customers’ perception vis-a-vis an axiological perspective, it is important to query the perceived brand value and the processes by which it translates into actual value for the customer. Investigating this philosophy, Tracey, Di Domencia and Haugh
(2010) executed a relevant qualitative study in eight UK social enterprises. Respondents needed to have commented on an organization that reflected their personal views. The researcher could engage answers from eight companies - enough to capture at least one factor in a non-parametric way (compare section 4.9); this indicated a good degree of validity and rigour. The study had a perceptual approach, and found that for responsiveness to a macro-environment, there must be continual adaptation of norms and values. Effectively the customer would be internalising the image of the company and its offerings, making this a part of personalised experiences and therefore configuring what is important to them in a brand. The paper however did not investigate longer-term embodiment of these offerings or clarify how the customer would interpret equity.

On the other hand, Keller (2009) explored brand value as a precursor to this all-important consumer based brand equity (CBBE) in a more tangible integrated versatile and encompassing brand resonance overall framework. With the writers building on a presumption from prior research that a brand exists in the mind of customers, their building a theoretical model was to create a tool to assist the process of lean marketing and brand building combined. The writers outlined that value is actualised via a combination of performance, judgements, feelings, imagery, and salience in shared customer and company experiences. The model communicates that there is no linear approach to the business exchange at any stage of that exchange, as may be projected by intense marketing campaigns. It is in contrast, a matter of social constructivism as put philosophically by Paton (2003), provided the information to make those
decisions is readily available. Keller (2009) explain accordingly, that at the crux of this framework, is the resonance of the brand. This creates a space for consistently adding value to products though, as described by Keller this does not categorically cap what that value could be. Similarly, Finne and Gronroos (2009) seem to extend Keller’s concept (2009) in greater depth and breadth. They projected external, internal and historical elements as well as adding future elements to stakeholder integration of brand messages. This reiterates that equity, indicative of value, is not stationary but is perceived as having even more value later in the exchange between the organization and stakeholders.

2.7.II Brand Equity and Reputation

Brand equity can be defined as the value premium that is assigned to the brand based on the recognition of that brand, and how its products and services may translate into revenue in comparison the products and services for another brand (Keller, 2009 and Punyaprabhasara, 2017). While equity might be limited to buyers’ perceptions, reputation as indicated by Winn, Macdonald and Zietsma (2008) has been termed for many years as “a perceptual representation or assessment of a firm”. This the writers claim, is bound by stakeholder theory, and therefore may include both buyers and suppliers. Reputation is only determined by what these stakeholders attribute to them and what they are seen to be (Walker, 2010). Therefore brand equity, an outcome marker of brand value, is only real if any semblance of a brand message - one that communicates brand reputation - or what some (Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty, 2006) loosely equate to identity and image - is sound.
Indeed, some communications specialists who have studied and applied theory to the topic for decades, for example van Dijk (1998, 2014) and Marsen (2006), reaffirm that communication has not actually taken place until the message is received and interpreted. Like Paton (2003), van Dijk subscribes to social constructivism and hence the involvement of people and experiences in understanding the environment. On the other hand, Marsen (2006), similar to later writers O’Cass and Heirati (2015) had approached communication from a somewhat sensory or stimulatory perspective, advocating for a variety of methods by which the message is received and processed. Neither of the two approaches can be considered as more important than the other, or mutually exclusive. However, they may be applicable to varying degrees and at different points along the continuum of business exchanges.

It is particularly important in transactions, as this continuum will reflect that it is the integration of a message, which determines whether a potential customer can be converted into an actual customer, and remain one that is loyal to a reputable brand (Mascarenhas, Kesevan and Bernacchi, 2006). The brand ideally will have a reputation that is being defined as a consistent stellar provider, as further explored in Feldman, Bahamonde and Bellido (2014). This detailed and large-scale investigation was culturally situated in Peru. Spanning 15 industries, represented by 69 companies, and including 1500 respondents, this yielded results that are somewhat generalizable to the discussion of how reputation is sustained. Both Mascarenhas, Kesevan and Bernacchi (2006) and Jones (2012) were indicative and specific in asserting that pivotal to brand success is how customers as buyers, who may be involved in the experience
of the brand, are free to interpret experiences. Feldman, Bahamonde and Bellido (2014) also implied this in their interpretations; they included both suppliers and buyers as premium stakeholders who will subsequently be a part of a new kind of branding processes. Comparable to Chu, Hsu and Li (2010) however, Mascarenhas, Kesevan and Bernacchi (2006) and Feldman, Bahamonde and Bellido (2014) do not go into great detail about how that would occur, especially for the higher performing companies, as in the latter study. Yet what appears to be consistent is that wherever certain challenges exist such as change in organizations, the latitude of interpretation of what the organizational mission, vision or subsequent offerings will be, was essential.

Chu, Hsu and Li, (2010) whose writings had focused on marketing communications, expressed IMC simply yet coherently as a cross-functional process in communication strategy; and hereby to some degree this accounts for the scope of communication that is expected. But they do not expand on mode, methods or culture, nor comment on the intertextuality in which communication can take place. However as explored previously, Duncan and Everett (1993) appeared to summarise IMC more thoroughly as a combination of theory, strategy and tactics. This by reasonable assumption implies IMC is not confined to verbal communication.

For example, Chahal (2013) reported that the Linguabrand language consultancy, found brands spend less than a quarter of expenditure on verbal communication (£2 million) versus on visual communication, which racked up a total of £8.7 billion. With knowledge of the company as a communications
firm, the writer’s exploration of the study’s results would have a fair level of validity to contribute to understanding the balance of what is involved in branding and marketing of the brand. However the reliability and generalisability of the results are questionable as marketing campaigns change, and different products will have dissimilar campaigns, often governed by the corporate message. It is true that the phenomenology of marketing reflects inescapable realities of what is happening in the present, and in certain buying cultures as also shown by Caemmerer’s Renault brand case study (2009). Yet both studies reinforce that greater focus on the background to business activity or the impact of corporate communication, is warranted rather than a tunnel approach to marketing. Accordingly, the ensuing section discusses studies including recognisable brands, and aspects of their corporate communication strategies.

2.7.III A Selection of Relevant Branding Studies in Service and Manufacturing

2.7.III.i Introduction

Brand identity relates very closely with the concepts of familiarity and trust. These are particularly relevant to the brand and change management when the brand is undergoing change: the organizational aim will be that the public has a high level of brand awareness and keen perception about new brand offerings. During change however, there may be expected gaps in this public knowledge of the brand. It is important therefore to look futuristically, wherein potential associations with the public, which are aspired to by the brand, are projected. The features of these associations will reflect the brand’s desirable qualities, and distinguish it from competitors. Brand identity must be sustainable, implying consumers readily identify with products or services. So
questions may be asked if there is undesired mutability between brand identity, perception and image. In the final analysis, the importance of what the public decides is key to sustaining their interest in the brand and how communication about the brand is modelled in networking, cannot be understated.

At the same time, as intimated by Jin et al. (2017) especially in a postmodern landscape, the type of business and what it offers doesn’t necessarily correlate with the TMC methods chosen; but it is markedly different in retail for example, where focus is on purchasing or sales, and transactions are brief. However, this thesis broadly addresses service and manufacturing type industries. Due to the extent of engagement of stakeholders in these industries, the communication and branding processes are similar and provide more opportunities for scrutiny.

2.7.iii The Studies

Using secondary data, and primary data integrating qualitative work done with the Renault car manufacturer, Caemmerer (2009) outlined how the creative corporate execution of IMC in a brand, taking cues from the country image, would be successful. With a popular, emotive and resonant brand such as Renault, this study appropriately factored varied modes of communication, while incorporating the relatable human component, which would lead to brand resonance. The main drawback for how the brand would appear during the stages of its projection, lie in whether perceptions of culture were deemed equivalent to how the brand resonated, and if they were a rule of thumb for customers’ understanding the brand. This may be separate from or synthesised
with how customers are part of the buying experience; in either case, the
importance of ethical and authentic direct corporate communication is evident.

To be more specific, Chahal (2013) and Porcu (2012) for example, imply that
verbal communication or any communication tool, should be perceived as a
strategic weapon. If well designed, this corporate armour potentially allows the
organization to overcome hurdles that might have seemed insurmountable.
This relates for example, to where brand resonance has become embedded in
phenomenology as opposed to being an enabler of fluid of communication. The
writers’ interpretations send a strong signal regarding the face and purpose of
communication in whatever form it takes. Corporate communication strategies
would encourage stakeholders to actively engage the philosophy of
interpretivism by applying their social values to brand experiences and in the
cultures these stakeholders find themselves, rather than passive acceptance or
non-acceptance of the brand.

It would appear that the discussion of culture as above could be extended to
business culture as well. An applicable qualitative investigation by Martin et al.
(2005) cited an extensive Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
(CIPD) study executed on 55 Scottish companies in 2003. With convenience
sampling, it determined perceptions of Human Resources (HR) employees
about work culture and subsequent branding of the organization. This
addressed branding internally and externally; it also highlighted the importance
of personalising a brand, and that HR teams should play a greater role in this
process. Convenience sampling done from only one department in the
organization may have meant the randomness and to a degree generalisability of results was comprised. Yet since HR is a bridge between staff and clients, their departmental view can establish objectivity in the matter of branding. It creates a space for post-positivist thinking and, elicits new postmodern truths relating to a brand on the edge of growth and change. These truths are relevant as exemplified in this thesis’ case studies of organizations ranging from three to one hundred years old. The configuration of communication as investigated will have direct implications on stakeholder impressions attributed to an organization and, sustaining the all-important brand name. If this concept were applied to corporate communication, it is likely that brand value and results are realised on a much grander scale than name only, via longer-term reputation.

Conducting an experiment on the frequency and intensity of communication and the impact on statement credibility (and therefore reputation) Koch and Zerback (2013) identified two counteracting effects. The first is the truth effect of repetition, and the sense of credibility established when having encountered the message previously. Importantly the second effect however, when repetition exceeds a threshold, there is an indirect and negative effect, with the receiver construing repetition as an attempt at persuasion. The receivers perceive this as limitations to their freedom; it prompts reactance, a possible outcome of mistrust hereby influencing the reduction of participants’ trust in the origin of the message. This either directly or indirectly implies a decreased overall message credibility. At the same time, while the receivers might have heard the message before, any implicit implication of minor variations in the message are not uncommon when seeking truth. In a continued search for
truth, if the normalcy of these variations (within threshold limits) are applied to both TMC and DC, it is possible that the acceptable level of the two exists here and, can bridge any gaps harmoniously.

2.7.IV Bridging gaps: Culture and Modern Communication in Brand Context

A key study (Shin, Pang and Kim, 2015) suggested further research to understand how people respond to the effectiveness of feedback factors. This is because the mutuality between players in communication and the forms of communication, may translate into the ways that culture affects engagement with online or computer-mediated communication. The writers also suggest in-depth interviews with corporate communication staff to establish if feature differences in online communication platforms are influenced by active decision making by those key staff. Essentially, the question is asked as to whether online detail will make much of a difference in the effectiveness of corporate communication or is it less crucial than non-computer mediated communication.

According to Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) dialogic communication is not required, but information dissemination is. This is therefore expected to have the capacity to be configured in such a way that clients learn about new offerings, the location of a business and any other salient information regarding the organization under investigation. Specifically, the writers had also noted that large companies use online media for information mostly as an information resource rather than for communication or building relationships. In fact, across both of the most frequently used social media websites, at the time Facebook
and Twitter, Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) determined that such companies including not-for-profit organizations did not fully utilize what was considered to be opportunities to engage potential customers. In 2012, Lovejoy and Saxton also wrote that 30% of the Fortune 500 companies initiated the use of Twitter, as shown in one such case study of this thesis. Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) claimed most not-for-profits were either negligent in simple tasks of updating the public about a campaign, or work initiatives they began; organizations, the writers found used Twitter for dissemination purposes only, versus for any significant interaction.

This is generally the opposite with SMEs, wherein actively engaging social media and mixt platforms is practised or encouraged (The Digital Garage, Goo.gl/HXEFH1, 2016). It may be argued that reasons for this include a lack of complex networking communication mechanisms within these SMEs. Comparatively, larger companies may have and can otherwise close these gaps for example by taking advantage of well-funded communication strategies and existing networks with similarly-sized and well-established contemporaries.

Saffer, Sommerfeldt and Taylor (2013) however found that using Twitter for two-way or dialogic communication purposes led to positive perceptions of organization-public relationships and gave some assurances that said company was committed to the relationship. Yet, questions remain, as to whether this relationship actually translates into business that is more valuable. Also, data relating to the degree that social media are useful for cultivating corporate relationships may still be incomplete. Furthermore, many underlying
secondary inquiries encapsulate the theorising process regarding the ways in which these TMC modes are utilised.

2.7.V Contextualising and Assessing Branding

To begin the process of reviewing select brands, Free's (1996) compilation of a six-point method of assessment of branding is espoused. They are considered in the sum of who (as demonstrated in DC) and what (in TMC) is crucial during communication.

- Commitment of chief executive officers (CEOs), as highest on the list
- Staff understand the vision
- Vision as set staff goals
- Benchmark against other companies within and outside the industry
- Customer focus
- Technology

Though developed in the context of business brands or the private sector, these six points of reference are applicable in the broader sense of branding in identifiable culturally situated entities. This becomes increasingly clearer throughout the detailed discussion of the exemplars, and later the research methodology. Both involve getting a vivid understanding of the expectations of communication in the sociocultural contexts in which data is gathered. Communication at different stages in the transmission of a brand message, may also for example, be affected by or be an outcome of philosophies enacted by message senders and receivers. Reflecting on critical theory, communication is influenced by the country background or organizational culture that exist, and time lapses over which important changes in the organization may occur. In
view of the relevance of these contexts, this exploration reflects how the six markers incorporate involvement of decision makers with plural stakeholders, socially situated means by which staff may conceptualise or apply brand vision, the consideration of others in the wide industry, focus on customer centric planning and postmodern inclusion of TMC when transmitting brand messages.

The business environment itself can be virtual or in real time; but applicable and innovative communication remains crucial as TMC and DC strategies are being investigated. With this premise, the next section reviews online data of select organizations to provide a snapshot of social contexts and clear trends or deficits in communication within these contexts. Discussions continue with how they inform theorising via philosophical considerations regarding the way corporate communication is streamlined using accessible relevant techniques.

### 2.8 Secondarily sourced Ethnographic data: Socially relevant Exemplars

#### 2.8.1 The Socio-Political Sector

Government premiership, referenda and politics in general often give an accurate snapshot of cultural expectations of a geographical region. Specifically, what is good or bad about a campaign’s infrastructure, which aims to communicate with the public, becomes strikingly obvious. Politicians or their representatives strive for popular votes and candidates present themselves or a topic, on the most visible and criticism-prone scale, for extended periods. So they will know just as vividly if the campaign mechanics - their businesses’ communication strategies to brand their leaders or political party - are working. The three prominent exemplars in geographical regions in which the thesis is
focused, were examined as mosaics of cultural expectations of the populace. So how the key expectations of this thesis are informed, will become more lucid.

2.8.1.1 United States of America (USA)

It is relevant to mention, as part of understanding the ethnographic process, the researcher’s familiarity of living and working in two major cities on the South and East coasts of the USA and travelling across seventeen of the states within these areas. Combined with researcher education in a Caribbean-based North American school system, these experiences give clarity on the point that some phenomenological aspects of cultures by region or state are distinct and separate from others especially where each state has its own governing legislature. Although this knowledge does not give a detailed picture of the entire vast US business landscape, it does reveal a commonality of trade in these regions; also it confirmed that existing socio-political structures still facilitate different business or organizational cultures, and specific institutional cultures (Hatch and Zilber, 2012). A shared culturally situated awareness and actively “doing” in a country perceived as a pinnacle of opportunity and knowledge, are routinely identified across the nation as the American Dream.

This dream of greatness had historically been espoused by renowned personas in the USA’s history. Dr Benjamin Carson, a decorated pioneer neurosurgeon and proponent of such national values via the Carson Scholar’s Fund, became the leading 2016 USA presidential candidate for several months. He had gathered the largest social media following on Facebook amongst the 10 main candidates as he aimed to communicate this dream to potential voters. This
was at a time when the USA was going through a negative change in its economic standing, in comparison to the growth of other large nations. However, when he slid in the polls after badly construed comments on the Paris and San Bernadino terrorist hits, Carson restructured his campaign. This was to try conveying his “brand” strength more effectively, that is, his competence and knowledge of how to deal with such crucial issues. In a live FOX News report (2015), 30-year army veteran General Dees and new campaign manager, confirmed this drastic unexpected drop was due to the populace not receiving these critical intended messages. The Carson brand campaign should have communicated a clear informed and firm foreign policy approach in tandem with other heads of state, in particular, when called upon to address tough terrorism policies. What went wrong in the communication process?

Dees went on to explain there was inadequate integration of the candidate’s key message across various platforms launched to communicate the message. Previously surging in first or second place, the candidate should have been sufficiently poised to make that transitional step into the vigour and rigour of presidential primaries. Starting with a grassroots campaign that somehow managed to outdo all other republican candidates in fundraising, as a political neophyte he needed to secure public confidence, or bring undecided voters in his favour. Yet, the team felt the communication strategy required tweaking at best, or at worst had reached its expiry date (FOX, 2015). There were too many branches to the infrastructure working on their own accord, and separate from each other. In addition, the excessive spending behind the Carson brand faltered; new advisers and public stakeholders felt the costly communication
modus operandi was not effective. The best representation of Carson as a plausible tenacious candidate was yet to be seen, despite the money being spent. Via regular ethnographic observations of his social media during damage control, a reduced number of previously media-unfriendly Facebook posts, and television appearances plus selective press engagements, were noticeable. Efforts were made for Carson’s core message to remain succinctly focused to have the requisite resonating effect. But his team soon realised that too much time elapsed after impairments in the campaign, while a newer communication strategy was being developed; and so other candidates gained traction.

What could have been Carson’s biggest hurdle was activating information in print or what some writers (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) would call latent information if it had not already been aptly engaged. This data should have been not only more obvious, but also resonant, reverberating and audible in a way that appealed to the public’s sense of reason and trust. Over time, Carson forged an alliance with one reputable opinion journal, the International Journal Review that espoused his own values. Links to favourable journal posts were regularly seen on his Facebook page; yet though consistently scoring highest on likeability, Carson did not personify a push past the trials of communicating what appealed to the passion of the masses. Within ten months of the campaign launch, he exited the presidential race and joined forces with someone, who to a significant degree, shared his values and no-nonsense approach: the more aggressive candidate who ultimately became USA’s president.
2.8.1.ii United Kingdom (UK)

This lack of success in engaging the populace may be compared with the UK. To authenticate the ethnography espoused further, it is also crucial in this section to state that the researcher has lived and worked in major urban and suburban areas in Britain (London, and Greater Manchester). This provided opportunities for understanding British culture; often cities and large towns are a microcosm of the country at large, as it relates to the culture of express implicit information and communication needs. So one of the noticeable trending topics at the turn of the millennium was the unease with perceived negative economic and social spin-offs from immigration. Subsequently formal discussions, for example on BBC’s socio-political television programme, Question Time (Brighton, 2016) regularly engaged a studio audience about whether the UK should disengage from the European Union it joined in 1974. Underlying or emerging queries, reverberated across the country, yet this national conversation did not abate confusion that took place some months later during political change and turmoil.

There was a formal EU referendum in 2016, on whether the nation should remain part of the EU or be leavers and be independent of benefits or what some may perceive as drawbacks that EU membership brought. The populace however, appeared to struggle to make informed decisions. Discussions about impending change, the effectiveness of the previous single economy arrangement, and what change meant for trade agreements and immigration, remained indefinitely unclarified (Question Time, 2018), as they did not appear to be explored fully on the political table in the midst of imminent government
upheaval. So not only was there a general disconcertedness in the populace, but leadership change in the ruling party. Mr Cameron, of the Conservatives, and Prime Minister of the nation, implied in his resignation speech (2016) that he could not steer the nation with a clear conscience. The referendum outcome (52% leave) did not reflect his values, leadership strengths, or in 20/20 hindsight, the values of many (48% remain) of the electorate. Further, at the time of the referendum, as the value of the pound sterling fell (Oanda, 2016), answers in the broadcast media may have been inadequate, as was any reasonably accurate prediction of how EU withdrawal may impact the daily lives of persons who knew nothing different. Stretching from 2016 to 2018, there were calls for a second referendum by those who felt misinformed, uninformed, or under-informed (Question Time, Guildford, 2018), but the EU parliament steadfastly opposed this early on, and would not entertain the requests. During this period, Angela Merkel, the German chancellor at an EU summit, continued to remind Britain of its binding obligations (The Guardian Politics, 2017).

The change branded as Brexit, proved to have embattled the new Prime Minister Theresa May, who triggered article 50 in response to the referendum, then embarked on a long road to the UK’s disengagement from the EU. There are signs this change may have become a turning point in Britain’s postmodern history, with her challenges in maintaining the UK’s credibility in Europe and Commonwealth counterparts. This was evidenced wherein May, in 2018, by parliamentary vote, had to agree only to take the country through Brexit, but must step down from premiership before elections in 2020. This series of drastic
changes and domino effects of the changes, seemed to be caused and bound by the less than candid approaches to transparent trusted communication.

2.8.1.iii CARICOM - Two key players: large English Speaking islands

General elections in the West Indies (a place that is also a significant part of the researcher’s formative experiences) are celebrated as traditionally democratic processes. Many countries gained independence from European colonial rule, within the last two or three generations. An example of elections in more recent times, includes Jamaica, where one political party the People’s National Party (PNP) had held the reins on government for four of the last five general elections, which by Westminster standards, take place every four to five years. So it was no surprise when political polling and the media (Charles 2014) strongly suggested, the PNP felt they would easily win the next general election in 2016, an outcome of the precedence they believed was already set. However, the party president Portia Simpson Miller had often taken a stance not to speak directly with the electorate or media (Charles, 2014) and instead, disseminate information via handlers, which at times meant the police force.

According to political commentators locally and abroad (Charles, 2014), this amounted to posturing, while other PNP parliamentarians also alienated much of the electorate (Francis, 2014) which may have otherwise come out to vote. On the other hand, the then opposition party Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) led by Andrew Holness was more visible and interactive. Additionally, he insisted that each candidate had at least one social media account by which obstruction-free interaction could readily occur with the populace, and importantly,
incorporate younger voters. This approach catapulted him to win the elections, albeit by a small margin of one seat. Nine months later in the November 2016 local government elections, the JLP wrestled many councils from the previous party that had not yet recognised that their communication machinery needed overhauling. Although the voter turnout at 30% was still far from ideal and, the municipal council of the capital city (a microcosm of the nation) similarly won by only a single vote, the populace had spoken. They indicated their willingness to be part of change alongside a more accessible prime minister. Overall with the very slim margins in elections, the clamour of the slighted opposition can still be heard. So the prime minister factoring the democratic history of the nation and CARICOM, has had to recognise the importance of the opposition as premium stakeholders and involve them appropriately in more decision making.

Comparatively in Trinidad, for the previous premier Kamla Persad-Bissessar of the United National Congress (UNC) party, some landmark international matters, for example her advocacy for decisions such as biased entry clearance at immigration borders, were repeatedly questioned. There appeared to be insufficient publicly available information to guide those decisions; and in some cases, issues were brought to diplomatic counterparts, or for the attention of the Caribbean Court of Justice via CARICOM (Chung, 2016a). After one term in government up to 2015, the premier was deposed and notably, trade relationships and channels of communication between Trinidad and some other countries including Jamaica have been under revision (Johnson, 2016). However, on investigation of the 2015 elections, the High Court of Appeal established Persad-Bissessar was subject to what was classed as judicial.
Communication procedures for changes in the 2015 general elections when she was ousted, appeared to be unlawful, and closed to some stakeholders, including the outgoing party leaders (CNC3, 2016a). But though that worked in favour of the UNC, while serving as leader of the opposition, Persad-Bissessar failed to convincingly communicate to the Speaker of the house the importance of a matter brought for consideration (CNC3, 2016b); and discussions were blocked by standing order. Then, the former premier was ejected from parliament for breaching protocol when she improperly protested the decision. This course of socio-political events of the nation revealed communication gaps that cannot be ignored in the existing formal and cultural CARICOM contexts.

2.8.11 The Private Sector
Exemplars are a few of the most culturally recognisable or decorated brands trending in the USA, UK and CARICOM, based on innovative industry standards. While mostly including brands in similar industries as the main sample for this thesis, some are brands are individuals from the creative arts hereby providing points of consideration when considering the likeability factor of a brand. It is also apt that with the scope and relatable back-stories, all the exemplars encapsulate much of what brands find stakeholders will respond to, and therefore have the maximum effect while remaining true to brand mission and overall brand image. The fact that many of the brands are under ten years old, and have undergone necessary changes in their life spans, yet at the same time gained the attention of many, attests in part to notions that substantial financial investment is not the sum total of suitable communication strategies.
2.8.II.1 North America

A salient case, with a hugely positive outcome, is documented in pop culture. Young charismatic singing performer Justin Bieber from Canada, having temporary residence in the USA, emerged on the international scene with significant speed and previously unimaginable success. The stark reality is that reportedly (Complex, 2017) due to limited finances or small start-up funds, a parent as a major decision maker in his teen years, went the route of uploading rogue videos; the latter was a minimalist input, but a parent actively sought an audience to view the creative material which led to great results. These included direct communication from industry leaders such as Scott Braun and Usher, who heralded Bieber’s entry into entertainment. Mostly limiting his entourage to this close set of formal renowned mentors from the music industry and essential security, Justin Bieber’s net worth soared over USD $200M and with an earning power of $60-$80M annually, while he appears on the Forbes Rich List (2016).

Devon Franklin, an executive producer opening his company in Los Angeles in 2014, after working with Sony Entertainment, and entertainer Will Smith’s Overbrook Entertainment (Devon Franklin Entertainment, 2016) to name a few can also be cited. His concept of using TMC aligned with DC as credible and wholesome seems accessible for discussion. In his succinct yet insightful posts on his Website and via Instagram, he appears to embody not only clarity but undeniable effervescence that engages the listener or reader. Via his many appearances in different contexts or media such as talk shows including Oprah, Dr Oz and Dr Phil, plus radio programmes where direct communication is even more evident, he holds an audience. He uses authentic timely tactics, hard graft
and industry-verifiable accomplishments. Franklin’s adopted communication strategy demonstrative of his talents, continues to reap benefits. With respect to premium stakeholders, Franklin’s website (2018) shows him being voted by the Variety Magazine as one of the 10 producers to watch and by Ebony Magazine in the Top 100 African-Americans in America. Additionally, the producer-entrepreneur is in the Top 10 Industry Impact Players in the country. This is another example of the viability of a seemingly trustworthy reputable brand that can be relayed convincingly in a straightforward way. Crucially, this viability has been sustainable where it is important and relevant to stakeholders.

2.8.II.ii Europe

Laissez-faire leaders and founders of Innocent Juices barely afloat in 1998, gauged feedback to their first attempt at fresh healthy juices. According to their website (2015), a simple tag line was asked of patrons at a country fair: should we leave our jobs to focus on the juice business? “Yes” cups went in one bin and “No” cups in the other. “Yes” prevailed, and with this one unobtrusive move, their accessible relevant leadership and customer centric style thrived. When trading independently, Innocent boasted excesses of £40M annual turnover, enjoying this calibre of success for several years. Compare this approach to the HAYS agency, a financially stable and well-established recruitment organization, that according to its website (2015), is most popularly known for jobs in accountancy, insurance, banking, HR, IT and finance. HAYS customarily sends one person to countries worldwide, to speak directly with divisional heads when exploring new markets; though the communication strategy is minimalist, HAYS has been ranked as highly successful (HAYS, 2015).
Another current example is Bianca Miller-Cole: taking advantage of postmodern entrepreneurial programmes seeking the best of participants in face-to-face communication, she placed a commendable second in BBC TV’s “The Apprentice” 2014. Miller-Cole, originally an owner of a revolutionary ethically balanced hosiery company, plus a personal branding agency, is now an author and professional speaker-mentor. The company website (Miller, 2016) records her self-reported strategy to advocate for effective networking, honing skills of a small financially manageable team, and by Instagram and Twitter accounts, exploiting the impact of crisp minimalist but personalised online contact with the public. As a result, she has many of the top names in industry as elite clients, as well as premium business associates as indicated on her website in 2019.

2.8.II.iii An International Mega-star from the Caribbean, and a Local Exemplar

In July 2016, and November 2016 respectively, the fastest man in recorded history, Usain Bolt along with Gatorade (2015) and Universal Pictures (2016) released autobiographies “The Boy who Learned to Fly” and “I am Bolt” respectively. They chronicled a narrative of humble beginnings, hard graft, meagre resources, a clear dream, dedication and the impact or importance of close trusted advisors. The outcome of the productions indicate that the narrative always existed, but earlier communication mechanisms in the life cycle of brand Usain Bolt, were sporadic or financially limited mostly to the athlete’s home territory. With more success however, the mechanisms could be put in high gear, where the most outstanding dimensions of his persona, trademark “lightning bolt pose” and accessibility featured significantly. In later
years, even towards the athlete’s retirement from the sport, when he engaged with social media more regularly, often as a result of sponsorship and brand ambassador deals, the posts still were consistently brief yet accurate for the intended purpose. Mechanisms for Usain Bolt’s communication strategy, which though now better funded, remained true to effective minimalist approaches. While telling more about the Bolt brand, they also provided a trustworthy reliable source of information. Now Bolt is one of the most recognisable and sought-after brands in recent history with a strategically predictable investable product.

A local exemplar became evident in the oral history proffered in the 25-year strong Mandeville Art Fair in Jamaica, West Indies. It was fertile ground for understanding culture, identifying new subject matter, and gaining alternative approaches to artwork, compared to what previously existed in the regional operating space. By interviewing artists themselves, capturing the changing reality of the brands they represented was possible; and equally as important was an appreciation of the local region and any commentary that may exist. Art potentially depicts reflections of history or a journey throughout history. It can be used therefore as a secondary resource to be evaluated as part of a narrative. According to the organizers in personal communication (RC Diocese, 2014) the history of the area is preserved either by commentary or primarily through the mode and vibrancy of colour. However they shared that in practice there is no emphasis on social commentary, as West Indians will express views readily without creating an artefact of it. Most pieces were very organic, colourful and precise in presentation, reflecting the brand or regional vibrancy intended by the organizers. This might be compared with writers Adami and
Kress (2014) in “Text and Talk” who also indicate the preference for colour, a concept applicable to end users being attracted to a brand offering.

Interviewing art historian Wince (2014) and viewing his works at the fair, he consistently used strong vivid colours, as almost to encourage a conversation of the tangible visible paintings he created. He felt a need to preserve history; and much of what he represented was from photographic memory, implying his unmistakeable participation in the process of replication. Wince believes the images are preserved by colour, as he paints them in an unadulterated format. There are recognisable and iconic items in his paintings, not so small however that detail was compromised. The artist is only one of many, so these findings cannot be generalised. Yet, that he as historian chose to document minutiae, nostalgic experiences, and iconic images that could alert the audience to his brand, indicated that visual representations have a place in branding processes. They also seem to allow space for growth within the culture that the brand exists, whether or not the culture outside of the brand changed. The artist was also quick to verbally share the background to his work, versus leaving art to speak for itself. This suggested that even in its most organic form, like other visuals or by extension online TMC, artistic visuals are not adequate in communicating all that a brand represents. Also, it is indicative as outlined by Fraser’s (2017) exploration of visual culture, that the expected and possibly most desirable trend is a blend of static and more interactive communication.

2.8.III Putting Exemplars into Context

A series of points for consideration emanate from these exemplars. The ideas have a trajectory towards negating that communication remains passive as a
product of powerful time-based changes (such as technology) and affirming that it is purpose driven. If driven, it may not equate to stand-alone TMC. Importantly also, the exemplars show that the world of business is no longer ineludibly centred round a few companies, creatives and their associated brands, to provide key services or products as the case may be. This is so because there exists a multitude of options some of which by virtue of their value, will be more desirable and reputable than others. Premium stakeholders (buyers and suppliers) can have unlimited access to information about them all, via visible internet technology. However, how much of this serves the real communicative purpose as would have been intended by the organization’s decision makers?

Accordingly, while developing this thesis’ rationale, such successes or failures as shown by the exemplars, were contrasted with traditional communication and marketing firms for example the researcher’s 10 years’ combined experience working at US and UK based research and market research companies. The general conclusion indicated that such firms may struggle for credibility and do not always secure premium clients via digital diet methods (Brabazon, 2013). Some writers for example Beugelsdijk, Van Shaikz, and de Groot (2004) reiterate that potential premium stakeholders believe trust is fundamental to economic progress; and trust may not be transmitted via online methods alone. This reality reflects Foucauldian theory, which advocates that the essence of truth must be evident. From these initial ethnographic observations, it appears that quantity of money spent does not automatically guarantee success, but content and mode of delivery of the intended message are critical. So, during communication processes the clarity conveyed
combined with accessibility and even brand likeability, deserve a second look. Further, finance involved in such strategies is worth consideration.

2.8.IV A Financial Perspective

As previously intimated in the introduction and literature review chapters, organizations (including start-ups) which are undergoing change, are more likely to have a limited budget; and especially for the latter, they do not recoup initial outlay costs until after a year or two. So secondarily, this thesis suggests routes that limit spend yet increase effective communication; the process might include businesses whose changes involve physical or virtual expansion (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2001). Jointly these points stress the importance of related prudence and timely ample precise data for premium stakeholders to make good decisions and define ways forward, if actively engaging a brand.

2.8.V Summary

So, the concern of this thesis will be about capturing attention promptly and conveying the most credible information in the shortest space of time and with the greatest effect. This may include technical elements and as communication theorising implies, human based elements. Culturally, these should be ideally transmitted over time while yet as discussed in Chapter 1, being unavoidably impacted by the communication narrative of generational change. This therefore suggests that for communication to be successful, it must be loyal to its definition of being a two-way process. Philosophies as embraced by individuals and organizations within identifiable cultures and business subcultures, will affect what occurs during communication processes.
Reciprocally, it follows that philosophy - which is governed partially by relevant epistemology - is vital to contextualise the subsequent methodology.

2.8.VI Epistemology and citations to justify decisions and assertions for FMA

Epistemology as the theory of knowledge and how that knowledge is justified, is especially applicable to how the knowledge challenges the status quo of the twenty-first century technological paradigm of communication: a synopsis of the area of concern (A). Van Dijk (2014) claims that interdisciplinary considerations are particularly important during the process of social constructivism, in creating knowledge and maintaining its flexibility. It is the overarching philosophy embraced in this thesis that to some degree reflects van Dijk’s advocacy of wide social discourse; it can translate into resonance of a particularly emotive subject, in this instance, just how pervasive TMC needs to be, in comparison to aligning it with DC. The degree of pervasiveness cannot be discussed without the guidance of a sound theoretical background and framework of ideas (F). Van Dijk’s generally unbiased approach reifies the concept that the literature implies, that such an investigation is wide open for discussion, as methodology and research design explore in the next chapter (M). Methods to do justice to the research are chosen via ethical processes. Together these are incorporated at subsequent points during the thesis; they are outlined primarily in line with Saunders’ (2019) research “onion”, with mention of other models. These and other details, with reference to a schematic and collective way in which the ultimate detailed case studies are approached, are also divulged in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY
3.0 CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY: ABSTRACT

The nature of this investigation required a wide scope of methodologies. This is given that the currently predominant and multifaceted approach to communication that is, via technologically mediated means, is being queried and challenged to varying degrees. There was a necessary interrogation into the history of communication in the geographical and cultural contexts of the sample, generally to determine more details of how or when the communication landscape may have changed. More importantly, this investigation focused on what the implicit and explicit expectations of communication within those contexts are. This information could then narrow down the subsequent quantitative and qualitative processes to ascertain if there had been critical information and due processes that had been omitted during these changes. It would also be determined if assumptions about what communication strategies should be, were now being superimposed on organizations that had themselves been undergoing change; such a dichotomous situation might have been a concern for decision makers. So a key point will be about building or maintaining the reputation of the organization’s brand, that is, dependent on at which life cycle stage it would have been. Significant emphasis is placed on the qualitative responses of decision makers’ perception of the essence of communication required, matched with the mostly quantitative responses collected from the premium stakeholders. The content of stakeholder responses must be factored in the complete communication cycle; and given that they as previously defined and categorised by Porter (1979), are the mainstay of the organization’s source of revenue, their views must be incorporated at some point. It may be argued that the stakeholders would
expect specific measurable information from the organization, and this lends itself to at least some quantitative analyses. Yet, since organizations are building reputation, details of respondents’ views most evident in qualitative methods of information gathering, are crucial. As implied in the research objectives, this embraced an applicable dyadic approach. Throughout the process of data collection, guidelines from the British Psychological Society’s (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics (2014) plus Bolton University’s ethics procedures, were used to create an ethics template.

3.1 Preface to Methodology

3.1.1 Ethics
The question of ethics in the social sciences discipline is one that requires significant attention to detail. Considering ethics in this field does not automatically involve a clinical approach as is the case in health sciences for example, nor does it require reliance on a high degree of empiricism inherent to applied sciences. However, there remains an underlying importance for accuracy and a true reflection of individual views, which is standard for any body of research, but particularly so when human participants are involved. Face-to-face engagement in primary data collection is crucial in a technological age where copious individualised information is made available online via websites and commentaries on social media. Therefore, certain guidelines regarding this complement of secondary data should also be applied. In general, the overarching guidelines regarding ethics as a whole, as available in established psychology organizations, have been engaged in this research, in order to govern how data is handled.
At the outset, as an internationally aligned investigation involving ethnography and respondents from three different geographical regions, the relevant and associated psychology bodies are referenced and discussed. Furthermore, this complies with mandates of The University of Bolton, as a UK-based higher education institution, to produce sound and robust research as expected by the Research Excellence Framework (REF, 2014). REF involves internationally pertinent, innovative and world-class research for any study completed in Britain; so this is additional justification that relevant bodies which provide guidelines to refine data collection and manipulation should be referred to.

In the broadest sense of data collection, especially in an investigation involving ethnography, it is initially recognised that enforceable laws exist in all three regions regarding the right to engage with publicly observable accessible information without fear of prosecution. This especially for this study excludes children or those considered otherwise vulnerable. With other individuals from whom data can be freely gathered, there are stipulations in the Research Ethics Guidebook (2018) to indicate specific questions that should be asked about whom and in what setting the data is being collected. Whether the observational research is intrusive to the respondent, and if the safety of the researcher is ensured, are also critical. Both require sensitivity to the nature of questions asked, how much personal information is requested and the physical or reputational threats that exist for either participants in the conversation. These questions include matters of consent, choice, and clarifying if there is a valid reason why consent may not have been obtained. Accordingly, it must be noted that the single most common and clearly stated prerequisite for ethical studies
with humans is, that for intentional responses via a questionnaire or interview, consent should be granted. This covers whether data can be collected, how it is done and finally, the ways whereby it is used and stored.

The British Psychological Society (BPS) issued a Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) which is the benchmark for how work involving human respondents is executed in Europe. Its website (2018) asserts that there are four primary foci of the underlying ethical principles: competence, integrity, respect and responsibility. In the context of this thesis, competency is embraced with regards to the requisite skills involved in the sound data collection processes. Integrity can be deemed to be a measure of the degree of precision and reporting resulting from the most efficient way of conducting research safely without wastage of resources. This can be challenging for a discipline such as the social sciences, because it might be problematic to measure a true and ethical representation of human behaviour; and therefore assertions to an acceptable degree of certainty are equally difficult to be ascertained. On one hand, qualitative data with verbatim responses as far as possible and without embellishments, provide richness to the thesis. Whereas, quantitative empirical data, in some positivist schools of thought, is the only really reliable data, and the sole verifiable means to a valid investigation that aims to make stringent claims. It is partially with this background that integrity has to be taken seriously to reflect ontological truth in the most inclusive ethical manner. Claims therefore for the social sciences may be justified via the accurate intentional integration and triangulation of the data for both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This elicits appropriate or embedded connections between clearly identifiable
variables or groups of data, as opposed to insufficient or partially construed associations. Outcomes of flawed results could cause irretrievable reputational damage to participants and close stakeholders; this underscores the scope of this thesis’ integrity. So it is imperative to focus on whether procedures and strategies used for execution and analysis of the investigation maximise potential benefits, and responsibly minimises harm to those directly involved.

Aligned with the purpose of this thesis, the literature review and methodological processes included both online methods of gathering ethnographic data replete with information that could serve as a useful source, and face-to-face interactions. The BPS (2018) outlines, as factored extensively in this research, that where co-present observations are undertaken publicly, these should be limited to what research subjects would have experienced via strangers (persons unknown to them), under normal non-participant circumstances.

However, as also outlined by the BPS Ethics Guidelines for Internet Mediated Research (IMR, 2017), the technological aspect of the research may be faced with other “stranger” challenges. Deciphering what can or cannot be attempted while meeting general requirements as put forward in the code of ethics can be problematic. Regarding IMR, BPS published four separate principles namely: “a regard for the privacy, autonomy and dignity of communities and individuals as participants in the study, scientific integrity, social responsibility and maximising benefits and minimising harm” (BPS, 2018, p. 2).
Mutually respectful and direct communication (DC) as necessary, regarding using respondents’ publicly accessible information, and researcher obligation to manipulate the data in a judicious way, are generally paramount where DC or co-presence is possible. Yet, as is the case in this instance spanning three different geographical regions, it was not always probable, or it would not appear to be necessary, given the non-obtrusive theoretical nature of much of the investigations. As the BPS (2017) highlights however, it is the blurring of these lines that indicates there should still be some consideration of the four principles above. In the case of secondary data for example, as is openly available on social media, there is no explicit policy stipulation as to whether or not data can be used. But BPS (2018) documentation maintains that the crux of what defines public or private space - confidentiality, copyright, consent, withdrawal and debriefing altogether filtering to autonomy - would require some attention. The main consideration for the researcher would be if evaluating content of the posts as outlined in the research methodology, and undisclosed to the “participant” possibly as a form of justified deception, would result in any tangible damage or harm. Then, the assertion that the validity of the research, combined with the social value it contributes, can outweigh the need to gain explicit consent, and therefore justify the data observation.

Notwithstanding, it is felt for this investigation, that since the owners of the accounts agreed to the terms of engagement given by the host, relevant policies were taken into consideration. These conditions, such as whether the pages are on public or private settings, are actively engaged, subsequently determining if the information would be initially accessed. In fact, for the
purposes of this thesis, especially in the early stages of gaining an understanding of public and cultural perception of organizations’ brand communication strategies, only freely accessible pages were utilised. These included for example, web logs that are not subject to copyright laws (BPS, 2018). Furthermore, these amounted to a non-reactive observational process, where there was no specific need in this thesis for posts that were part of private domains of the users’ accounts. Yet in contrast, altogether this could provide a true picture of how the expectations of communication might have been perceived and actually preferred by the public.

On the other hand, in the latter stages of this thesis with case studies, some of which were part of the original complement observed during ethnography, explicit permission was requested via the respondents, to peruse their social media, and other communication material. This data set may have involved their premium stakeholders, and therefore carried more currency or scientific, economic and research value for the organizations, as well as the researcher. The respondents (who were decision makers or senior staff members) were informed of the nature of the investigation, the process, and desired outcomes, and how data would remain the property of the university. Should there be an intention of publishing of data, their responses would be anonymised.

Yet it does not mean, from an ethical standpoint, that permission to use observable information is manipulated in any way that a researcher may choose, for example for financial gain or respondent character representation and commentary. Rather academic advancement as defined in the university’s
ethics documentation, was the ultimate intentional goal. Respondents were not rewarded or coerced to reply to questions; yet, they were aware they could withdraw participation at any time and the comments discarded.

With regards to the rigour of scientific enquiry, the main factor the BPS (2017) claims is the limit placed on the level of control; and the greater the control that exists, the higher the value of the research. There may be important variables that needed to be controlled, such as the identity of the responder or the pattern, intensity and frequency of responses, that actually proved challenging to control. This may have been due for example to geographical distance or changes in the browser or setting history with regards to accessing individual organizations’ online data at any given time. The outcome could be findings with average precision, and subsequently less robust recommendations being made. This consequently may lead to harm to the business rather than benefit as a result of the investigations. So in each case study, there was always initial direct contact with the respondent. This was either face-to-face or by telephone to explain further detail of the research and to ask preliminary questions that set the context, and establish veracity and longevity of the online data. Upon agreement, the respondents were then supplied with the information sheet and consent documents. After this point, the data was gathered, and in 5 of the 6 case studies, it was face-to-face verbatim; for the Fortune 500 company in the USA, the questions were sent by email and completed by the respondent on company stationery. Prospects for follow-up communication were arranged, provided there were areas for clarification. Furthermore, through conversations
with the respondents, additional preliminary information about the case study organization, and how to source other secondary data were confirmed.

Joined closely with the matter of control, is the necessity to maximise benefits and minimise harm, should the research be considered safe and valid. This largely depended on if the practicalities of the methodology were fit for purpose, given the subject content of the investigation. There is also always the matter of whether the data will actually be anonymised or may be traced back to the people from which it came. The suggestion by the BPS (2017) is that if they were identifiable, any analysis of the data, should not be immediately affixed to this information; or otherwise, the data could be paraphrased or summarised so as not to convey the precise wordage of the participant. The aim of this thesis involves heuristic guidelines, so a high degree of exactness or empiricism in transcription, is indeed not required; yet with respect to paraphrasing, data processing is accurate and ethical. Furthermore, as the BPS outlines, for large aggregates of “ubiquitous data” such as social media sites, the risks of harm are negligible; yet the potential richness of data cannot be denied. What does become even more important however, is the degree to which the information is kept pristine and confidential during data gathering and processing.

The North American counterpart to the BPS, is the American Psychological Association (APA) which is the overseeing body for research with human participants. While its 2018 website outlines in greater detail ethical guidelines that are similar to the BPS with regards to consent, minimising harm or conflict of interest, originality, debriefing, and sharing information for publication,
verification and review, there are subtle differences. With respect to research and publication, some of these include the emphasis that the APA places on ensuring that institutional approval is established in the first instance. The fact for example that the USA as a nation has various categorisations of organizations such as Fortune 500 (as included for a case study) may be a testament to how to access this classified data. Further, the APA like the BPS speaks about deception, while the BPS refers to transparency and accountability of the research process. More specifically APA states that should information be withheld from the participant to adequately complete the investigation, it must be divulged before the end of the thesis. The respondent must also be given the option of withdrawing the data at that time.

The Caribbean geographical region, in particular, the CARICOM states which are associated with academic enquiry by housing tertiary level institutions, uses previously explored APA standards for social research. Therefore, further considerations of the code of ethics, would be purely cultural, for example the degree of probing for information. The research, regardless of how noble it may be, is faced with some cynicism from potential respondents about the length of the time engaged and the types of information being requested (Tolich, 2010; Dickson and Holland, 2016). This however did not preclude data collection, but facilitated researcher knowledge of the preferred length of discussions; and so the sense of obtrusive behaviour was minimised. It is from this perspective as well, that the specific ethical guidelines as published by the University of Bolton must be factored in this thesis. This may be summarised as providing thorough information inclusive of the subject title, the purpose of the thesis, and intended
outcome as well as what may be done with the data after completion. Respondents must also give informed consent to participate in data collection before the process of collection can actually begin. Additionally, if there may have been respondent apprehensions, researcher discretion and judgement of paralanguage cues given, also assisted in putting the respondent at ease. Otherwise, recognising limitations of the extent and quantity of data they offer freely, meant that a sensitive approach and technique in further questioning or, terminating the interrogation would be essential. These ethical considerations regarding gathering data were supported and complemented by the philosophically sound, organized, and academically justified FMA.

3.1.II Philosophical argument to justify decisions and assertions for FMA

Constructivist philosophy dictates a process whereby information is understood and new ideas created, through independent generation of meaning, and making sense of personal experiences. This is in contrast to constructionism, which assumes there are perceptions of truths that could exist without question (symbolically or with some evidence), and largely remain unchallenged. However, this research unreservedly challenges the new paradigm of the emphasis on TMC, and also seeks to make more sense of the proliferation of TMC along with splintered communication theorising, and the original and often culturally situated meaning of communication. Additionally, the framework (F) of ideas previously established in this thesis, is clearly in line with this constructivist philosophy, given that there is a range of sources of the brand information to be understood as are the ways in which this information will be understood. This means that there is an equally wide range of opportunities
and reasons why more effective communication strategies should be investigated. The area of concern (A) as broadly outlined in section 1.5.II, also is supported by constructivism. “A” is summarised by clear implications of a lack of connection within the multidimensionality across both TMC and DC, that could achieve the optimal resonance leading to premium stakeholders’ perception of high brand value and reputation. Constructivist philosophy can guide the process of stakeholders making those meaningful connections via appropriate use of TMC and DC. The methodology (M) that will elicit the information that justifies and creates those cognitive connections, is based on cultural and individual input. Constructivist philosophy outlined, cannot exist without this human element, and so also justifies the methodological choices of the FMA.

3.1.III Research Design: Overall Approach to Data Collection and Evaluation

As intimated in Chapter 1, the research design must be appropriate for meeting the research objectives and achieving the research aim. In the process the research questions should be answered, hereby giving greater credence to the research findings and elucidating the outcomes. The literature review indicated that there have been significant changes to the communication landscape over generations and into modern times, to the degree that a new paradigm of communication was now in effect. The fact that online technology had become a prime facet of postmodern communication in key areas within the geographical sampling area for this research, but the approach to its use differed, meant there needed to be definitive elements of both an exploratory and descriptive research design. These broadly correlated with qualitative and
quantitative expectations of research strategy at different points throughout the execution of the study. These approaches also are befitting of the primary philosophy of constructivism used to create the most cogent understanding of the elements of communication and a proposed communication strategy. In context of the research topic, the mixed methods design was generally considered first, by using aspects of two basic research models. The process model applies to how a phenomenon changes over time, so could examine spoken narratives and print material for example. The variance model addresses evidence in consequences and outcomes of the phenomenon, as described by Payne, Pearson and Carr (2017). Yet, neither were exclusive of the other, nor have details about philosophical stanch, approach to theory, or strategy. So, an inclusive model, the Saunders’ Research Onion (2019) - Figure 3, that also reflects some sequence by successive outer towards inner layers, and more specifics about mechanisms by which data is collected, was applied.

Figure 5: Saunders’ Research Onion (SRO) - Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2019)
Not every dimension of the model is to be used, rather only what relates to addressing the research aim, objectives and questions. Vitally, the deductive (general to specific) perspective, which helped in theory development, also elicited required original information by way of a pilot (Appendices 1 and 2). With the splintered nature of communication of communication theorising, an inductive (specific) approach in comparison, would wrongly assume that communication theorizing is stable and exempt from change. The pilot included focused groups and semi-structured interviews in qualitative auto-ethnography (where the researcher was a part of respondent experience) and ethnography. Initial data gave credibility to early philosophical positioning, and later the basis for information re-used in subsequent other major strategic stages, of a survey questionnaire (quantitative) and case studies (qualitative).

3.1.IV Understanding the Role of Philosophy

Philosophy is a cognitive approach to questions that seek to address existence, reason and knowledge. It is against this background that philosophy is crucial when dealing with sources of large bodies of information, as is the case with online modes of communication in established organizations; this is especially so, since the organizations in this thesis also espouse different philosophical approaches and would have undergone changes that result in dynamism within these entities. These considerations (SRO layer 1) are not governed by one philosophical position: if the thesis was approached as if it was so governed, it would be a risky factor in data collection. However, the fact that there are some similarities in value systems and how knowledge is generated in the cultural spaces that the organizations exist, means a research paradigm grounded in
broad philosophy is crucial. Further, there is a demand for philosophical anchorage where a mixed methods approach to the investigation is necessary.

3.1. V How Philosophy Governs Field Studies and Ethnography

Overall, to shed light on the topics of assigning brand value and reputation, this thesis involves deploying ethnographic qualitative methods into how communication processes evolved particularly in relation to applying constructivism. Especially during the ethnography governing the pilot stage and stage one (see Figure 6), organizations used for data sampling were chosen based on their high levels of engagement within the cultures and professional landscapes of the regions under investigation. This meant the public at large, and specifically, potential or real premium stakeholders of the organizations, would have had adequate opportunities to observe and glean substantial information about the brands, evidencing a framework of ideas (in the FMA) that exist around the topic of investigation. Then they could construct the best understanding of the brand as possible, within the existing social context. It is also this context that the philosophy of constructivism as introduced in section 1.9 and discussed earlier in this chapter, guides the blending of ideas to create a template for a desired culturally relevant communication strategy. Various elements of what is considered in business culture and regional culture follow.

3.1. VI Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria in Field Studies and later Case Studies

Where the organizations were within a specific industry, one of the inclusion criteria was based on their entrepreneurial emphasis as evidenced in participation in, or contribution to significant national or regional investments,
and competitive programmes. This criterion marked the start of an era where the importance of both networking and online visibility had become paramount to how the organization might have expanded its clientele.

Naming some entities (from **Appendix 5**) Bliss Bridal, Keneea Linton Boutique (the owner being the conceptualiser of the syndicated Mission Catwalk) Forever Sweet, Bianca Miller, Collection Moda, Henry’s Delight, and Investment programmes The Apprentice, Dragon’s Den and The Innovators: respectively, they had either entered national or international competitive televised series, or themselves been the organizers or facilitators. The proliferation and drive of these televised series posted online via social media soon after, engaged the attention of the populace often for several months or years. Via accessible sources of information (networking with powerful decision makers, then TMC) organizations and their brands, got significant exposure, facilitating even further recognition and engagement by potential premium stakeholders.

Entrepreneurial emphases also had to match their visibility in the cultures in which the organizations existed. For example, Steve Harvey is one of the most recognisable faces on USA daytime television (Harvey, 2016). Similarly, Innocent Juices (2015) initially led the healthy drinks industry in Britain where its operations began and then by extension into Europe, where the first additional offices were established. Websites or social media accounts (2016) for Stewart’s Auto, show the entity to be the foremost dealers and service professionals in mainstream automobiles in the Caribbean region. Also, for fitness coaches Patrice White and Kamila McDonald, their online presence
(2017) show them as two very involved persons at national and international levels as brand ambassadors or social media influencers and official spokespersons. Their work has been for their own brands as well as for large Jamaican organizations, as both reach to European or North American regions. Where the organizations were involved in education, as were two educational consultancy establishments – VERSAN and AIM (2016) – the inclusion criteria involved how successfully they placed students mostly from the Caribbean in other parts of the world and into leading universities. The organizations were broadly observed for their accomplishments with Ivy league (US) or Russell Group (UK) universities, monetary value of scholarships gained, and the viability of the organization based on the currency of its staff and the range of perspectives it may have on international study. Furthermore, VERSAN has been in operation for thirty years, before the surge of online methods of communication while AIM established itself in the last decade. So the methods by which they communicate, and the purpose as well as the content they hope to deliver are considered to have a longitudinal and cross-sectional dimension respectively. Accordingly, their modus operandi was compared and contrasted. Similarly, the reach of communication strategies in North American cultural contexts, might be exemplified in the actualized political role of the United States president. This office is often considered to be the pinnacle of a collective international Western community; so some open communication is expected. In the literature review of online material, much attention was given to the initial fore-runner in the 2015 presidential campaign, Dr Benjamin Carson. Inclusion in the ethnographic review was to evaluate how campaign teams communicated, and shortfalls as Carson fell from premium stakes. Later in
contrast, this gave way to an overt communicative controversial figure, Donald Trump; differences with the president’s social media activity were also evident. Using these broad outlined criteria would support and further substantiate the historical narrative of communication processes as discussed in Chapter 2.

Main exclusion criteria for the case studies, involved firstly as previously intimated, if organizations were retail, versus in service and manufacturing. This is given that communication emphases and strategy would have been markedly different due to what they were offering their buyers, the terms of these offers, and how engaged they would be with suppliers. A few retailers and the outcomes of the communication involved in their marketing strategies were relevant in preliminary interviews, only as far as understanding tenets of some basics of corporate communication as opposed to its details. Secondly, the organizations could not have included highly recognisable transnational brands. By reasonable assumption, these would have already established value and reputation to a degree where any change would be governed by forces much larger than are manageable according to the design of this thesis. As also divulged earlier, this scope and depth of range of organizations was to capture a true picture of the ethnography and cultural expectations of the three regions. So, having secured a good understanding of this, the iterative process required of the underlying grounded theory was advanced by interviewing a narrower group of seventeen (17) decision makers, in addition to twenty-two (22) members of staff across the ten (10) ISCO-08 categories of occupations. Again, these were based in the three geographical regions to confirm key aspects of ethnography, and garner up-to-date first-hand information regarding
how organizations communicated in their cultural space. Also data on what was seen as most important during the process of that communication was required.

3.1.VII Background to the Interpretive Process for Field Studies

Later during the investigative process, the six (6) case studies, some of which were sourced from original (ethnography) samples, were buoyed by empiricism via initially evaluating corpora and quantitative resources in field study questionnaires (see Appendix 7). The research objectives, which aid in meeting these aims also have interrelated qualitative and quantitative emphases. As explained by Wei (2008) and Klein and Myers (1999), they require detailed consideration of the how, what and why of results, as well as good evidence of the results. The outcome of the field studies are therefore expected to assist in satisfying research aims, in the given context of this thesis.

Klein and Myers (1999) gave seven sound principles of how to interpret the field studies as described in the previous section. They begin with the fundamental principle of the hermeneutic circle. Essentially, this clarifies that there is iteration between the meanings of itemised parts to a given topic or text, and the whole text; herein the ideal outcome of the iteration, is the clearest understanding of the text under consideration.

The second principle involves contextualization, as intimated prior, wherein the social and historical backgrounds to where the research was undertaken, undergo critical reflection. The aim is to ascertain how the problem emerged, and influences that current contexts may have on the outcome of investigations.
Thirdly, the interaction between the researcher and the participants also requires critical reflection. In this instance, this principle speaks to handling of data and how the association between the researcher and participants helps to evaluate and analyse the data, so new truths can emerge through findings.

The fourth principle of abstraction and generalisation, embraces the application principles one and two above with theoretical and conceptual positions that elucidate how humans understand, and then act. When doing so, the objective is to incorporate the idiographic or personalised approach to understanding this knowledge creation aspect of human nature. In the absence of any detailed consideration of personal construct theory for example, this principle is particularly useful for analysing some of the individual responses given by the premium stakeholders, as well as the case study respondents. Although this is partly theory based, it does not preclude interpretation to be relevant only to the respondents in this study sample, but renders findings more generalizable.

Fifthly, Klein and Myers (1999) write about dialogical reasoning, and how this principle essentially challenges previous applications of theory preconceptions used to guide the design of the study. Over the course of the investigation, there may be an observed dichotomy between expected and actual findings after the planned design was executed. Therefore, there was a possibility of shifting or revising the research process prior to the projected end of the investigation.

The penultimate principle number six, speaks of multiple interpretations. As a self-explanatory term, it is particularly relevant to this thesis. Similar to the way
that the topic of communication and associated theory are noted as significantly splintered, so then were responses to some test instruments expected to be. In any study requiring a human element, there is a possibility of multiple interpretations of one topic. The principle however demands a tangible degree of sensitivity to the differences, and by extrapolation, the ability to look beyond the explicit differences, to locate implicit truths that the research seeks to unveil.

The seventh and ultimate principle is “suspicion”; implying again that data is to be viewed thoughtfully. In this instance, care must be taken with possible biases or subjectivity manifest in responses to test instruments. Wordage may change the narrative; being aware of how this might happen is important for not only accuracy in presenting findings but also, where a cohesive communication narrative is paramount. Therefore, there should be very little room for error, if any at all, in accurately developing that narrative and presenting it to readers.

In order to apply these seven principles in the best way to achieve ideal and accurate interpretations, a good account of other espoused philosophies or philosophical positions across an apt range of specific identifiable ones, is vital.

3.1. VIII Additional Specific Philosophy

While as discussed in previous sections, the philosophy of constructivism governs the nature of the knowledge being investigated and how the process is executed in this thesis, others are important. Pivotal on one hand are positivism, existentialism and empiricism, as referring to concrete evidence, independent responsible choices of individual will and use of the physical
senses respectively to determine scientific data and belief systems. These are contrasted with interpretivism, where people make sense of the world via a more gradual conceptual or abstract cognitive learning process.

So it is useful if a good sample of organizations, each with an identity or brand faithful to sound philosophies as outlined above, is part of geographically relevant investigations. This spans from the pilot study to ultimate stages of case studies and selective quantitative validation. It reflects an eclectic approach that is, pulling from different germane sources in the absence of one overarching philosophy. There will always however be some insider-outsider tension where philosophies differ between the investigated and the investigator. So the researcher identity for this thesis, which is recognisable as multinational, must be available to reflect objectively when assessing data.

Nevertheless, despite a high degree of unbiased interpretations, the chosen organizations will also create multiple realities; and the realities remain relevant to communicating participants within the geographical and international cultural contexts of their organizational operations. Further, as this thesis assimilates two separate but inter-related communication modes - one real time and organic, the other technologically mediated online – this renders the juxtaposed philosophical groups even more relevant. Together, philosophies will evaluate current communication trends, which are limited DC or, networking with more TMC; so the best route to fertile ground for expression of brand value and factual data dissemination, can be determined. The dichotomy of both modes implies a need to apply abstract and empiricist philosophical methods to
achieve ideal research outcomes. These lie in capturing the perceived value assigned by premium stakeholders while an organization undergoes change at precise times, as it hones or sustains firm brand reputation as being trustworthy. Merging information via these polar methods requires governance of how they are executed, as influenced by philosophy in paradigmatic application of theory.

3.1.VIX Combined Application of Theory and Paradigm to Understand Trust

The historical theory of deconstructionism introduced a sense of now modernized aporia (or doubt of what may have been considered to be perennial truths) as intimated by Shah (2017). This provided opportunities to question philosophical positions and methodological paradigms such as structuralism. It maintains that human realities cannot be separated from relationships between participants in the cultural interaction involved in any degree of relationship including the basic level of communication. It is true that humans are social beings; but the underlying process of decision-making uniquely differs from social construction. Deconstructionism assigns less credence to social constructionism; so, there has been some anxiety or agitation as the discourse widened: what seemed to be new knowledge that it may elucidate followed suit.

Buckner (2017) in an evaluation of another philosopher Lacan’s ambivalent position on deconstruction, sheds light on the presupposition by the proponent, that this anxiety around knowledge, has no object but is ever-changing. Lacan later adjusts his claims to say that “anxiety is not without object” (Buckner, 2017, p. 1); from reasonable assumptions it suggests any difficulty in deconstruction would lie in finding where the object is. In the ways they are apparent, critical
analysis positively identifies facts such as the objects, and challenges them to form a new and possibly previously unexplored judgement about said objects.

Van Dijk (2014) in more modern dialogue, had introduced critical discourse analysis, that includes critical analysis, and discursive processes of finding the object. It could be said that these processes elucidate components of the object itself. Van Dijk admits that the object, as in this case of communication, is a subjective object, not an immovable objective object, as it may mean something slightly different for each person. Similarly this thesis does not claim exclusivity, but appropriation, relevance and truth of the essence of communication; accepting a communicated brand message, translates into trusting a desired brand. If the object (the content or mode of communication) is changing, deliberately or otherwise hidden, obscured by previous paradigms, or no longer relevant, all four of these possibilities accentuate the need to have sound reliable discourse about that knowledge, its source, and contexts of its creation. This discourse may not only necessitate what for this thesis is encapsulated by a constructivist paradigm of online and/or social media. But discourse itself involves human participants, outcomes of their actions, and the impact of what those participants engage in. Where there is impact, mutual feedback often exists side by side; that in turn means that trust is more probable with discourse.

3.1.X The Theory of Deconstruction and Methodology

This deconstruction or challenge of the status quo of online media, facilitates justifiable creations of knowledge that can be trusted. This is accessible via incorporating broad social constructivist approach, through representative,
available and robust mechanisms of data collection and analysis. It is in this framework that ethnography becomes particularly important: the information available through wide-reaching online media as a global phenomenon, will be applicable in the cultural space it is used. It is here where people exist, that they have undergone experiences or make meaning of that information as it is communicated online. The essence of the topic of this thesis is about that communication, which however as Buckner (2017) outlines, may translate into different concepts as far as existential phenomenology applies. In the case of product and service brands, the phenomenology may directly relate to the geographical regions engaged, as well as the industry to which they belong.

3.2 An Introduction to Detailed Research Methodology
Meticulous research methodology is very important in a wide-ranging academic investigation as described above. Its scope involves ways for managing evolving communication content and mode, around internal organizational changes, in the context of corporate leadership strategies that result in the aforementioned desired research outcomes. Methodology must be framed and approached carefully (Yin, 2014) to outline how this stepwise investigation ensues. As communication narratives changed radically in the last century, a deductive slant (SRO Layer 2) to a plethora of communication modes is appropriate. Yet, it is the ability to address change, which comprises a unique academic contribution from this thesis. Data collection at varied stages will be lucid and in later research stages, somewhat inductively prescriptive by telling a cogent story to transport new truths about communication, into postmodernity.
Accordingly, sound methodology involves specific ways to meet research objectives and elicit this new information; then on achieving the aim, there would be a better understanding of gathered data. In light of theoretical and empirical objectives, research strategies involved qualitative and quantitative methods. A general partly deductive iterative process that uses GT (SRO Layer 3) prefaces these approaches; the process potentially discovers new theory or rich insights, and reveals latent theory to drive the investigation. In-depth ethnographic qualitative accounts of narratives of what is broadly merged within industry communication and new empirical versions of communication material actively used, subsequently factor in anticipated research outcomes.

3.3 A Search for Theory and Theoretical Framework via Methodology

This pursuit began in earnest during the literature review, a significantly large part of the research process. An overview of how communication is theorised is provided. Importantly, the way that the grand narrative traverses or in some case supersedes culture and could be translated into recognisable variables, is perused. The review also gives stepwise summaries of what may be essential to create the final theoretical framework that potentially helps determine a communication strategy. This background drawing on grounded theory does not espouse a positivist approach, but rather a possible development of theory.

Concurrently, latent secondary data that includes a re-appraisal of archival research found during the review (SRO Layer 3) is interpreted and recorded as findings, which may lead to new theory. These are corroborated by way of the mindful alignment between theories and their further incorporation in question
design for both quantitative and qualitative purposes, as given in Figure 6. The literature review therefore was a tenacious time-bound process approached at two approximate periods; this was designed so the background, observations of postmodern changes and current reality, could have been accounted for.

3.4 Choice of Research Strategies or Approaches Further Explained

Cluster sources from which organizations for the pilot, surveys and ethnographic observations (SRO Layer 3) are drawn, include Europe, USA and CARICOM. Data gathered in these areas during the initial stages of primary and secondary data collection supports conceptualising and postulating around traditional and, newer or seemingly changing theoretical paradigms relating to what defines and is involved in communication. These reflect specific philosophical considerations and approaches as summarised below.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, cultural influences including access to internet technology evolved comparably at the same pace in the three regions (GITR, 2016). This means, to a significant degree, evaluation or synthesis, ontology and epistemology of information access via TMC is theoretically and empirically possible. The regions also have similar western values - their axiology - as part of the established Trans-Atlantic region, benefiting from bilateral provisions between them. The researcher had geographical access there, as well as circa equal cultural or lived experiences and stakes in each area; this facilitated the intricate outlined methodology, yet minimised subjective interpretations of data found. At the same time this made expected outcomes applicable to the researcher. As in SRO Layer 4, triangulation of
mixed and multi-methods is used (Figure 6: D – F) for analytically garnering the most accurate internally validated information (Figure 6: G - K) from case studies as the main research strategy by which qualitative data is generated. Denscombe (2003) stated however, that research strategy is not the same as research methods but a systematic plan of action. So outlining how the role of case studies is essential to establishing the desired research outcomes is key.

3.5 The Importance of Case Studies

Yin (2014) explains case studies’ feedback are excellent communicating devices. So initially, there are lucid discussions regarding what changes case organizations are undergoing, and why these affect current communication strategy. These are matched with transparent communication strategies used in the past over the short (1-3 years) to medium (3-5 years) term, giving context to time dimensions of the cross sectional aspects to this study (SRO Layer 5). If cases are relevant to and therefore suit the audience, Yin (2014) believes they elucidate a previously obfuscated topic, in this instance, a changed landscape of communication as it relates to businesses. Case studies speak with such a compelling clarity and cogence that they can stand alone without the support of other intricate research methods. Thus, a particularly important feature is that case studies can be appropriately complemented by for example vignettes as in preliminary ethnographic processes engaged (as well as non-textual material elicited in webometrics at other stages in the thesis). The body of data collected in survey Stage 1 to create a question set for the case studies, is deployed homogenously (Figure 6: G) to ensure cases are treated equally.
As stated in the introduction, Stanfill’s work (2012), tells of protracted procedures of finding truth in scholarship where the hinges of methodology, ontology, axiology and epistemology meet. The pilot and Stage 1, begin a probe of this critical process; new or potential theoretical explanations of phenomena are inculcated in Stage 2 (OBJ 2). These are robustly resistant to laborious interrogation of the case studies, and elicit the rigour this research dictates. At the same time, as intimated by Stanfill (2012), the exploration produces a pliable way of understanding varied schools of thought in academic discourse. The writer’s propositions therefore can apply to dynamics in the selected case studies as spread across three geographical regions. Further analyses of data gathered in this way, can end in fruitful combinations of ideas grouped convincingly together.

The proposed international case study work has a far-reaching scope, although a tight sample of six service and manufacturing entities is used. Crucially, both groups yielded rich mostly qualitative data and a significant total of supportive quantitative data. Other engendering factors regarding the complement sample of cases must be considered. Initially, there are common essential hinges of communication strategy; this expressly refers to stakeholder responsiveness shown across the two groups (service and manufacturing), versus consumer reaction in retail.

Secondly, they would have all been undergoing or undergone a significant internal organizational change within the short or medium term. So they are at a similar point in the business life cycle where change is imminent.
Thirdly, from the three geographical regions, the same number of higher education institutions and organizations from industries or disciplines for which the HE/FE institutions are renowned, will be addressed. This focuses data gathering on identities or brands associated with specific activities.

Fourthly. the HE/FE institutions chosen are tangibly involved in online methods of communicating with learners, some of which includes distance learning. This leverages the importance of clear communication channels without which these operations at the selected entities cannot take place.

Lastly, the case studies’ subject disciplines that match and combine industry and academia, capture the dynamic of material offered to premium stakeholders at educational institutions.

Engaging schema theory to package this combined information in ethnographic contexts into relatable sections for the methodology and further analysis, will be particularly relevant. With this premise, dyads are also used to encapsulate the connectivity in professional sociological pairings (academia with industry), the ecosystems they together create, and the ones in which they exist. Premium stakeholders in education are expected to morph into senior or decision-making roles in allied industries; so the cases can be addressed as relevant dyads.

3.6 The Relevance of Dyads

According to the Cambridge dictionary (2018) the basic definition of a dyad is a pair of closely related elements, that are connected by a significant
sociological tie. Sociology is “the systematic study of the development, structure, interaction and collective behaviour of organized groups of human beings” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2018). In the context of this thesis, the tie that binds the case studies as organized groups of individuals, is the ecosystem of the specific discipline and industry in which the stakeholders work and do business. While it may be argued that sociology traditionally related to collective living communities and subcultures, it may alternatively be applied to studying organizations and communication that occurs then influences the success of interactions within these organizations. In this light, Gooty and Yammarino (2011) outlined that dyads have a place in organizational research. Dyads are mainly relevant in mobilising concepts around communication strategy in the theoretical paradigm of DC and TMC as explored in this thesis. The dyads are comprised of an industry and a higher education (HE)/Further Education (FE) institution where the discipline of both establishments converge, thus providing a mutual benefit where substantial desired communication strategies are the outcome. Reflecting on systems theory and the two adaptive levels of decision-makers and stakeholders within and outside the organization respectively, dyads can be further used in their multiple level analysis.

Additionally, the importance of dyads applied as symbiotic units of analysis, to determine the firm theoretical constructs or framework as a re-stated aim of this thesis, must be emphasised. Gooty and Yammarino (2011) firstly admit that one of the challenges in using dyads, is related to how they, as units of analysis, are appropriately modelled or defined as part of the methodological process. Also, it can be difficult to say where the units fit conceptually in the overall
corresponding body of research. The writers advocate that the configuration must be originally applied to work settings, rather than necessarily any specific interpersonal variable. At that time, the analytical processes which are the most applicable for a multilevel qualitative study, include the Within and Between Analysis (WABA). For this thesis, it applies to both independent and dependent variables, which are explored at length. Then WABA recommendations (Gooty and Yammarino, 2011) anchor investigations of interpersonal questions about communication. All three dyads reflect several macro and meso-economic factors, which can impact brand identities; simultaneously, changing dimensions of the selected brands become recognisable. Using PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal) type analyses (Rustin, 2015), such factors in the chosen geographies most clearly depict consumerism (USA), capitalism (Europe) and, in CARICOM a mix of consumerism and capitalism (see Chapter 4). Yet, the latter region is primarily represented by conservative minimalist approaches to communication. Initial observations and the literature (Knoblauch, 2013) indicate espoused TMC and DC strategies broadly correlate to the capitalist and, consumerist or minimalist approaches respectively.

However, with further interrogation of premium stakeholders (SRO Layer 6), it is here that praxis or the meeting of theory and practice (Boromisza-Habashi, 2013), resides to elucidate what could be more effective and appropriate communication. More specifically, this relates to how a communication strategy is best configured in comparison to where the literature suggests a proliferation of communication modes in effect, redefined communication. It would be
ascertained that theories related to the meaning of communication and what communication modes must do to be true to meaning, will have a significant positive effect on shifting the postmodern communication paradigm. To demonstrate the importance of the essential pillar of theory, further mention must also be made of how critical Bertalanffy’s systems theory is to the case studies. The main approaches to the theory (Mele, Pels and Polese, 2010) as applied in this thesis and how they contribute to regulating an organization’s environment and managing change are significant. Regarding what communication involves, and how it affects the organization, theory speaks to the importance of interactions across disciplines within organizations. This is crucial to deciphering tenets of a proposed theoretical framework. It is possible too, that application of systems theory is taken to another level of comparative relevance in business and regional cultures across the organizations (OBJ 2). Yet it is interconnected only where theory is bound by values the organizations espouse, and within the research’s philosophical contexts for analysis.

3.7 Approaching Analyses of the Case Studies

Critical analyses of data collected prior, with a cross-case analysis, and a within-case analysis, should determine the vein of similarity or commonality that exists between the cases and in the three regions; this addresses OBJ 2. These processes can also shed light on the truth of what works for the organizations especially when the brand experiences change. Here, a sound theoretical framework that potentially binds the commonalities is possible (OBJ 3). This is achievable via a series of other analytical processes (Figure 6: Stage 2 H-K) that together refine and direct the available information to suitable summaries.
of the cases studies. The studies are juxtaposed with the premium stakeholders’ views via measured consideration of the personal construct theory. From this, factors affecting communication, and more details on how they are used in an increasingly modern communication strategy, are ascertained (OBJ 1). For further clarity, it is useful to record stages corresponding to SRO and a step-wise methodology represented in Figure 6, as a diagrammatic summary.

Figure 6: Diagrammatic Summary Representation of Methodology
3.8 Explanatory Outline of Research Methods

While the overall methodology of sections 3.2 – 3.7 justified why the research was designed as it was, methods outline specific tools or techniques applied.

3.8.1 Qualitative methods

3.8.1.i Detailed Sampling Considerations

Perhaps the most important point for consideration when assessing qualitative components to an investigation, is sampling. That is, who or what will provide the richness of data required, is crucial; but the former takes precedence over any form of convenience sampling such as extensive corpora annals. This research does however engage select organizations in industries that the researcher has encountered, in the UK, USA and CARICOM. The process embraces auto-ethnography (Figure 6: B) plus the researcher’s business interests in and experience of a range of regional and organizational cultures. So, the thesis has become more redolent of the researcher’s PhD journey.

For example, during the pilot stage, there was one multinational organization that was highly accessible to the researcher. This facilitated seven respondents in the various categories, as described by Free (1996) in chapter 2. Also, seven other semi-structured interviews with equally accessible data from business owners, provided a clear indication of what should be considered in the subsequent stages of the thesis. Although it was a deductive process, there was some degree of purposeful sampling, in which decision makers as business owners or managers came from service industries where it was expected that data will readily reflect institutional change. The clarity of this
purpose-driven approach was lucidly shown in polls of a bastion of service orientation, the latest US presidential campaigns (Wall Street Journal, 2015) as perused in the literature review. Opinions of “likely caucus goers” versus those “disengaged” from political processes, were gathered. This implies appropriateness of timing, and stresses why suitable consideration of stakeholders - where themselves are directly involved in branding processes - and resonance needed to build reputation, are key. Regarding sample quantity, as explained by Van Voorhis and Morgan (2007), any new information flat-lines where the participant number is about 30; and subsequently nothing novel is garnered. In this thesis, no new information was retrieved after 14 pilot and 17 subsequent interviews; although, most interviewees had self-serving views on communication.

3.8.1.i Probability Sampling for Gender, and Culture

Research over several decades (Phillips, 1980; Mulac, 2006; Hancock and Rubin, 2014) indicates that the female gender is more inclined to communicate in an integrative way that encourages open participation. For this reason, at least half the pilot respondents, subsequent samples and case studies were comprised of women, with a focus on methods of communication. However, this did not preclude men, in the context in which gender would be considered in this thesis. The focus it is hoped, reflects the dynamics between a company’s movers or shakers and real or potential customers or clients; the desired open communication strategy resonates to create a strong brand. It is noteworthy to mention, that male to female ratio in business is statistically remarkable in varied ways and across cultures where data is being collected. The Caribbean
for example as reported by the Jamaica Customer Services Association (2014), has the highest proportion globally, of female to male managers with favourable work ethics; the opposite applies in Britain. What is important from a sampling perspective in contexts of culture with gender, is the implied easy access to sought-after data relevant to what a clientele perceives to be the most credible when becoming aware of a brand. So the research does not include any detail about the dynamics of gender numbers in one geographical region or another, or in job roles. This is because a clear focus is on postmodern businesses which are customer centric (Adami and Kress, 2014), versus business leader-centric. Peculiarities in communication styles of either gender is only pondered as for example symbolic "semiotic text", wherever it may influence brands’ growth.

3.8.1.iii Further Details of the Pilot, relevant to Research Methods

A pilot (Figure 6: B) is similar to a microcosm of the real study; it was necessary to determine internal consistency of the survey instrument to be used in other stages of this research. It also indicates where to improve the data collection instrument. Some convenience sampling of an international organization, which reflects regional and business culture where a part of case study data collection occurred, was used. Structured interviews were conducted with four decision makers and two premium customers, alongside three separate replicated conversations with a country manager. This embraced reflexivity in order to glean data on the history, relevant changes, and current organizational needs.

As information would be generated from GT, that is, previously existing theory or newly determined theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), using an organization
with some features similar to the proposed final case studies, was important. It was also critical to ensure that interview question items reflected enough of the corporate communication strategy and emphases under investigation. West Indian branches of the pilot organization, itself headquartered in Florida, USA, were failing. The regional head office and distribution centre for the Caribbean, located in Jamaica, was going through a rebranding process that was expected to shift the perception of its most valuable stakeholders or potential ones.

This unique set of circumstances provided a source that was rich in qualitative data, wherein staff at different levels, and longstanding premium customers were willing to give feedback. Since the respondents were associated with the entity for decades, it provided, as raised above and in the literature review, an in-depth reflective dimension to the narrative regarding a communication machinery both internal and external to the organization. This fits well with the meta-theoretical framework of systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1956) facilitating study of features common to complex internal and external systems.

The pilot informed test design; for example, respondents made an immediate summary of the business offerings and attempted to integrate the information during the interaction with the researcher: this served as at least one marker for going forward in the official studies. Pattern matching tested internal validity and reliability, both applicable to chosen data collection instruments. Themes and key words plus secondary data were used to create core content of Stage 1 interview items. The pilot engaged selected marketing material and
databases which in turn informed design of the investigation into factors that may influence communication strategy.

3.8.I.iv Auto - ethnography

Via semi-structured interviews in auto-ethnographic processes, circumstantial and concrete data was gathered from entrepreneurs and academics. Additionally, they demonstrated substantial international scope; and either they had experience with the researcher’s business interests, or generally benefitted from the research topic. When clear themes or implied variables were identified during initial discourse, interrogations proceeded. It echoed broad ethnography, providing fertile ground for iteration involved in GT (SRO Layer 4).

3.8.I.v Face-to-face Ethnography

Complementary to the pilot, semi-structured interview processes of ethnography (Figure 6: B) which involved evaluating several subject relevant organizations, were used to determine espoused views in the cultural contexts in which the entire research would be done. There also needed to be assertions of what might exist due to organizational expectations, theory in action, regional culture, a combination of the three prior factors, or portions thereof. Essentially, assumptions of epistemology or theory of knowledge in contexts of qualitative research as in this thesis, are that responses - some via extended discourse - would paint a true and representative picture of the topics under discussion. Ellis (2014) outlines that focusing on the following, derives and attains the aforementioned required assertions.

- Participant observation, immersion and going native
Appreciating lifestyles, understandings and beliefs

Clarifying context or social setting of content, where a sound description of a social context is developed

For this reason, ethnography as part of lived experiences over different annual seasons (Wolcott, 2005), is critical for assigning a greater degree of credibility of results. Ethnography would be exploratory and regulatory; so specific tools are not needed to begin the process, as the design develops over time.

The researcher however, must be true to the emic perspective and explore what these inside experiences dictate. Simultaneously, theory complemented broad ethnography executed using the following guidelines for interviews (Ellis, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF INTERVIEWS</th>
<th>DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactive interviews:</td>
<td>An in-depth and intimate understanding of people’s experiences with “emotionally charged and sensitive topics”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive or dyadic interviews:</td>
<td>Focus on “interactively producing meanings and emotional dynamics of the interview itself”. Reflexive ethnographies: “document ways a researcher changes as a result of doing fieldwork”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layered accounts:</td>
<td>Often focus on the author’s experience alongside data, abstract analysis and relevant literature. This form emphasises the “procedural nature of research”. For example, internal policies also require strict adherence to standard procedure with regards to institutional data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semi-structured interviews, discursive conversations, and in a few instances impromptu focus groups, were held with employed personnel. Additionally, in relevant instances, secondary data were sourced from organizations, and decision makers in the ten groups of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). Investigations surrounded what were expectations of the premium stakeholders they associate with. To a degree, this also
mirrored the pilot case study, yet simultaneously it could lead to a wider more insightful understanding of geographical areas involved in the overall thesis. This ethnography plus the literature review, auto-ethnography and pilot study, aided the creation of items for stage one quantitative facets of this research. Ethnography as discussed in Chapter 2, was approached broadly, where socio-political impact on culture of the three regions was examined. Dickson and Holland (2016) believe cultural nuances of a populace so derived via ethnography and specifically by how people expect to be informed, would be clear. Importantly, gathered data increased understanding of the way culture can be accounted and controlled for in the overall research design. Secondary and primary data collection began in earnest and at times, concurrently. This is justified, as GT while being explored, informed the in-depth literature review, plus alignment of other theory; GT both led and formed a part of methodology.

In Stage 1, a further overview of communication requirements for a sample of private sector organizations was done. In twelve months between 2014 and 2015, more face-to-face conversations took place with clients and decision makers as stakeholders in organizations across the regions. These elicited a breadth of knowledge that contextualised what communication is meant to achieve in the context in which it occurs. This held true to traditional definitions of direct communication; but the main recognisable ethical consideration as previously alluded, when collecting data was the independent nature of the Caribbean populace. It meant ethnographical approaches must only be applied if there is something concrete to discuss at a specific time in respondents’ experiences, rather than a continual check on their business
undertakings. Generally, established organizations from a range of industries accessible to the researcher, were engaged in contexts of immediate relevance of business or regional culture. Using such methods, organizational values based on what communication is hoped to achieve in light of organizational mission, were noted (Dickson and Holland, 2016). The process helped to determine later sample requirements and fed data into subsequent stages, particularly for assessing latent data implied by GT.

3.8.1.vi Online Ethnography

As implied by Shin, Pang and Kim (2015), it can be said that the worldwide web creates a global community, and might be viewed accordingly especially when an organization is seeking business. So it is argued that the online ethnography (Figure 6: F) was also possible, to the extent that organizations allowed the public into their business worlds and as far as internet host rules allowed. This could often be quite some distance into this world (Shin, Pang and Kim, 2015): the internet reveals an appreciable level of the entrepreneurs’ desired openness about their business and is a source of information via sometimes unfettered communication about it. Against this background, an extensive nine-month process of observation of electronic communication methods, including webpages and social media sites of many US, UK and Caribbean service and manufacturing organizations or their owners, was undertaken. This seasonal length of time is similar to that recommended by Wolcott (2005) when undertaking face-to-face ethnography.
Importantly, where opportunities to communicate further detail in face-to-face ethnographies were sparse, the online process served to determine general trends in the choice of platforms, or media, and with respect to posts, what was the general frequency, substance, purpose and wordage. For several months, observations of core webpages, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as recommended by Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) were made 5 – 6 days in an average work week. Broad material content, quantity, and timing of communication were noted. Decision makers took readers through a virtual ethnography, often having a webpage and one or two social media accounts that merge key aspects of the business and the owner’s persona. This preferred standard and point of reference, also relayed features such as likeability or credibility of their organization. Alongside with perusal of relevant news items, this yielded data to inform how webometrics was applied in Stage 3 (Figure 6). Thelwall (2009) explains this quantitative approach to studying internet content is pliably used for social science goals – in this instance, to build a cohesive narrative – without limitations of one technique or discipline. Theory also assisted the process, including to contextualize the why and how of communication.

3.8.11 Theory and Quantitative Methods: Helping to Build a New Narrative

Theories as perused in the literature review, were also engaged to demarcate items in the first quantitative questionnaire instrument. The items in turn were expected to reciprocally show and reify the connectivity of theory. But it most importantly elicited several gaps to be addressed later in the thesis, elucidate stage one interviews based on GT in ethnography, as well as indicate ideas
items (Figure 6: C, D and E) for use in designing the stage two qualitative interview. Other required deliberations for a sound narrative included:

- Using multi-methods via merging prior qualitative and secondary processes to arrive at reliable and valid instrument scales
- Checking scales when constructing the qualitative instrument
- Factoring how crucial presentation, recognition, understanding, recall and evaluation processes will be when interrogating respondents and assessing qualitative data
- Skewness or kurtosis indicative of normality if present, in reference both to what exists now and what existed in the past
- Robustness of the instrument, and well defined Likert scales with internal consistency to derive precise data for extrapolation
- Likert scales suitably depicting intertextuality of communication, and inter-subjectivity of respondents from different disciplines
- Subsequent interviews: types, quantity, time for accurate transcription and suitable codes

So, results from the quantitative investigation were immediately beneficial and applicable. Unassailability of how and why the theory-based question items were asked, contributed to its own internal reliability and validity of subsequent qualitative methods that will further develop the narrative, via case studies.

### 3.9 Mixed Methods Used to Define the Communication Narrative

#### 3.9.1 Quantitative data collection: Surveys for Premium Stakeholders

As described by early communication theorists, such as Shannon and Weaver (1948) communication is at the very least, a two-way process as has been
factored in the ethnography discussed thus far. Yet it was important to elicit more detail from premium stakeholders - those who can increase confidence in the organization’s reputation of traditionally quality provisions of the brand and can bring other clients to the business. Also, suppliers build confidence in the brand as reputable and conducive for business deals. What is essential is that both complete the corporate communication cycle with decision makers.

So a clear picture of expectations that these premium stakeholders have, must be determined. The intricately designed theory-based questionnaire referred to in Part 3.2, was completed online and face-to-face with 40 respondents across the UK, USA and CARICOM. This number was largely intentional, as the focus of this study is on corporate communication, rather than for example the mass market, where a much more sizeable complement of respondents would have been necessary. On the other hand, it is felt that this number gained critical rich data from premium stakeholders, informing how to craft the interview questions for penultimate case studies as further outlined below.

3.9.II Technical factors in Choice and Compilation of Case Studies

3.9.II.i Choice

Narrative theory factors greatly, as it relates to communication theorising (SRO Layer 5) which is a vehicle of change in organizational processes. It is key for the quantity and content of data needed in analyses H - K. This assists in meeting research objective (OBJ) 1. So in addition to ideas discussed in Part 2.2, building a narrative involves particular focus placed on case choice.
This was critical in garnering the information required to do thorough analyses and draw reasonable sound and justified conclusions. Considerations included using case studies that are aptly represented in the following ways:

1) At least half women-owned, factoring evidence-based sampling that affirms their communication is often integrated more intricately than men
2) Thriving, surviving and failing economic positions, to be able to gain more understanding of perceived efficacy of communication strategies
3) European, CARICOM, and USA influenced, as in known trade routes
4) Manufacturing and service industries within the researcher’s interests
5) SMEs and larger organizations to demonstrate communication impact
6) Organizations where the researcher has been given permission for access, or is likely to gain access, to ensure a fair size sample
7) Institutions with significant online and physical presence
8) Experience of formal entrepreneurial competitions, where a grasp on networking or face-to-face strategies plus online ones, was essential.

There were distinct and specific discussions regarding what changes the organizations are undergoing, including clarity of what is taking place, and why this would necessarily affect the communication strategy

### 3.9.II.ii Compilation

Some reflection on ethnography-based GT, which elucidates existing practice and its background in chosen organizations, would be necessary. With special reference to communication content and mode, reflexivity with postmodernity may suggest the message frequency and intensity appropriate to ensure believability (Koch and Zerback, 2013), hereby meeting OBJ 1. This involves
phenomenological stories in regional cultures where the cases are geographically located. Though cultures are noted, it is not always expected that research results will be applied homogenously, or over an organization’s life cycle; since as Deetz (1992) and Mantovani (1996) highlighted communication narratives change each generation. It is believed that findings as relevant to current organizational culture or the approach to stakeholders, mark the end of iteration (Figure 6: G).

Explanatory and comparative case studies, that may also serve a descriptive role, will rival the notion that any observation is due to chance and not by potential application of theory. This can be evaluated using a diagrammatic path analysis (Figure 6: K; Figure 17), that is, an extension of multiple (linear) regression of the original quantitative data analysed with qualitative data to give the postmodern flexible communication model (PMFCM). So this reflects brand resonance as in OBJ 2, buoyed by prior narrative, content, and thematic analyses of data gleaned in case studies. Brand reputation is quantified with indices purported by Feldman, Bahamonde and Bellido (2014) as given in Chapter 1; they potentially gauge corporate reputation. Accordingly, it is important to note too, key elements of the cases’ organizational background and reputation, to reflect their espoused philosophies, missions or visions.

3.10 Background to the Case Studies

These case studies that are variable in size as mentioned previously, are approached below in pairs as dyads: that is an industry and a further or higher educational institution whose premium stakeholders are from the
aforementioned industry. This grouping will elicit useful data about what is required of good communication from decision makers and those engaging with their organizations, in the ecosystems they construct and are mutually present. Table 2 below gives a summary of the key points within each case study, and the subsequent sections explored then in more detail.

**Table 2: Summary of features of the six (6) case studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study and Dyad number</th>
<th>Name of Organisation</th>
<th>Governing Philosophy</th>
<th>Service or Manufacturing Industry</th>
<th>Change which the brand is undergoing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 1 Dyad 1</td>
<td>Church Teachers College</td>
<td>Religiosity based on self worth and excellence</td>
<td>Education, with a strong record in science, including math and, food and nutrition</td>
<td>Now offering joint Masters and Doctoral degrees with local universities and one in the USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 2 Dyad 1</td>
<td>Henry's Delight</td>
<td>Existentialism</td>
<td>Manufacturing healthy snack food products</td>
<td>Changing products’ outer packaging, and online presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 3 Dyad 2</td>
<td>Bolton College and University</td>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Education, with strengths in Sport Science Boxing and fitness training</td>
<td>Merging to become a premier institution in Northwest, and Britain New independent management, to turn out professional boxers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 4 Dyad 2</td>
<td>Metro Coaching</td>
<td>Positivism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 5 Dyad 3</td>
<td>Northern Caribbean University</td>
<td>Axiology</td>
<td>Education, having historically exceptional business department</td>
<td>Recently became self – accredited, and aims to provide a culturally unique consistent brand to community, through staff and students Sold traditional business streams, and took up new SMEs endeavours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 6 Dyad 3</td>
<td>The Hartford</td>
<td>Collective Action</td>
<td>Fortune 500 insurance and finance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.10.1 Dyad 1

**HE - Church Teacher's College (CTC): THRIVING**

CTC as an institution for educators, embraces philosophy with two clear value-based tenets focused on individual worth and excellence. Both are to a significant degree governed by religiosities, as outlined on the college’s website
(CTC, 2018). Founded in 1965, and run by the Anglican Diocese in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, it does not deviate from this perspective, which also includes integrity, honesty and other altruistic characteristics. This dictates how stakeholders interact with others and their environment. Published website information indicates these collectively aim to secure CTC students’ successes.

An initial face-to-face discussion with the assistant vice principal for academic affairs, served one purpose; that was to explain the purpose of the thesis generally and, potential data collection specifically. While agreeing for the institution to be a part of the investigation, other feedback reified that CTC had not changed what defined the institution: its moral position or fundamental offerings of teacher education in a range of disciplines since inception over 100 years ago, and over the period of investigation. This discussion was complemented by further perusal of CTC’s website. It was noticeable in the institution’s 5-part mission statement, that their decision makers had vested interests in producing progressive and leading teachers. After their tenure as learners, these new teachers are expected to demonstrate socially responsible and sustainable practices. Additionally, they would have developed exceptional “attitudes, values and morals” that enable them to serve well in any community into which they integrate. Ultimately, the teachers would be highly able and therefore capable of motivating their own learners. CTC’s vision accorded with the mission, inasmuch as the institution desired increases in student intake while meeting needs of the millennium as the premium source of teacher training, as well as spiritual and professional development in the environs. An example of where these mandates appeared to be advocated, was in the offer of double majors in human ecology (including the pure sciences and food and
nutrition) where only high passes at the GCSE level could ensure matriculation. Upon further assessment of the webpages, it was also found that although the institution’s core values indeed had not shifted, there were new offerings, which would result in master mathematicians and leading innovators in the sciences. The fact that the private institution has a lengthy history, accredited status with a reputation for being the regional authority in education, and established experimental school programmes, also meant an exclusive approach to the aforementioned face-to-face operations. Focus was therefore on a centralized governance of the institution that protected this reputation, and those who associated with it; this was rather than decentralized to lower level management or communication via the mere proliferation of communication modes that exist.

**Industry Organization - Henry’s Delight: SURVIVING TO THRIVING**

Henry's Delight, a manufacturer and distributor of healthy snacks, is a new organization, which since its inception two to three years ago, is no longer considered to be a start-up. As a previous educator and proprietor of an in-demand service of ICT-based learning and instruction, the owner deviated from the classroom, based on the negative climate of student behaviour found there. In a candid discussion on the Innovators (2016) televised Entrepreneurship programme and as recorded on Facebook (2017) the owner stated she could no longer cope in the classroom, and proceeded to her new role that demanded less emotional investment and means to the responsibility of her existence. This self-report is embedded in what is essential for not only the owner, but the business to survive. In the 2018-2019 financial year, with full and part time staff, the owner distributes products to dozens of major outlets across the island.
The unique selling point of the healthy snacks product is that there are no preservatives added, and in the publicized entrepreneurial competition, this was promoted as such. Though the product has a shorter shelf life than many similar ones, due this non-preservative claim, the owner had very good turnover from sales, from a range of distributors. Research at government food regulators, the Scientific Research Bureau, Jamaica, was done to determine that the products fit the brand message claims. Created from an innate desire to provide a full meal accompaniment, and healthy alternatives to regular snacks, the owner quickly described benefits of the products. In fact, initial conversations during data collection revealed that the main brand alteration to packaging was to reflect the owner’s claims and to attract customers to the product.

3.10.11 Dyad 2

**FE/HE: Bolton College, merged with Bolton University (in 2018):**

The university is reportedly a thriving institution, wherein its public relations and marketing material disseminated in 2016, boasts that it has been in a good financial position that will categorically facilitate the organization’s five-year strategic plan. The aforementioned material appears to suggest that this would be concerned with delivery of courses rather than the communication strategy overall. Undergoing changes from an institute several decades ago, to a polytechnic, and more recently gaining university status in 2004, the current drive and postmodern change the organization embraced, is to be a premier institution. Since 2017, there had been active plans, which have now been realized, to merge with Bolton College, an Ofsted Grade 2 rated Vocational Studies Institution, before the end of academic year 2018 - 2019. The college
as a university centre will benefit financially. This is a further testament to the university’s expansion plans; though currently focusing on the Northwest, management is eyeing Britain as a noticeable well-regarded institution that forges and builds on industry links. Students at the college will be guaranteed a place in all degree programs at the university provided they meet the minimum requirements for entry. Importantly, both organizations independently have noted emphases on fitness and wellness. The college has a gym that opens late for staff and students, and the university has a bilateral association with Bolton One, that houses a full suite of sporting facilities and activities. Exploiting these provisions, the university steadily places in the top 13 in the UK for sport science degrees and joint second for value added; while for graduate prospects in the northwest, it is rated first (Guardian University League Tables, 2018).

Espousing the long-term vision and mission of being a teaching intensive and research informed university, its emphasis lies in the study of knowledge, and justifying it based on facts with logical reasonable stated evidence alluding to the worth of the institution. Accordingly, for 2017 – 2019, the university was rated first for student satisfaction among universities in Greater Manchester, and 18th in 131 universities UK-wide (Complete University Guide, 2019).

**Industry Organization - Metro Coaching: SURVIVING TO THRIVING**

Metro coaching (UK) Bolton, is a fitness training facility for amateur boxers and emerging professionals, which essentially began under other management as part of a previous similar facility. Metro’s most recent infrastructural shift is that it gained independence as a result of the chosen and decided style of delivering
its service. This Metro felt would yield the best proven results, for the majority of people in its jurisdiction. Deviating from the North American approach or administration of the former GLOVES group, and separating from the management team, it became independently established three years ago; Metro also brought with it, some clients from the previous operational setting. On its own premises, Metro Coaching’s aim is to train clients until they become professional boxers, and as such its new autonomous management has designed its organizational structure and communication channels accordingly. This as the senior coach interviewed claimed, was to try to ensure that opportunities and facilities for gaining experience are readily available. Smooth changes are made and approval processes are followed in order to become professionally rated; meeting the requirements of the national regulatory body also is achieved and streamlined.

3.10.III Dyad 3

**HE - Northern Caribbean University: SURVIVING**

Established as a private faith – based training liberal arts college in 1907, NCU faced a gamut of survival, failure and thriving experiences over its history. There is a constant re-affirmation or informed assigning of value to its offerings. Currently the largest English-speaking higher education denominational institution worldwide, it received a full university charter from the government of Jamaica in 1999, and now provides programs in many academic disciplines. Historically since 1978, the Adventist Accrediting Association, Washington DC, USA, had recognized all programs; locally, the first program accredited by the University Council of Jamaica, was the Bachelors in Business Administration.
Presently, NCU boasts triumphs in local and international entrepreneurship and technology competitions for example, the International Business Model competition for several years running (Mcintosh, 2018). Further, the university offers its own Masters, and joint PhD degrees with offshore universities.

**Industry Organization: The Hartford Financial Services Group: THRIVING**

Publicly held Hartford is a premium service business investment and insurance company, with a history spanning over 200 years. So the first important relevant factor is that the organization with significant focus on social responsibility, has inevitably been through two centuries of varied robust communication strategies. This includes specifically, the last 100 years across a range of culturally influenced changes in the USA, as discussed in the literature review.

With the head office located in Connecticut, part of the Tri-State area of the metropolitan hub of the United States, The Hartford is deemed one of the primary players in its industry, having also earned a place in the Fortune 500 list (Fortune 500, 2017). This list of 500 successful USA companies, accounts for two-thirds the nation’s GDP, with a proportionately higher employment rate than most organizations. In 2017, the Hartford placed 153rd on the list, outperforming many recognizable names in finance and investment management. Additionally, in 2013, for the previous five years 2008 - 2012, it was named by the Ethisphere Institute, USA (2013) as the most ethical company, as there was some evidence and indications, of its commitment to a high degree of trustworthiness. Recently, as indicated on its website (2017) the Hartford sold its life insurance, retirement plans, a brokerage deal and some annuities. Then
in 2017-2018, on purchasing Foremost’s commercial small business, it expanded the potential range of its successes.

### 3.11 How will the Case Studies be approached?

The range of underlying philosophies firstly suggests there are multiple voices (Stanfill, 2012) in the thesis. Views can complement, elucidate, and contradict each other, but they should ideally result in a conclusion. Critical analysis with WABA, will determine the vein of similarity or commonality that exists between all case studies. This should also find both the truth of what works for the organization especially when (re)-establishing the brand during change, and aligning theory to bring commonalities together cohesively. From the case studies, a set of confirmed factors affecting communication, and more details on how they might be used in an increasingly modern communication strategy, will be ascertained via a series of analytical processes. Together these refine and direct the available information to suitable summaries of the cases studies. A narrative analysis (Figure 6: H) reflects communication theorising processes, while content analyses (Figure 6: I) began to gauge how whatever the narrative depicts, is linked to produce communication material which the cases chose. As intimated by Penrose (2015), business advisors or consultants, and communication specialists would give a unique perspective to professional communication. This often is a necessary link between stakeholders external to the business, and decision makers within the business. Although originally, views from such individuals in discrete focus groups were considered, organizing respondents together in these groups, would have been challenging. It is believed however that three of the persons interviewed for the case studies,
being at the highest organizational level with responsibility for communications for the educational institutions (Bolton College/University Centre, CTC and NCU), proffered highly valuable insight into what communication should be. These were the longest of the six interviews, wherein the respondents also gave additional information, as express outcomes, which at times though, unsolicited were particularly relevant to the potential scope of the research topic. Where respondents were engaged outside of the scripted questions, as well as within the context of said questions, for evaluating how the organizations further integrated their brand message (Figure 6: J), care was taken to minimise buzzwords that could cause reaction rather than response. The overall aim was that data must be reliable and robust, while the process remains rigorous and without potential biases as would be reasonably possible or achievable.

Therefore semiosis in (Figure 6: J) as a precursor to thematic analyses (Figure 6: K) as somewhat embedded in business culture, was only relevant where as expressed by the aforementioned respondents, stakeholders preferred an identifiable face. As described by Braun and Clarke (2006), connections will be made between what is said during qualitative processes and respondents’ implicit requirements; these may also complement what is buried in visible words. So thematic analyses further demarcated variables, not only in DC but with observable TMC as part of communication processes. Using one set of questions then another that rewords the first set from the immediately preceding stage, is a relevant productive literary strategy. Here the PCT (Figure 6: K) is engaged to make greater sense of individualised responses in case studies; a report and conclusions or recommendations are given to create a foundation for
final stages of this thesis. There also needed to be a general check on the deflection rate (Constantinides, 2006) in the 12-18 months after initial data collection, as Wolcott (1995) suggests. It records perceived value of brands by measuring the time between introduction and steady customer engagement.

3.12 Coding

This is an especially important process, as it is necessary to ensure that the most relevant information can be extracted from the data sets. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) describe coding as heuristic and essentially a method of discovery. This implies coding procedures comprise part of the findings as precursory stages to analysis. Accordingly, case studies are included in entirety within Chapter 4 on Results and Findings. The writers categorise coding into two main groups, first and second cycle coding, which in that order, facilitate the extraction of increasing detail and appropriation of results. Then, there are many sub-groups in the two categories; they were chosen as relevant to this thesis and the stages of methodology. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) also take into account apposite theory as applied in Chapter 2. Coding groups and sub-groups are outlined further below.

Firstly, some element of structural coding is a standard for any study that has a tangible qualitative element. It is defined as content based or conceptually accurate in a way that reflects the distinct set of research objectives or questions on different segments of data. In this thesis the objectives were about identifying factors that impact the communication strategies, some comparisons of these strategies in different geographical regions, then also deciphering a
robust theoretically bound framework for the new proposed strategy. The first cycle coding in the early stages of data collection is best used to fill gaps or make elements of the past and current narrative about communication strategies cohesive. This type of coding could be ideally put into greater focus or evaluated using holistic coding to account for the fundamental themes common across the data sets (see Table 4 - Pilot).

Provisional coding established a preliminary set of codes that were to be used further during later stages of the data collection (Table 5). Both dovetailed appropriately initially into iteration expected within Grounded Theory, and subsequently into values coding. Given that the sample was from different geographical regions, the latter would appropriately account for certain espoused attitudes and beliefs. Assigning specific themes to the data was also critical, as this clearly identified what the units of text were about (Tables 4 and 5) and could best aid the process of delineating variables to be examined more closely. This also helped to clarify boundaries of initial coding (Table 5), which separates unique parts of the data, and highlights similarities or differences. It is an important step in the iterative process, and extracting from the data what may be evaluated and synthesised in greater depth. This is combined with the application of theory in later stages of the study.

The second cycle coding as Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) explain, is the next step in re-analysing data that had been coded previously. For this thesis, it embraces pattern coding, which seeks to determine relationships between the units previously identified (See Tables 12 – 17: Case Studies).
Following closely, is focused coding (Table 20) which narrows and highlights some of the more frequent categorisations that are looked at with a greater degree of scrutiny. Following this, to enable building the desired theoretical framework, is theoretical coding. As the name suggests, this coding facilitates the overlay of theory that may be used to further connect the splinters in a changing paradigm of communication and returns to its essence.

As communication involves both parties being sure that they understand the message, it is also important that as much detail as possible, within the cultural constructs, be garnered by statistical methods. These must continue to match the research objectives; so the last stages of the thesis (L) are to refine the evaluation of what premium stakeholders most readily respond to. Broad categories for further appraisal and re-interpreting data for this quantitative stage would have been previously generated out of the qualitative data analysis. There would be an empirically based evaluation and a suitably thorough review of the responses regarding what a suitable number of stakeholders (N=40) think about key communication processes for branding. Results from the first quantitative stage of the thesis, are again cross-checked with views and previous experiences of decision makers and business consultants, on this occasion with a greater degree of interpretive processes as described by (Klein and Myers, 1999). To avoid sample error, the sample needed to be large enough to reflect a sound understanding of human behaviour (Ajzen, 2001) and meaning making as understood by the respondent in his or her own world. Factoring both DC and TMC as available in precise conditions via a synoptic summary of available webometrics, synthesis of results are based on syllogism.
Importantly, although across all the case studies the amount of TMC present within their communication strategies varies significantly, if foci for analysis remain on the objectives as outlined in Chapter 1, this difference would not affect the veracity of the results themselves. Inductive reasoning, then deduction re-applied syllogistically afterwards, arrive at a conclusion wherein it is acknowledged that multiple propositions may be true; yet there are heuristic guidelines for commonalities that will lead to successful trusted communication.

3.13 Possible Limitations and Challenges in Data Collection

With regards to Figure 6: D, as a consequence of timing to access respondents’ data retrieval, a substitute for some data that it would have been gained by a larger sample of premium stakeholders, was used. Encapsulating trends in multimodality, this was sourced from verifiable Google Analytics (November 18, 2016). Though without company-specific data, these summarise relevant corpora (Figures 1; 3: F). This body of information informs Stage 3: H-L of qualitative interviews, after which a final theoretical framework is ascertained. Also due to some travel restrictions for data collection, there was a degree of reliance on online versus face-to-face observational ethnography.

Feldman, Bahamonde and Bellido (2014) showed that not all variables are of the most importance or relevance to instances where the entities demonstrated better business performance. Also, the writers admitted that though corporate reputation gained importance over time, the precision of its measurements did not evolve similarly. Considering both writers’ observations, only a subset of the eight items - those in direct relationship with what is involved in brand reputation
as outlined in Chapter 2 - is given more consideration. This is relevant in the context that the organization may be in a vulnerable position while undergoing change, and therefore may not be at its highest performance levels. These five items, particularly important during change, were customer-centeredness based on good business relationships, which result in optimism all round, trust or ethical tendencies, good governance with innovative practice, and leading products and services. They are inductively used to better understand the representation of reputation, and how variables contribute to it.

3.14 Key concerns of how empirical data will be analysed or synthesised
To give suitable contexts to analyses of the results, for example with regards to normal distribution of variables, a preliminary comparison of non – parametric tests is apt. In addition, regression is appropriate as regression analysis will determine the relationship between independent and dependent variables, and give increased direction and definition to meeting OBJ1. Cronbach Alpha is used to check the internal reliability of results. The design and inclusion of stage 1 (Figure 6) questionnaire items regarding varied features of the organizational brands makes conjoint analysis possible; the process determines how people value individual attributes of a product or service. A check must also be made for Type 1 errors, that is, ascertaining if there is a significance which is due to a variable outside of the ones being tested (extraneous variable). It is useful to examine premium stakeholders’ propensity to respond to brand resonance, that potentially focuses attention on brand value measurements (Young and Rubicam, 2003; Schultz, Block and Viswanathan, 2014). It gives insight into what creates a good brand reputation.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND FINDINGS
4.0 CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS AND FINDINGS: ABSTRACT

Results with different degrees of depth yet together relevant to communication were elicited from multiple sources creating an eclectic study. Sources included findings from secondary print or online data, and primary data from interviews and questionnaires with a total of one hundred (100) human participants. With regards to premium stakeholders’ responses, the results gathered from the test instruments, satisfied varied specific purposes within ambiats of the objectives of this research. Very importantly in some instances, results were also distinct express outcomes, for example as communicated by respondents during fully structured interviews. These unique unexpected outcomes suggested some non-linearity in both the actual results and, in the process of their interpretation.

Comparatively, while semi-structured interviews with online non-participant or participant ethnography, and observations are less ordered than structured interviews, the heterogeneity of results also meant there is no linear way in which results could be presented. This multiplicity of results, lends itself to interpretation which can be achieved by deploying thematic analyses. When juxtaposed with other analytical tools and interwoven theory, this will potentially lead to sound conclusions. Focus however must be suitably placed in the context of interpretation of the results, which harks back to the different methodological approaches used for data collection. So context is a primary feature in how the results are first separated, then discussed in a sequence in which the purpose of analytic interpretation is recognisable. Accordingly, Figure 7 below gives an overview and summary of how results in each stage supported subsequent stages, and ultimately meet the objectives of this thesis.
Figure 7: Flowchart of Different Stages of Results
Crucially, when analysing communication theory and strategy specifically, though stakeholder preference of stimulus (Azjen, 2001) may be included in relation to the results, there appears to be some situations that have an overriding effect on any innate preference that may exist. Hegel explains how this can be condensed by phenomenology that often is clearly detectable in regional geographical spaces where business processes are similar; it is a step towards a suitable starting point for the presentation of emerging results.

Considering the pilot for example (see Figure 6), as an operational and distribution site for an international organization, it was strategically located. As the site is in a large English-speaking independent nation (Jamaica) between the organization’s head office in Florida and the rest of the similarly free English, Spanish and French speaking Caribbean islands, its role was designated accordingly. It was expected that tangible information relevant to both regional culture, and organizational cultures around a brand in the geographical spaces it which it exists, would have to some degree been accounted for, especially when speaking with the country manager. Responses from middle level managers and premium stakeholders garnered in a focus group, informed later stages of the investigation. An initial process of analysis of focus group results (Krzyzanowski, 2008) is in particular reference to discernible themes (Table 4) and considered variables that should be explored in further depth, in relation to effective communication. Also evident from data collected, was the overall philosophical slant from which the brand did business. Perils that exist if guiding philosophy regarding brand credibility and what the brand had to offer were no longer plain to premium stakeholders, were identifiable and needed attention.
4.1 Philosophical Approach to Interpretation of Ethnography results
Communication at different stages in the transmission of a message, can be influenced by or be an outcome of the philosophies that senders and receivers enact (or not). It may depend on existing country, background or organizational cultures as discussed, and the time lapses during which changes may occur.

Accordingly, over the course of this thesis, some emphasis is placed on areas in which questionnaire respondents and case studies are physically located. Ethnography is presented in three sections, beginning with an account of the geographical regions, followed by a fair online ethnography. Then thirdly as express outcomes of semi-structured interviews, ethnography in relation to existing business cultures and how this impacts different staff levels, is perused.

4.2 Ethnography Part 1: The USA, CARICOM AND THE UK
Many Eastern and Southern States of North America were used in the sample for this research. It can be said with reasonable confidence that their culture pivots on the three major states: New York, Georgia and Florida; all three are major recognised hubs that welcome business. New York a case in point, is listed by CNBC (2016) as one of the top 15 most hectic hubs in the United States overall. Georgia also ranks in that list, but also importantly, is that this state has one of the largest and busiest airports in the world, the Hartsfield-Jackson Airport in Atlanta. It is also home to several Fortune 500 companies including well-known names such as Coca Cola and Holiday Inn. Additionally, the state regularly hosts large and international trade shows - a testament to the business culture that is present there (CNBC, 2016).
So not only are the two foremost cities well known for merchandising, manufacturing and servicing, but in addition, the third area, Florida traditionally revered as a shopping mecca, is in close proximity to the Caribbean. It shares similar weather as well; and as such, North American trade routes between these two mentioned areas are regularly used and permeating cultural influences inevitable. Consequently, the outcomes in both regions are highly recognisable. Therefore, from the pilot phase to the final stage of this thesis, Florida is included in discussions of the business contexts and some ways that these may leverage how persons in the Caribbean regions use and respond to information about services or products on offer. Furthermore, the three regional cultures in the USA, are summarised based not only on available documented information as indicated above, but also on the researcher’s lived experiences and employment in these areas, hereby also contributing to auto-ethnography.

In addition, educational institutions across South East USA have high enrolment numbers of both local and international graduates originating from all three geographical areas (VERSAN and AIM, 2016). This knowledge is especially helpful for the processing of results as a part of dyads, as explained in Chapter 3 on Methodology. Educational institutions that are found in or based on systems in the UK, Caribbean, and the USA, as well as industries there, are together used as units of analysis; therefore triangulated data from the regions will be expressly required and relevant. This is also important given the fact that one Caribbean-based case study, NCU, as an educational institution is closely associated to business interests and accreditation bodies which are in the United States.
The South East of the USA is even further buoyed by the overall consumerism approach to trade by its populace and international travellers. Consumerism, in this case American consumerism, is an economic theory, which states, “a progressively greater level of consumption is beneficial to the consumers” (Passini, 2013). Passini speaks in detail about how “binge consumerism” even alters how persons communicate; a sense of autonomy in making the choice to consume more goods will increase. From psychological perspectives, the writer cites present-time orientation, impulsiveness, narcissism and the crisis of relationship with authority, as critical factors in new ways that persons approach life, or what is crucial to them. This may be linked conceptually to consumptive emotions associated with social media, as described by Jin et al. (2017). Care should be taken by business owners and managers to ensure apt data to assist decision-making is available. Table 3 is a synopsis of how TMC was often used.

4.3 Ethnography Online: Part 2

Table 3: Ethnographic observations: online media from 16 organizations (Appendix 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEBPAGE/WEBSITE</th>
<th>INSTAGRAM</th>
<th>TWITTER</th>
<th>FACEBOOK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a general rule of thumb, it appeared that the webpages were not necessarily updated regularly, with the exception however, of two organizations -- VERSAN Educational Services and the first website for Steve Harvey Show. They had built empires over two or more decades, and relatively stable webpages reflected the continuity and regular accurate communication extended to clientele that required contact communication due to the nature of the business.</td>
<td>Successful organizations with more followers, seemed to spend more time giving advice, showing values or vision that they espouse, and reasons for making the posts. They also tagged other entities or persona that appeared to be premium stakeholders who had shared values or renowned sensationalism. Collaborations were common between them. Videos were less frequently used than photos.</td>
<td>For more established entities, retweets were often used to show agreement on a particular topic, or inform the public of a sensitive matter. It was also engaged to summarise other posts in Instagram or Facebook, and point the reader there. Generally, it served the purpose to get attention, and increase curiosity. With a limit of 140 then later 280 characters, it appeared to be either directive or, pointedly suggestive that readers make up their minds on a given topic.</td>
<td>This gave historical accounts, and contact data. It also was the main forum used to seek to correct costly errors made in the public domain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ways in which these media were engaged, broadly reflect the reason, the locale and the substance of communication in relation to what the organizations or brands offered, and what they thought was important about the public's perception of them. Some organizations however relied heavily on TMC, while others less so, depending on the type of industry of which they were a part.

The implicit expectation was that local or international stakeholders understood these organizations and their leaders, so then would be more inclined to support their businesses; this was irrespective of whether these were based in the USA, UK or Caribbean. As previously intimated, building value of their trade and reputation, was one of the primarily goals of using the social media. Exposure to TMC, combined with a desire to purchase service and products often determined the first reactions of prospective international travellers.

At the same time there is always some risk involved in accepting proposed credibility of information published online. Reputable internet based third party customer review sites such as Amazon and Trip Advisor who verify purchases, are arteries that potential stakeholders can research to help decide to do business with the organization. This means, the TMC that breaks can also build.

For demonstration purposes, and for opening the discussion about the impact of online communication, the exemplar of tourism as a major service industry and consumer of manufactured products, is outlined below. This is especially since it is also relevant to all three geographical regions. Tourism is abundant in the three large US cities: New York, Atlanta and Miami, as well as many parts
of Britain. It has a reputation of great opportunities for sightseeing, theme parks and shopping. Tourism it can be said, is one of those industries which might be heavily reliant on TMC, as the webpage is one of the main ways in which visual information about the product which most often would attest to its reputation, may be garnered. While the tourism product may be different in nature and size, the same degree of emphasis goes for the reputation of the Caribbean.

Over the past two decades, many Caribbean islands were voted amongst the world’s leading wedding destinations, with Jamaica also securing the top Caribbean and Sport Tourism destination; for years the Sandals All Inclusive brand has swept similar world Tourism awards (Jamaica Tourist Board, 2014). Accordingly, a routinely scheduled tourism outlook seminar (2014) in the tourist capital of Montego Bay, was designed to maintain that reputation.

Rather importantly, the event was to also create more opportunities for direct communication by buyers and suppliers in tourism rather than necessarily depending on the different forms of TMC. Organizers were quoted saying they wanted to ensure that smaller and less well known industry players (not only in the islands, but those from other countries) will be on an equal platform for business access to travellers, as larger more visible ones. Convenors had recognised this as an area of imbalance and competition in the tourism industry.

This brings the relevance of further details of this corporate communication, with regards to the transmission of information, into sharp focus. When occasions for direct communication arise, as in the case of the previously
mentioned seminars, questions will be asked about what precisely may be the most salient factors to consider in order to achieve optimal results. With greater regards to trust and economics (Beugelsdijk, Van Shaikz and de Groot, 2004), the writer implies that the robustness of the data available in the contexts of their collection, is crucial.

So considering the relevant fact that one of only two worldwide reputed Richard Branson Centres for Entrepreneurship is located in the renowned Montego Bay, another such Caribbean regional example is cited. In November 2014, the Jamaica Business Development Corporation hosted a Global Entrepreneurship week that saw several business upgrade seminars rolled out across the island.

A visit to a centralised location touted as the proposed location for a “Silicon Valley” of the nation (the same geographical region where some pilot interviews were done) gave good insight. For example, results and observations showed that for corporate communication in initial stages of business operations, focus seems to be on presentations, and workshops or seminars as discussed prior. This is one of the most relished approaches used by successful entrepreneurs regionally, as they could make direct contact and build trusted networks.

Yet an interview with event organizers during this entrepreneurship week, revealed that the seminars had been shortened due to feedback from previous years of their staging. Premium stakeholders that is buyers, suppliers and in some instances the business owners themselves, were still mindful of the time they felt that they needed to spend on such an activity. This was even in the
crucial stage of DC and networking as the case may have been; so the business owners needed to meet immediate needs of stakeholders by understanding what they wanted and not compromising time that they knew was possible. At the same time however, networking opportunities between newer entrepreneurs also featured prominently; the fact that they too were careful of the time spent, suggested that the focus was trusted business information and networking for the purpose of business, rather than necessarily relationship building. So, both approaches are in agreement with the core concepts of the reviewed literature and previously mentioned international entrepreneurship programmes regarding what the quality of talk as direct communication truly is.

The trends observed during this aspect of the ethnographic process, reflect the importance of whether “talk” will be regulated for credibility, specificity and clarity, as well as decision-makers’ accessibility to communicate with respect to business offerings. Yet as also outlined, in a postmodern technology driven culture, DC cannot stand alone. This and other key themes stated or abridged in Table 4 below, emerged throughout the results from pilot study processes.

The respondents made limited reference to TMC, but dedicated much time to speaking of how decision makers assumed responsibility for communicating directly to stakeholders and in varied creative ways to attain their purpose. Some details of the themes, and what could be delineated at least a portion of the variables for exploration during the latter stages of this thesis, are given after the tabular account of the pilot study.
### 4.4 The Pilot

**Table 4: Themes from pilot case study and semi-structured interviews in focus groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PILOT &amp; ETHNOGRAPHY with one case: set questions on service, communication and sales</th>
<th>ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE &amp; AUTOETHNOGRAPHY: in focus groups with key stakeholders</th>
<th>THEMATIC ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Execution and sample</strong></td>
<td>Multinational Health and Wellness organization: head office in Florida, USA (judgement sampling) 7 interviews, including some replication:  * Caribbean supplier = JA country manager  * Central island regional manager  * Independent distributors (tenure 6 weeks to 20 years)  * Long term customers</td>
<td>Interviewed 7 business owners or associate stakeholders in Jamaica, Trinidad, the USA and the UK, ascertaining what is most important to them during change (convenience sampling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Themes reflecting potential variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1:</strong> Getting the word to the general public and key stakeholders</td>
<td>* There needs to be promotions in churches  * Overall visibility to the “man on the street” should be improved</td>
<td>* Differentiating products from others when communicating to public  * Taking company mission worldwide, and being specific to the cultural requirements  * Had time and money only for investing in products’ bags (note theme 2) and getting them seen in market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2:</strong> Meta-space, presentation, visual representation</td>
<td>A new physical layout in line with the name change the company now is ongoing (also staff uniforms)</td>
<td>Proposed physical location must be awe-inspiring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3:</strong> Professionalism</td>
<td>* Strategy is to match the approach and known career of the customer  * Stick to the values important to the company</td>
<td>Should not lose high value customers due to staff’s overly casual communication online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 4:</strong> Locus of responsibility</td>
<td>* The company could also provide alternatives and fix-it solutions to less than desirable lifestyles  * “We must initiate health fairs, versus just being a part of one … pro-activity”.</td>
<td>Though potential customers know the owner, after scheduling meetings, the timing for completing face-to-face consultations with occasional travel out of town, is a problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 5:</strong> Technology</td>
<td>Invest more in e-books: though some customers do not necessarily wish to buy, they want to know about it</td>
<td>Social media should be an asset not a liability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Key points from Primary and Secondary research during the Pilot:

4.5.I What variables appear to be important?

4.5.I.i Alignment or Integration

1. A combination of DC and TMC is better than any single methodology.
2. Regional and organizational culture will be relevant in different instances, but similarities suggest key commonalities.

4.5.I.ii Variety

3. It appears that to tweak the USP during the change, the varied other forms of online communication must be explored.
4. A brand must be atop of what is effective during change; and brand messages need to be approached in different ways.

4.5.I.iii Values

5. Values espoused and aptly communicated by the brand will influence how stakeholders perceive it or, invest in it over time.
6. The accessibility of decision makers is important yet so is their believability.
7. Trusting the brand has to do with the accuracy and timeliness of delivery.

4.5.I.iv Content

8. A succinct message will have a greater effect than multifarious ones.
9. Validity of the method of communication may be as important as content.

A perusal of these points by quantity, suggests that virtuous values espoused and demonstrated by the brand are the most important considerations for
premium stakeholders when assigning brand value and recognising reputation. For this thesis, it appears that organizational culture can be the control variable as cultural impact was common to most respondents; and integration of more than one communication method is ideal. Simultaneously, communication methods adopted should be clear and fit for purpose, as should the content of message be. This means that with communication as a shared understanding, how communication is executed are independent variables. Brand reputation and brand value are treated as dependent variables. Independent variables likely cause or force an outcome, while the dependent variable is the end result.

4.5. II Summary of Variables Considered
So crucially relevant to the organizational culture, as noticeable in the pilot and later especially in case studies renowned for business and finance, this perception of trust was crucial on two levels. These included the stakeholders and how non-corporate staff in an organization were informed to portray organizational goals to them. Persons should not only be able to articulate their views on organizational theory, but fulfil their part of the bargain of representing the organization well. Traditionally, it has not always been possible for such staff to do so to a degree where external stakeholders gain the most information, as the directives as filtered via corporate level communication, take precedence, and quite often have clear guidelines to protect the infrastructure and integrity of the organization. So then, it is conceivable that upholding reputation of the organization in the eyes of stakeholders, will be compromised. In this light, a closer look at regional cultures, processes of recognition of merit, pliability to change, and the organizational cultures within them were warranted.
4.6 Change or Preservation? Relevance of Culture to the Pilot Study

As part of the auto-ethnography, purposeful responses from some stakeholders, were sought. The National Cultural Development Corporation with responsibility for selections of national honours in the geographical operating location of the pilot organization, was part of the ethnographic process, and at the same time that the pilot was executed. How culture, and from time to time, how the focus on communication methods changed, directly influenced the recognition of success of personal or business brands. The directors and associates of this entity initially indicated that provisions for creative expressions and learning at the advanced level of education intensified over the past two decades.

Similarly, the relevance of how the community also grew to express itself or respond culturally, was also paramount to then determine the direction of regional cultural changes. Discussions indicated that as a nation, being responsive to change will be important to assigning value to culturally relevant experiences.

Simultaneously, whatever was used to defined culture was also preserved, and a creative space for this was ideal. Content of the pilot results, from a range of staff willing to comment with depth and acuity, initially suggested there must also to be tangible emphasis in data collection with regards to other business level categories. This implicitly supports the notion that it is important to align the truth that Caughlin and Sharabi (2013) speak of with ethics, and at the fitting stage of research, incorporate matters of responsibility and accountability of
staff all round. The degree of organization of the two, or as a pivot to further discussions, is particularly relevant: details of what, how and with whom a brand message is being interpreted or transmitted, proved also to be critical. So it was crucial that the second part of the ethnography involved all categories of staff.

4.7 Ethnography Part 3: ISCO - 08 job groups semi-structured interviews

This, as found through the iterative process implied in the results, was crucial to contextualise the case studies. In all three geographical regions, there were regular similar references in respondents’ answers from the pilot stage straight throughout to said case studies. This was regarding how the staff at various levels, could work best amongst themselves to facilitate the decision making process for stakeholders. It then is tangible evidence that this orientation to wider staff views, could not be altogether separated from corporate communication strategies. Accordingly, below is an account of similarities and only a few differences in the business cultures of sample organizations, as part of the participant ethnographic summaries of uniform job categories in the three geographical regions. Therefore, with the exception of the type of industry organization, no specific distinction has been made between these regions when relaying the results and findings outlined in the following commentary.

4.7.1 Managers

The availability, choice and pricing structure of the services and products provided, as well as whether the clients could invest the time in seeking business, appeared to be of great importance to what management communicates. How the two translate into a resonating brand message for
repeat customers was the expected outcome. The sum total of what the managers would spend their money on, also depended on timing and availability of funds; often this would not be explored until the organizations absolutely needed the service. The above was exemplified in one set of circumstances where a respondent-initiated discussion was held with a bank manager about a specific need for better and more open internal organization communication; yet this was not considered on the budget going forward. Although the issue was of grave concern, no further mention was made of this during subsequent communication. That being said however, it may be that the business culture of financial organizations, is what makes the difference as far as how communication competence is more often than not, dealt with internally, and to appropriately preserve reputation. This notion of inadequate internal corporate communication, was later corroborated when conducting a full case study of a similar financial organization (see case study 6 of the Hartford).

On the one hand, for example one multinational corporation which has even larger scope than the previous exemplar, admitted it appeared that substandard customer care was embedded in its culture. Essentially because of the niche products it provided, an international business representative of the organization, indicated that staff believe their main customer base was obliged to purchase from them. However, customer service is often linked with productivity (Lusch and Vargo, 2006). To further justify this point, yet another financial institution which was interrogated, promoted soft skills and an enhanced company culture, wherein these skills are given much more focus than is traditionally or culturally practised. Both staff and premium stakeholders
are nurtured. Happiness and the comfort of the staff are important to this organization, as these features espoused phenomenology, that is essentially the sum total of experiences the clients had at a given point in time. Additionally, another finance manager interviewed, closely mirrored this sentiment, by expressing that the ability to deal with customers in an adaptable way, means the organization is responsive to change that exists outside the organization as well. Managers from other industries corroborated the concept, extending the claim that delivery and making good decisions occasionally on the client’s behalf is key to building a good reputation, implying the decision maker understands and knows the business. In the best-case scenario, stakeholders trust and have confidence in the organization’s judgement; otherwise they may not have time to do the task themselves, so said decision-makers freely do so.

This appeared to correlate with feedback from many managers interviewed, who felt any successful business is often about the previous customers, reputation of both client and organization, networking between the two and the stimulus to drive products and services to market. The context in which this takes place, therefore can be communicated by the organization in both implicit and explicit ways. For example, as some proprietors interviewed indicated, the quantity of what is communicated to be on offer, can either entice or distance stakeholders; this however they claim, is mostly dependent on the clients’ available resources to make purchases. In summary, this section implies therefore, that communication in action within organizations’ internal processes, plus intertextuality external to these organizations, are both required to strike the correct balance where the two can exist harmoniously.
**4.7.II Professionals:**

At one university when a head of department was interviewed, it appeared that for a clear message of what is required by the stakeholder to be effectively delivered, the business identity and name of the stakeholder is revealed. So there needed to be a declaration of the nature of the enquiries, what was brought to the table, and what the organization offered; that is, enough information needed to be shared for both parties to make good decisions. This revelation would initially be to the person who acts as the strongest link to the desired decision maker, such as a business manager who also has high stakes in the organization’s reputation. In that way, the message and the completed transaction have the most desirable outcome. At the same time, efforts are made at ensuring authenticity of provisions of quality and care, for example, staff at another university interrogated took a significant amount of time to ensure responses to a stakeholder’s request met international standards. Hours were spent to convey the quality of the level of its standards; so the exact stakeholder requirements pertaining to the request were key to the discussion in order to fulfil it. This underscores the need for adequate correct information, to make the right decisions and determine the way forward that benefits both organization and stakeholder. It was also noted, that for this respondent, and in the person’s work context, feedback from patrons and community members in close proximity would also be expected to be relevant, succinct, and verifiable.

This concept appeared to transcend culture, for example as noted in five open day type events at a university in a different geographical region. Fact and experience-based opinions of the community always mattered, and in one
instance, the perception was that the institution was still in development phases. Over time, the university has responded positively in that the two-way communication loop to realign its institutional strategy for the future, is at least being explored. This could mean that a unique personified claim is centred on the organization’s mandate, as it becomes the identity the institution may wish to espouse. Further, it might translate into a strong brand; as this relates to the thesis, how well communication transmits an appealing, well-resourced and sound brand message, can be investigated.

4.7.III Technicians and Associate Professionals

In one instance in a telecommunications firm, the importance of the client taking the responsibility to listen and decipher the exact nature of the service or product as explained by marketing material, or a staff member, was re-affirmed. In as much as technical staff may have some information, reliance on this assistance was discouraged. The implication however, is that the demands of the stakeholders may get increasingly vigorous on the one hand, or open to critique on the other. In one large health facility, speaking with both a social worker and the matron, the patrons’ medical and non-medical needs were expressed, then recognised as demanding attention. However, the wherewithal to manage the process of communicating those needs to internal stakeholders and patrons as external stakeholders, was inadequate.

4.7.IV Clerical Support Workers

Where staff have no immediate control over the brand message but simply become part of it by delivering basic services, there appears to be less
engagement with clients as stakeholders. Yet, what is conveyed by this action can easily become negative, if the service is either substandard or prefaced by a reticent approach. If the brand already had a significant public presence, staff with whom “talk” (Watson, 1997) was initiated, seemed unconvinced that engagement was necessary. However, physical appearances of the business space and staff themselves representing the brand were often commendable.

4.7.5 Services and Sales Workers

If the former category was compared and contrasted, some similarities can be noted. For example, visual presentation as found in primary data, is up to standard, but the approach to stakeholder access to internal operations of an organization via this occupational group may differ. From secondary data, it seems this process translates into more direct aims at their communicating the culture of the business. That may not only depend on the nature of the business, but the culture in which it is situated, and how successful that business will be.

Yet it appears that where more personal services are being offered, or if social media becomes a part of the communication process, staff may communicate increasingly openly with premium stakeholders, to the point that professional boundaries could be crossed, as noted in two organizations investigated. This potentially undermines the trust expected to maintain an organization’s credibility. But since this may occur at an operational level where outcomes of face-to-face interactions are observable, it means that after such encounters, some feedback from staff involved and the external stakeholders can be usefully garnered for reflection, for example in research or apt corrective action.
4.7.VI Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers

Secondary and primary data indicated that staff at this level, needed to know boundaries of what can be communicated and what shouldn’t be said. Although specialised service is offered, the ideal in an intelligent trade-off of valuable customers versus high numbers via at times necessary or inevitable contacts with stakeholders. This is opposed to having associations with several persons, without said relationships translating into real business, or improved reputation.

4.7.VII Craft and Related Trades Workers

For this category, the sample served to highlight the importance of social activity, and in some instances, social decision making. The effects of the interaction or the interaction itself of craft workers who were spoken to, was a more significant contributor to decisions regarding a matter that was common to all persons in that group. Although they did not always share problems or successes associated with the matter, since the members of the group could relate in some way with that issue, this meant that a group consensus took precedence over any preferences that may have existed.

4.7.VIII Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers

In summary, comments from this group were primarily about how comfortable or secure the employee was in a given condition. This allowed them to decide what to do to satisfy clients. There was also some emphasis on relationship closeness, but this could sometimes be compromised when pricing strategies became a factor. It appears too that common values or a sense of acquaintance conveyed in a family business either of a contractor as an employee or of the
client, created a sense of security for that employee. This underscores that reputation is indeed a useful consideration in relation to assigned value.

4.7.VIX Elementary Occupations
Here it was found that a steady momentum in dealing with stakeholders, and having a conversation with clients, was not to be underestimated. This implied that sustainability and contact may also be critical to keeping customers. Expressed slightly differently, this indicates that the broader implied question “what does talking with premium stakeholders, or about the industry mean to them as stakeholders?” should always be interrogated, and positively exploited.

4.7.X Armed Forces Occupations
In a few conversations with one former member of this group, the most obviously important variables, were regarding truth with acceptance of self, and of the situation in which self was found. It reifies the importance of authenticity and phenomenology as turning points in decision-making processes.

4.8 Interim Findings

4.8.1 Ethnography across Staff: summarised
An organization’s overall presentation of its offerings, or what people observe suggesting the importance of some face-to-face interaction, is often critical to how they make decisions about the organization’s brand. However, the results also suggest and reconfirm that relationship marketing, in accordance with Pels, Moller and Saren (2009), has had so much attention over time that the original value of the brand may become blurred. The relationship-bound
interaction itself no longer may be beneficial for the company; or if there are several relationships for the sake of increased customers, the quality of relationships is lacking. On the other hand, results from hereby speaking with a range of staff, show that focus should be the communication interaction; it must be specific and relevant to the needs of the stakeholder. Moreover, the importance of clients having a range of opportunities and information to make decisions for themselves is paramount. This needs to be practically demonstrated by the organization in the initial stages, i.e. where the entity validates itself (including through staff) as genuine and trustworthy, even before transactions commence. At least some of this must be apparent in action, ensuring that what an organization proposes to do - in writing or verbally – is actually done. It therefore supports the position, that information available to potential stakeholders online or as the only main source of information prior to entering into a transaction, is indeed inadequate.

To clarify this position, results from more targeted questions posed to several owners/managers/decision makers in organizations of varying sizes and turnover (Figures 5 and 6) are used. The interview items had been derived via the initial literature review as well as the ethnography as described above, in order to establish some connectivity with published work, as well as what was actually happening in situ. This is contextualised by phenomenological and cultural boundaries. Particularly concerning the relevance of integrating the message, some secondary data was assessed and interview items designed from key areas as discussed in the literature review. So these included purposively chosen words, many intimated in the pilot case and as outlined in
the coding process. Culture (company/regional), budget, online, networking (face-to-face/telephone), secondarily print (business cards, fliers), competence, communication, change, strategies/methods, public understanding (marketing mix, resonance) were essential. Sample interviews are in Appendix 4.

As mentioned in the methodology Chapter 3, collecting online information to be used as a comparative element and until saturation and trends were clearly identified in the face-to-face interviews. These were part of this preliminary stage of GT iteration.

4.8. II Graphical and Tabular Summaries of Stage 1 Interviews, with 17 decision makers

*Figure 8: Bar Chart of the Percentage of Company Budget given to Communication Strategy*

There was absence of, or no clear response to requests for this financial figure, from three of the interviewees. However, the majority of organizations who did comment on this question item, reportedly dedicated over 15% of their revenue to communication processes. This supports and in some instances confirmed
Ayyagari, Beck and Demirgüç-Kunt’s work (2003), implying a tangible amount of the revenue is spent on communication and marketing. For the UK, this figure varied yet approached 70% at times, while in the CARICOM this hovered at 1–15%. It is noticeable too, that many respondents were either vague or, for 20%, they were unsure of the figures. This is indicative, at the very least anecdotally, that there probably were no fixed budgets, but rather widely flexible ones to meet demands of what decision makers felt was necessary for corporate communication.

![Aspects of Communication](image)

Figure 9: Pie Chart representation of mentioned aspects of Communication

When evaluating Figure 9, the most observed aspect to communication, was that decision makers needed to be on time with the information that would help premium stakeholders make the decision that they felt would be most useful. Secondly, they expected accurate information that would finalise to a greater degree the decision making process. Otherwise, each of 11 other mentioned aspects to communication contributed equally to what the respondents felt was important to communication.
The fact that there were so many mentioned dimensions to communication, indicates that one mode of communication will not likely suffice if all communication needs of the stakeholders were to be met, especially where the risks involved in engaging with the business must be kept at a minimum. The coding process below however, began to give greater definition to the data.

**Table 5: Summary of findings of first cycle coding: Stage 1 Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding categories, themes, and potential variables</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Via Holistic coding</td>
<td>Each organization felt at least one (different) aspect of communication was important, depending on industry or vision, implying online strategies alone will not do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via Provisional Coding</td>
<td>Accuracy and methods of fixing grave errors made (damage control) during communication were critical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via Values Coding</td>
<td>Clients used prior information (length of time information was known for, was often irrelevant) to make present/immediate decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **INITIAL CODING:**                              | **Communication** Important at inception or point of negotiation; Specific points in institutions history were used to get feedback, and for decision makers’ reflection. Involvement of premium stakeholders in what was most important for the branding especially with regards to educational institutions.  
| **Networking**                                   | Seems to be with previously existing customers and family recommendations. Face-to-face can be particularly important, based on the nature of the business  
|                                                  | Sometimes needed a face as a symbolic reference; recommendations ranked highly for the methods of communication  
| **Location**                                     | Dependent on the chosen business model in relation to whether to expand, logistics, and where offices or clientele might be located  
| **Online**                                       | All organizations were upgrading online strategies and websites (and seemed to always be in this stage, CARICOM sometimes did this later than businesses from other regions)  
| **Culture**                                      | Organizational culture appeared to be more salient than regional culture  
| *Summary*                                        | Combined with decision makers’ accessibility, accurate timely information must be communicated when contacting key stakeholders. This is best done in real time. A very wide range of methods of communication have been used for corporate communications and marketing; these may be geared towards saturation rather than focused attention. Only one respondent categorically stated that due to diversity of platforms, the timeliness of sending messages and consideration of needs of the audience, should be upheld. The following were also observed as culturally relevant: USA – Consumerist; UK – Capitalist; CARICOM - Minimalist |
As outlined above, views from a cross section of multidisciplinary decision makers provide a firm platform by which to understand cultural expectations. These appeared mostly to be limited to timeliness of response and organizational culture. This is one of the first indications that the organization is tasked with creating the right culture via its staff to provide required information. Theorising about the communication strategy therefore begins with the general systems theory about the adaptive behaviour of two parties. The decision maker and other members of staff in the organization demonstrate purposive behaviour, and stakeholders external to the organization engage in social constructivism when making sense of information provided to them.

This process ideally embraces organizational theory, in particular contingency theory as discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review. It appears from results outlined so far, including the pilot, that to benefit stakeholders and decision makers or the organization as a whole, if key elements of the communication strategy were to be maintained, a variety of inputs to the strategy, as implied by contingency theory, is important. This could further justify the intricacies and subsequent overlap of some theories as embedded in the quantitative instrument (Appendix 6) the results of which are presented below. However, it is important as well to establish an appreciation of a timeline for the stakeholders’ association with the organization, if the degree of relevance of contingency or details about a contingency plan are to be generally understood.

Mixed methods, it is argued, allows for triangulation of results to complement or create a suitable foundation for ultimate perusals of qualitative case studies.
4.9 Presentation of Results from quantitative methodology (Appendix 6)

Using SPSS with all ordinal and scale variables, an acceptable Cronbach alpha value of 0.663 was derived, given that there were ten items on the instrument. So it can be said, the instrument was internally consistent and therefore reliable.

![Figure 10: Scatter Plot Representation (used as Kurtosis) – How persons learned about the institution, and when they first gained knowledge]

Though from Figure 10 there is no definitive normal distribution, it is evident that the predominant method by which the stakeholders learned about the organization and offerings under consideration, was by word of mouth (WOM). Then secondarily there was a combination of websites and webpages, and word of mouth, or by the websites and webpages independently. Fewer persons (N=6) learned of the institution in the last year, via a much smaller
range of online modes by which this information was available, in comparison to a longer time ago, where more modes were used, but the range was smaller.

As there could be no assumption of a normal distribution, subsequent fitting non-parametric tests (One sample binomial, Chi Square and Kolomogorov-Smirnov) were run in SPSS. They implied that only responses to two of the ten questionnaire items, would lead to retaining a null hypothesis $N_0$, postulating no relationship between the alignment of TMC and DC that might affect the efficacy of communication. These two items were about what the accuracy of information proved to be, and what positively differentiates organizations from others. The fact that the specific responses to these items would have either been time bound, or a mix of possible responses respectively (see 2.6.II.iii) makes $N_0$ a positive indicator that there are plural factors that would contribute to the narrative of communication, and eventual reputation of the organization.

WOM interaction seems to correspond with data in Table 6 below, where the figures indicate that for 20/28 (over 70%) of the respondents to the relevant questionnaire item, the turning point for actually entering into business transactions was related to direct human interaction, or opportunities (via the human interactions) to explore the ways to progress their interests. This figure may not be conclusive evidence given that less than 30 persons gave a response, which according to Van Voorhis and Morgan (2007) is the minimum sample to evaluate statistical differences.
Table 6: Turning Point and Communication Strategy * Business Relationship Cross Tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Turning Point And Communication Strategy</th>
<th>Business Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student/Teaching UG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Industry/Non-Teaching PG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning Point And Communication Strategy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to people (general)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk - getting to know others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk - trusted accessible information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk - accessible open days/going into uni</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varied comm strategies with detailed info</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation of funds</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to attentive staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to expand/progress</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk - inside source</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk - relaxed environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk time - early response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparable product</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reasons</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.10 Brief Summary of Findings of the Stage 2 quantitative questionnaire

As intimated in the table 6 above, assessments are of the results from questionnaires disseminated to students and industry stakeholders. Undergraduate students in two North West universities, as well as with pre-university adult students at an associate college of one of the universities were categorised as one discrete group (UG), while postgraduate students (PG) on non-teaching courses, and industry stakeholders as direct buyers or suppliers were considered to be another group. Postgraduate students who had a greater autonomy, were indicatively more aligned to industry.
As previously signposted, all respondents were considered to be premium stakeholders, that is contributing either directly or indirectly to the highest net value for the associated organization. For academic institutions, respondents studied in subject disciplines provisions recognised by national league tables (for example, the Guardian League Table, 2016) as highly regarded in the top fifteen universities nationwide for industry relevance, research, entry qualifications or teaching quality. The respondent numbers for undergraduates totalled 24 or 60% of the sample, while the other premium stakeholders, that is, in the industries or non-taught postgraduates (16 respondents or 40% of the sample) were interrogated. Importantly, this to some degree also mirrors the case studies, that is wherein the data is evaluated using dyadic structures of industry and educational student pairings, and can therefore give further boundaries, for example via applying the schema theory of units of information. This concept is used below.

In reference to Table 7 below, for UG, 13/23 respondents did not believe that prior information mostly matched (that is matched to a degree of 80% or more) what was given in direct or face-to-face conversations. So the main area of concern at the time of DC appears to be whether all information required by students was available. A smaller proportion of industry/PG students (4/15) indicated that prior information and did not concur with the face-to-face encounters. This might be attributable to the fact that PG students are mostly independent learners, and therefore expect less sustained guidance from the institution, as students can design their study pattern themselves, and are already closely associated with the industry of choice.
Table 7: Prior Information Matching FTFC * Business Relationship Cross Tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Business Relationship</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student/Teaching UG</td>
<td>Industry/Non-Teaching PG</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Info Match FTFC</td>
<td>20 - 29 percent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 - 39 percent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 - 49 percent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 - 69 percent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70 - 79 percent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80 - 89 percent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90 - 95 percent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96 - 100 percent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows that there was more than half, N= 21/38 who had a positive first reaction implying that this encounter matched expectations of prior information they were given. Comparatively N=17/38 showed a somewhat positive reaction, indicative that only a portion of the information matched up. Or at the very least, respondents would have not been able to make a decision based on inadequate information at the time, and so gave a neutral response. If the information that was required was not available at the time, then a neutral response is expected.

Table 8: Prior Information Matching FTFC * First Reaction to FTFC Cross Tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>First React FTFC</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Somewhat positive</td>
<td>Very positive</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Info Match FTFC</td>
<td>20 - 29 percent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 - 39 percent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 - 49 percent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 - 69 percent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70 - 79 percent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80 - 89 percent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90 - 95 percent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96 - 100 percent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in table 9 above, N= 7/39 stated that some information was missing and in fewer instances, 15/39 mostly accurate, and 17/39 it was very accurate. This was regardless of the method of communication used to garner the information in the first instance, although most methods included WOM and at least one form of TMC, or another such as print or broadcast methods.
Table 10 demonstrates that the highest level of trustworthiness of the institutions as brands, was rarely allocated, even though initial encounters were positive. Singling out the case study of the college that is the only group that had become familiar with the institution they chose to engage with, by a variety of means. These included walking in to make face-to-face queries, yet they also did not have an altogether positive impression of the institution. Nevertheless, feedback was more supportive of the organization as a whole. One important observation was that although information about the organization did not always match with what was garnered face-to-face, trust did not necessarily drop to extremely low levels. But, trust remained at or below seventy (70) percent, indicating something still was desired regarding stakeholders’ confidence in the organization overall.

Table 10: Prior Information Matching FTFC * Trust Developed for Institution Cross Tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior Info Matched FTFC</th>
<th>30 percent</th>
<th>40 percent</th>
<th>50 percent</th>
<th>60 percent</th>
<th>70 percent</th>
<th>80 percent</th>
<th>90 percent</th>
<th>100 percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29 percent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 39 percent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49 percent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 69 percent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 79 percent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 89 percent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 - 95 percent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96 - 100 percent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The cross tabulation with matching prior information and trust, showed less than a third (14/36) of respondents surpassed 80% trust for organizations, and others (22/36) hovered mostly at 60 – 70%. It implies the importance of information consistency. Figure 11 shows from given parameters that positively differentiated organizations (at scale 5) communication transparency and cultural identity were most commonly cited, and secondarily together, perceived value and flexibility; yet organizations are only mostly fairly regarded (Figure 12).

Figure 11: Positive Differentiation filtered by how well regarded the institution is
(a)
Therefore a query to be explored is what makes communication transparent, in order to meet desired outcomes of organizations becoming more highly regarded. Figures 11 and 12 account for parts of the BAV - that is, differentiation and esteem more specifically, reflected as how respondents regarded the organizations. Simultaneously Table 11’s estimates show a 0.05 significance between trust and reputation: in this instance, trust was considered dependent, based on the supposition of truth in organizational mission and vision independently represented by regard or reputation.

Table 11: Model Summary and Parameter Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equation</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Parameter Estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>4.086</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>4.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.835</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The independent variable is How Well Regarded.

Similarly, a one-way ANOVA with trust and first reaction to face-to-face interaction factored by accessibility of people with adequate information both gave a high significance level of 0.002. So there may be an input affecting both,
that leads to higher brand trust or reputation. The fact that a larger factor of cultural identity also rated highly (Figure 11b) means this query reverts to the phenomenological and human element of corporate communication narratives. Reflexively, this refers to mission and vision, and how they are transmitted to appropriate personnel within the organization. Yet respondents had indicated that some information was missing in this narrative, when prior knowledge via TMC met DC and even in some instances when there was a mix of TMC and DC. It implied content and mode of what is communicated is partly important in determining details of how to achieve transparency. While no other extraneous variable is expected due to the relative clarity of results above, greater detail is required in striking a balance between the two (see 4.9). Though it cannot be ignored that other less frequently mentioned elements may play a role too; case study dyads (Tables 12 – 17), elucidate expectations of communication.

4.11 Introduction: Presenting Results of in-depth Qualitative Interviews

The next section via twenty-three (23) items across six case studies shows how organizational value and reputation are enabled via adopted communication strategies to relay original mission and vision. Then the modes by which decision-makers employ DC and TMC for credibility, specificity or clarity of information and accessibility, is explored. This interrogation gives more information regarding what is involved in reputation, and intimates that internal operations are crucial. Care was taken as described in Chapter 3, in selecting a range of case studies that provide insight for more effective communication; this facilitates less known players in varied but similar industries on an equal platform as larger or more visible ones.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM 1</th>
<th>What do you consider to be the most critical aspect of communication at the corporate level?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback is significant because this is how you get a sense if what you've said is understood,</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether devotions or when the principal meet with the students' year groups.</td>
<td>Varied opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity for students to ask questions,</td>
<td>Opportunities to query</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback, which helps to indicate the extent to which the message is being communicated.</td>
<td>Degree of understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That may be feedback again because in communicating, if we went to UTECH to ask to accredit a program, they should understand what we are asking for, that we are on the same page... and the extent we know they can provide what you are asking for.</td>
<td>Mutual understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's important we are able to articulate what is understood to provide clarity so feedback important.</td>
<td>Articulate clear understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM 2</th>
<th>In your tenure at the organization, have communication strategies changed? If so, how?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater emphasis on electronic communication. As we have grown in terms of student population, in terms of acquisitions of facilities for example the internet...we have grown and acquired greater efficiency in electronic communication. Its moved a lot away from memos. When I first came; now we don’t do a paper pen. We type and email</td>
<td>TMC emphasis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ITEM 3 | What challenges if any have been encountered? |
The biggest challenge is to get to the level of business we would require. E.g., we still at this point, and students definitely who do not access their emails as regularly as you would like. We do not get the impression that all our students are accessing emails as we like.

**ITEM 4** How long did it take for these hurdles to be surmounted, if they have been?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low student email use</th>
<th>Required business level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staged process</td>
<td>Time appropriation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will say we didn’t get this information, and we say but we sent the email,</td>
<td>Low student email use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously e.g. re: exams we’d use communication by notice board such as a list of grades/ now only use our student management system and electronic system where the student has access to the account rather than a noticeboard or examination office. To ask or check a notice board.</td>
<td>Change information-delivery process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An improvement we have in terms of communication as it relates to teaching-learning environment...many lecturers use electronic means e.g. Schoology - that’s what we use now.</td>
<td>Upgrade TMC methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ITEM 5** What is the weighted importance of your company mission?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students understand mandate</th>
<th>Philosophical expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transactional ethos</td>
<td>Ethos matching reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observable staff behaviour</td>
<td>Clarity of non-verbal communication to support ethos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mission I think presents what our general objectives are, and what’s our guiding philosophy. Its significant when our students first come into college... they have a clear understanding of what we are about, e.g. first year students meet with the principal or designate a session, (sic) regarding skills and attributes in training what we attempt to do in guiding them what we want with individual worth and excellence.

How we communicate orally or in terms the kind of models in terms of general deportment or actions. Communication goes beyond the talk. The body language in terms of action
is also very significant. In terms of what we want, we explain what it means.

Then in terms of actions, we make every effort that these actions reflect what we stand for. Part of our mission is to train teachers who have a zeal for learning to produce Christian teachers, e.g. involve them in devotional exercises. We do tell them, but in terms of our daily operation reflected in our actions

ITEM 6 What is the weighted importance of your company vision?

Our aim is to be the premier teacher institution in Jamaica and the region. This ties us with the mission. With students’ academic performance.

And we are very keen in ensuring not only academic is emphasized but soft skills for human living, we put a lot of emphasis on that. So we say to students we are doing well but when you go out we want you to stand out amongst others with a generally good attitude.

Exercise individual worth and excellence… soft skills that make society civil.

ITEM 7 In reflection, at what stage is credibility most important? At the visionary stage? At the transactional stage? A combination? Throughout?

It is at every stage. Transactional suggests when you come to college which will prepare for world of work, in the classroom, those who facilitate the learning are expected what is delivered to be delivered. It means we need competent educators.

We should ensure we have in place the best mathematics tutor to provide the training we promised them. …respect. Students feel if they carry my part of the transaction, the institution will carry their part of transaction.

At transaction stage is significant where the rubber hits the road.
Only that it takes place at transactional stage that the mission and vision is accomplished. Only with credibility is it achieved with mission and vision.

Transaction very important as is means mission and vision are achieved.

If we say you are going to do a course and you get 40 I shouldn’t give you 30 or x amount for semester, what you get is a full semester of value.

**ITEM 8 On average, how often do you attempt communicating the corporate message to premium stakeholders?**

In terms of people we collaborate with I wouldn’t say we frequently share our vision and mission – it doesn’t require it;

in terms of students we ensure the vision and mission are mounted on campus;

we remind them of what we stand for from time to time in general assemblies.

When we decide on a theme for example a bi-yearly theme…if we think it can carry over.

We assemble 3 times a week.

Year group meets with principal once per week.

Assemblies are information giving sessions.

**ITEM 9 When you do make contact, what determines the content of the communication?**

What we consider at the time necessary for what is needed. For example all this week, we emphasised that exam begins this week…what is required what issues we think is necessary at point in time.

If at the beginning of semester, ensure, you are registered for all classes. Fees paid, if not communicate with the principal.
ITEM 10 When you do make contact, what is the content of the communication?

Water shortage. Power outage, student management changes

ITEM 11 When you do make contact, is there a preferred mode of the communication?

Face-to-face communication because we get info to everyone present and students and lecturers present and do follow-up for example by emails, but the issues with access otherwise. I’d say a mix. We use noticeboards for some things. Less of that now, but depending on what we may use the noticeboard

ITEM 12 What determines the preferred mode?

The message

ITEM 13 What have you found to be most important to build trust?

Consistent in the message, you are not saying one thing and acting in another way.

If we are saying we value excellence, it must be excellence in all areas.

You can’t say you will, and then some can’t carry out the job, or the facility can’t deliver performance.

The message consistency is supported by transactional activities.

ITEM 14 Based on interactions with premium stakeholders, how important are bearers of brand messages?

Very important. There is a significant requirement that those who bear the message must be well informed, clear and effective in how they communicate the message. For example about a particular matter, to get all the facts so there’s no confusion, example communication about regulations, or how we calculate it as described by the student handbook, guidelines
communicated through these means. If actions guided by guidelines

ITEM 15 *How important is it that premium stakeholders understand the reputation of the decision maker?*

Very important extremely important. It is critical we have persons; stakeholders recognise them as authority to send out information, then secondly the co-requisite knowledge. You know what it is. If an email comes from the registrar, it is something worth stopping to look at. For example, a registry matter.

Maybe staff development officer who sends that information, there may be need for query, unless the officer says he is doing it on behalf.

ITEM 16 *Between the time communicating to stakeholders and engaging in transactions, what potentially changes?*

Not for most things. Mission and vision are likely to remain the same for some period of time. We are very careful with that. Within a one year period there are no significant changes, unless curriculum, or fees, but we are careful to guard against it because of potentially creating mistrust.

We are careful to ensure that what could possibly change isn’t significant enough to affect the decision the student would have made.

ITEM 17 *If there is no change, what measures are taken to ensure the initial corporate brand message holds true?*

We are consistent wherever the messages in who presents the message. It may not be the same but whomever it is, there is a clear understanding amongst those persons. With the principal the mission, myself the structure of program, but it could be the registrar, just make sure a consistency with the
ITEM 18 **In comparison, how effective are TMC (online) and DC (FTF networking; including by phone)?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriation of social media</th>
<th>Immediacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media not used for formal communication with students, staff, lecturer. A lecturer may have a WhatsApp group but at that level. If I need to call an urgent meeting I may go through their WhatsApp. I would not be managing in the group, but getting through to the student leader.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phones relatively reliable when we can make THE connection, but it can be a challenge; especially amongst the young students, we find text messaging, they may not respond to a phone call but the text, e.g. cancelled or postponed call, they’ll pick up on the text.</td>
<td>Text over call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They may not go to email at the same time. TEXT is kind of immediate.</td>
<td>Text over email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ITEM 19 **When do you consider them appropriate or not?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not administrative, but lecturer say for example</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ITEM 20 **Can TMC or DC sufficiently stand alone to build trust and credibility?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this technological age, I think maybe because as where I sit, I’m not technologically of (sic knowledgeable) as someone more current with the facilities, now they complement each. The FTF is almost like putting a face to the whole thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As we are training teachers it is important. It was once face-to-face but at this time, you need both, I’d think the most effective communication would be achieved with both in an effective balanced way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ITEM 21 How does your organization affect the connection between TMC and DC, if you do so?

I think since we still put significant value on DC, we have been using TMC to complement it, only in some areas.

Providing information of academic progress to data management systems, maybe there’s need for explanation. We have married the two and they support each other.

I would say we use one first and then the other, for example spoken, then email or written documents

ITEM 22 Is the transition a timed or spontaneous process?

For aspects of it its timed, in the sense for example when we first started the degree, we didn’t have the facilities to provide electronic responses, for example grades, and course outlines… so now that must be timed yes, but that’s the only thing I’d say is timed

ITEM 23 What trends external to your organization might have affected your corporate communication mode?

We have had to provide… there was competition amongst institutions for example, when students have applied to our institution. When want to get the information, as other institutions may be fishing for the same students.

Also for example, the availability of access. The fact that the institution now gains access to internet

Demand from our customers… students may be demanding, when if applying once had to pick up application, we can now say you can go online. This drives the way we communicate. Availability of our access worldwide, and the fact it’s available…previously, there was just no access

We’re going towards sharing what we are doing just with general public, it’s not being shared with public to improve presence; students are aware but not public so much, so we are working on that competence and skills
## HENRY’S DELIGHT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM 1</th>
<th>What do you consider to be the most critical aspect of communication at the corporate level?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What can I say. When I introduce and give a sample, I don’t really have a challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes I get immediate feedback, or in a few weeks. Most times immediate. I don’t see a challenge communicating with them, and a challenge accepting the product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM 2</td>
<td>In your tenure at the organization, have communication strategies changed? If so, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I try to know them instead of sending someone and try and go with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persons go to the store, and they will recommend, taste and like it, and then recommend it to the customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM 3</td>
<td>What challenges if any have been encountered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Just one, and they said it was a little too pricey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM 4</td>
<td>How long did it take for these hurdles to be surmounted, if they have been?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I didn’t intend to lower the price. Everyone else said it was good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I took his number and looked into it, but I didn’t call back. He was Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM 5</td>
<td>What is the weighted importance of your company mission?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People are more health conscious and want healthy stuff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|        | My intention is to supply and cater to myself and family using healthy products, which is no preservatives and additives...and supply the market with healthy stuff to buy. That’s what people want.
Cost of health...it is better to lower the cost implying healthy things in the body and supply healthy food.

ITEM 6 What is the weighted importance of your company vision?

Supply to the world or export. Supply meeting Expansion

Demand

Persons are looking for healthy stuff or food. That's one of the reasons I don’t have a problem with people accepting. They’ll go for it. That's what they want.

Demand and acceptance Ethical position

I’m sure it’s not only a Jamaica thing. The world is after a healthy lifestyle. That’s why other countries are going after Jamaican stuff 'cause its natural.

Authenticity and credibility Stakeholder acceptance

ITEM 7 In reflection, at what stage is credibility most important? At the visionary stage? At the transactional stage? A combination? Throughout?

On introduction of the product and consistency, realising that’s what they like and want.

Demand of consistency Quality and availability

ITEM 8 On average, how often do you attempt communicating the corporate message to premium stakeholders?

Whenever I get the opportunity, for example in the media. I think a lot of people are not educated.

Educated stakeholder Opportunistic timing

ITEM 9 When you do make contact, what determines the content of the communication?

I just say what it is to be said about the product.

Appropriate content Clear direct communication

ITEM 10 When you do make contact, what is the content of the communication?

Local, real Jamaica food, healthy, no additives preservatives no salt. Lots of chips are imported.

Authenticity and credibility Stakeholder acceptance

ITEM 11 When you do make contact, is there a preferred mode of the communication?

Talk in person. I don’t really by phone.

One to one Direct communication

Only a follow-up feedback by phone Feedback
ITEM 12  *What determines the preferred mode?*

Consistency, Quality of raw material. Ask if they spray to force the product into fitness. I always ask as I am into natural organic food.

So no chemical to grow the product. Sometimes I go to the farm.

ITEM 13  *What have you found to be most important to build trust?*

They need to know who the manufacturer is and who they are dealing with.

Women doing business are serious about intentions, and want them to buy into the local stuff.

I think personal contact is important.

ITEM 14  *Based on interactions with premium stakeholders, how important are bearers of brand messages?*

By myself. In case whomever is involved in business will have to be and know what I want.

And I also intend to grow my own food.

ITEM 15  *How important is it that premium stakeholders understand the reputation of the decision maker?*

It is and remains in competition, market not to lose customers and business level consistency maintained.

ITEM 16  *Between the time communicating to stakeholders and engaging in transactions, what potentially changes?*

Nothing

ITEM 17  *If there is no change, what measures are taken to ensure the initial corporate brand message holds true?*

Recorded, written down. Steps that the workers follow.

Health persons, Scientific Research Bureau etc, check if I am following the guidelines.
ITEM 18 In comparison, how effective are TMC (online) and DC (FTF networking; including by phone)?

TMC: that is where the world is now. TMC Trending
Some go to shop, you FTF, and they go online to follow. FTF then TMC Required order
Can also do face-to-face online. FTC and TMC Mixed modes

ITEM 19 When do you consider them appropriate or not?
Depending where the business is located for e.g. overseas, when it is not appropriate to travel. Distance Appropriation
I make no calls before, I just ask if it possible to speak with the person in charge. Intention Direct communication

ITEM 20 Can TMC or DC sufficiently stand alone to build trust and credibility?
It can stand alone, I don't think you have to. Independence of modes Appropriation of communication
Technology takes over. TMC Predominance
It depends on the type of business. Type of offering Appropriation of communication

ITEM 21 How does your organization effect the connection between TMC and DC, if you do so?
Consistency: face-to-face communication should match any other method. Consistency Appropriation of multimodality

ITEM 22 Is the transition a timed or spontaneous process?
It's a phase thing. I am not really online for example ordering goods. Phased Time appropriate
I intend to do some, based on how fast the business is growing. Dependency on demand Appropriate time
I have FaceBook but it is not really a professional look. But I am doing it stage by stage Phased Show reputation

ITEM 23 What trends external to your organization might have affected your corporate communication mode?
I don't know of what's out there. Competition is key. Viability Stable business
More aggressive. Make more business. Action More business
Move at a faster pace. Action Time appropriate
Table 14: Case Study 3

**BOLTON COLLEGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Category label</th>
<th>Theme label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ITEM 1</strong> What do you consider to be the most critical aspect of communication at the corporate level?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uhm the clarity of key messages that the senior management team want to get out to customers …</td>
<td>Key message</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we know the key messages, e.g. for English and Maths, we know how many students we need and then how we progress throughout the year, the key messages would be across each market.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the targets that we are working towards, and the also the progress that we are making against targets.</td>
<td>Target and audience</td>
<td>Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ITEM 2</strong> In your tenure at the organization, have communication strategies changed? If so, how?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They've changed extremely slowly with a slow and extremely slow move towards digital marketing and digital communications. There has been a budget cut by 45% in the last three years. Three hits of 15% each. That has had an impact on our marketing.</td>
<td>Timing and budget</td>
<td>Timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The big frustration for myself, is I am now in my fourth year of getting the main site redevelopment. The current site is not mobile friendly and in this day and age this is ridiculous. There has been an agreement in the last few weeks that to redevelop website and secondly to invest in support of an agency re: implementing a social media strategy.</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>TMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over the last 3 years we’ve produced printed material</td>
<td>Development of print</td>
<td>Appropriated TMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leavers – to be into context college has 26 million and 13 million comes from school million. 2225 young people. What we have been doing, printed prospectuses which have now been developed online as downloaded in click through books for further information in all the areas, the vision is to move from printed copies and move towards an app, or a mobile friendly</td>
<td>Recruitment and promotions</td>
<td>DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What marketing do and the school liaison function</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relatively new building, new facilities, recently inspected by Ofsted.

Number one college for overall achievements rates in Greater Manchester.

Students progressed to HE and found employment. Work experience programme developing them for the world of work. We can provide different pathways, e.g. full time, or apprenticeship programme, we talk them through, getting qualification while getting paid. We talk about our strong links with employers over 600 in the area.

Also enrichment activities sports activities. Key selling point.

Also the support that is available a LDM and they have that person whose job is to look after them at the college.

Employability and personal skill, - development as a person. Importance of English and math is going on to university.

ITEM 3  What challenges if any have been encountered?

Biggest problem at the moment with premium target market is the growth of 6th forms in local schools. The government always pushes for school giving impartial guidance for young people. But we find that isn’t happening at the local level. So we have problems getting into those school e.g. at assemblies events and things like that.

Also what parents see as the various problems for their child. Stigma of A-levels is still there as to how to get to university. E.g. BTEC can still get you straight into university.

ITEM 4  How long did it take for these hurdles to be surmounted, if they have been?

Still haven’t been. They are ongoing. Bill (sic the principal) was talking me in getting to schools and how he could be a key contact in getting to the school.

I also look after corporate communication for the college. It is hard to get a brand perception not like Pepsi Cola, we don’t have that sort of money. There seems to be a stigma will the college. Say a parent has three children, One goes to Runshaw and goes to university. Another needs a-levels and goes to the sixth form. Then the other who is low level they can always go to Bolton college. That seems still to be the perception, with parent that seems to be the second choice. A lot of students leave Bolton and go say to Bury college. They are competitors. Despite them going through an Ofsted dropping from 1 to 3, we seem still to struggle keeping students. We are working with an agency that works with unis (sic
universities) as to how they keep students. Just the word Bolton would put me off.

Say compared on Lambourghini. Just spending an hour walking through, perceptions seeing boarded up tanning shops. There is lots of good things happening but for some reason, it doesn’t get promoted. But they struggle – new Aldi, lots of developments food festival but doesn’t to make that jump.

ITEM 5 What is the weighted importance of your company mission?

Not really to the young people

ITEM 6 What is the weighted importance of your company vision?

That students progress either to work or university. That’s why we are here to make sure they do the best they can and hugely importantly

ITEM 7 In reflection, at what stage is credibility most important? At the visionary stage? At the transactional stage? A combination? Throughout?

Transactional – and having an interview – for young people. Initial stage is just to school and giving message

At that point, based on how application process words UCAS they are given a log in see the competitor courses and apply to other colleges, and open them up to competition,. A response to their application is important and when they are invited to an interview that experience has to be good. The credibility of the tutors, the information they give out about their course. The conversion rate is very high. When we get them into the building. Although the focus should be on getting them in. When they see the tutor and speak to them. If you look at the messages we put out they are about OfSted report and achievement rates

ITEM 8 On average, how often do you attempt communicating the corporate message to premium stakeholders?

We have what we call a keep warm – I work in conjunction with recruitment relations – initial letter and then various information we send birthday cards, competitions, what’s going on in the course, news update for e.g. new student day, not after but prior to enrolment, Can get a taste of college life, come in the morning and get a taste of the course, and in the afternoon fun activities. One a month…

ITEM 9 When you do make contact, what determines the content of the communication?
Key message to reinforce, why they could come here, also what’s going on in the department at that time. And what they have planned for the future.

ITEM 10 When you do make contact, what is the content of the communication?

Some communication may be slightly different for different areas

ITEM 11 When you do make contact, is there a preferred mode of the communication?

Via letter that’s it for the moment, but also via text talking to the agents that come in, we want to take it via social media e.g. direct and FB, and that is in the planning stage. We send postcards, and birthday cards

ITEM 12 What determines the preferred mode?

Social - finance

ITEM 13 What have you found to be most important to build trust?

Experience says it is the interview and how they are treated when they come in to the college. Those interview evenings. You can check the drop of rates which are not high at those points.

ITEM 14 Based on interactions with premium stakeholders, how important are bearers of brand messages?

Massively; the college tries to involve the Curriculum leader and senior leadership for those key messages

ITEM 15 How important is it that premium stakeholders understand the reputation of the decision maker?

Usually important. Previously the principal always used to start the meeting and go through mission, vision and values or organization and why it is important. Embedded at the senior level. The new principal is going through the process for changing those that he thinks that are too wordy.

ITEM 16 Between the time communicating to stakeholders and engaging in transactions, what potentially changes?

Change mission

ITEM 17 If there is no change, what measures are taken to ensure the initial corporate brand message holds true?

(No answer)
ITEM 18 In comparison, how effective are TMC (online) and DC (FTF networking; including by phone)?

Online is becoming more and more important but we’ve managed to hit our target by doing face-to-face. It may well be the preferred communication for the young people. We’ve hit targets but having good face-to-face. What drives people to open evenings come from school liaison activity. I’ve also invested in a team of learning ambassador. E.g. people who work in the community 16 – 18 key postcode areas – networking, and making contact with local community centers, libraries etc., they have a database, and it’s a massively effective, clear evidence that they have gone and progressed after meeting the ambassador.

ITEM 19 When do you consider them appropriate or not?

We’ve had a short shortfall during this campaign so we have tried the technological stuff e.g. fb adverts, working with Capital Radio, using Dacs advert e.g. when they log in to spotify a verbal message (they hear it – not text) by a certain number of impressions.

ITEM 20 Can TMC or DC sufficiently stand alone to build trust and credibility?

Not so much with tech, but FTC there’s more credibility there. DC outweighs TMC. Credibility

ITEM 21 How does your organization effect the connection between TMC and DC, if you do so?

One of the key things we are doing this year is introducing marketing ambassadors. Key people from different areas. Arts etc. etc, regularly meet with myself and talk about what is going on in college, and they can feed into social media, things we may have missed in the past. And before they actually happen. Stuff that goes to newspaper, capture what people are doing. E.g. doing a press release with SMS version.

ITEM 22 Is the transition a timed or spontaneous process?

It will be timed process as part of the agreement with the agency is that there will be staff development training and for the ambassadors to look at the type of the information they want. Can’t switch just like that. The director says we can be up and running in 14 days, but content may not be right.

ITEM 23 What trends external to your organization might have affected your corporate communication mode?

Website statistics, and the amount of people using desktops or using mobile or tablets, if looked at in ten years ago it would be completely different. 83% of our
web traffic is either mobile or tablet, and it would be the other way round 10 years ago.

There is a danger with some of target market e.g. ESOL adults that are not ready. Like someone from life drawing, a lady who does her own classes, all the people do not have a computer. It is with young but not adults. Community learning is prime example of that we have £2,000,000 to deliver in communication. We do a door drop within 5 miles, and one of the previous directors said we shouldn’t do it anymore, and the results went lower. Quickly re-introduced it and went back up.

Access and also trust, established centres with established people. It is a good example of DC; they know and respect them, why they are there and what they are trying to do. If you sent Bill or a senior manager they would be saying “who are these people?”. 

| Reaching audience | Direct mode appropriation | Trust | Reputation |
ITEM 1 *What do you consider to be the most critical aspect of communication at the corporate level?*

That the individual wants to do boxing. Some people just want to come out of the house. If you don’t want to do it, it is better you leave it alone.

ABA (*Amateur Boxing Association*) deals with all registered clubs and British boxers. Every year they have competitions from school boys straight up. We have to interact with coaches of other clubs to set fights etc.

ITEM 2 *In your tenure at the organization, have communication strategies changed? If so, how?*

Yes, almost like every two years, the ABA comes out with different rules towards us.

We used to register boxers written, and now it is through the internet. Verbally hasn’t changed.

But everybody is gone now to the digital world. For example, if there is a group in Scotland and you are wanting to set up a competition, there is no sense driving there one or two times…you just send a text and get a reply in seconds. Not social media.

ITEM 3 *What challenges if any have been encountered?*

The most challenges you face is verbally, because sometimes the person can’t explain verbally but online they can write what they want to say. Compare to if in a relationship, and talking on the phone will go on for hours, they will tell you all they want, but they are not all that open as it is in this industry.

ITEM 4 *How long did it take for these hurdles to be surmounted, if they have been?*

It can be sorted out easily. Sometimes it is just a misunderstanding. It is not a big factor. Because if people don’t know you or somebody attached to you, they give you a run around or don’t talk to you directly. Until you say you know a person (*sic respondent gives examples of names*) or someone recommends you to them, who they know, then it is ok.

ITEM 5 *What is the weighted importance of your company mission?*
Ours is to get professional boxers, enter big competitions and to get international. Now we have one pro boxer who is doing very well, won 6 fights. Turning out world class boxers.

ITEM 6  What is the weighted importance of your company vision?

That it’s very very important to turn out world class boxers – that’s the vision. It takes hard training and dedication for that. We are aiming to have the best boxers in England, intense training facility – we wouldn’t be able to put out the quality we need to put out there.

ITEM 7  In reflection, at what stage is credibility most important? At the visionary stage? At the transactional stage? A combination? Throughout?

Definitely a combination. In general, I would look at it and say, what you say you can do, that is what we believe in doing. The results. Without the results, they would say we are taking their money on false pretence. The more championships, and fights we win, people see we are heading in the right direction.

ITEM 8  On average, how often do you attempt communicating the corporate message to premium stakeholders?

Our boxing season starts October, so I wouldn’t say every day but it is on an every other day basis. It closes in March. It is an on and on basis right now; up to last night we had a kid who fought and won. We are looking for fights for different boxers. The peak season was last month when we had school boy championships, novice when we had those big competitions, under 15, and we won... the results are people see that we are doing things right.

ITEM 9  When you do make contact, what determines the content of the communication?

Most of the time we stress on the ability and quality of the boxers we have, certain standards we set, we try to maintain that standard. A high-level boxing standard. Because you have a lot clubs that are just a joke.

ITEM 10  When you do make contact, what is the content of the communication?

The first thing we ask them is if they have certain aged kids willing to go for a boxing competition. When we get the reply, we get age and weight difference. Recruitment – we use fliers sometimes, and friends bring in friends. We get most of the business from WOM recruitment.
there. They see our kids’ performance, and then they say they want to join. That works more than the fliers.

ITEM 11 When you do make contact, is there a preferred mode of the communication?

Face-to-face referral  WOM  FTFC

ITEM 12 What determines the preferred mode?

Previous success. But sometimes we waste our time. Go to Liverpool, and have to come back. Some coaches are not straight, the parents too…say something about the kids just to get them in… but when we go the kids may be underweight or overweight. And some coaches do that just to get a fight. It shouldn’t be done. You end up giving away too much.

ITEM 13 What have you found to be most important to build trust?

More verbal communication. More than online. When you can see the person at a different venue at a fight. A coach says he has xyz, 4 or 5 kids licensed to box. Weight, age etc. More than just calling and asking the club and arranging the fight. When you go it is a different thing.

ITEM 14 Based on interactions with premium stakeholders, how important are bearers of brand messages?

Very important, as the message can be misleading. A senior coach or head coach needs to relay that confirmation.

ITEM 15 How important is it that premium stakeholders understand the reputation of the decision maker?

Very very important, because they are the ones running the club, portray image, sending message to parents, boxers and members of the public. And boxing fraternity ABA.

ITEM 16 Between the time communicating to stakeholders and engaging in transactions, what potentially changes?

I would say nothing changes, everything is on paper on contract. Once that is signed, that is it.

ITEM 17 If there is no change, what measures are taken to ensure the initial corporate brand message holds true?

Maybe frequent communication. Keep in touch as often as possible. Communications must be up-to-date. A boxer can be training after signing a contract and get injured and you have to change the fight date
ITEM 18 *In comparison, how effective are TMC (online) and DC (FTF networking; including by phone)?*

Verbal is more effective

ITEM 19 *When do you consider them appropriate or not?*

Verbal, like at a competition, when you are not at a competition - technology

ITEM 20 *Can TMC or DC sufficiently stand alone to build trust and credibility?*

Yeah you can. It depends how you trust that person. As I tell you before, the distance sometimes. For example, you speak to someone one time initially and then tie up what you have to online.

It takes time sometimes to build that trust though.

So if it going and the guy is underweight, and this happens twice, trust deteriorates.

ITEM 21 *How does your organization effect the connection between TMC and DC, if you do so?*

If the trust is built they can be used independently. It depends.

Connection is initially.

ITEM 22 *Is the transition a timed or spontaneous process?*

Most of the time it is spontaneous. Once you build that trust

ITEM 23 *What trends external to your organization might have affected your corporate communication mode?*

Digitisation. We have communication now in all types of media. We don't have much problem in that section. We use Facebook, WhatsApp, messenger, landline
Table 16: Case Study 5

| NORTHERN CARIBBEAN UNIVERSITY |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Text**                      | **Category label** | **Theme label** |
| **ITEM 1** What do you consider to be the most critical aspect of communication at the corporate level? | Consistency | Internalised mission |
| First internal because it is not hype not modality, rather the target audience. In the internal, if we are not aware of what we are telling externally, we would have erred. We need to be aware of the heartbeat, which implies radiating the core. | | |
| **ITEM 2** In your tenure at the organization, have communication strategies changed? If so, how? | TMC | Executing communication strategy |
| Yes most definitely. We started in 1998. Morphed considerably over time. The strategy changed as technology and solutions online became available and developed and became included in how to execute communication strategy. | | |
| For example there was time we couldn’t use social media but then this developed, and we modified to reflect trends – modality, academia and market to reach. Quite a lot changed over time. | Response to change | Trending TMC |
| **ITEM 3** What challenges if any have been encountered? | Appropriate multi-modality | Reaching stakeholders |
| Again always with a strategy to implement, persons warming up and being responsive internally and externally in the public. For example communication with alumni 100 years old. We have some over 100, in their 90s with whom we interact. The challenge will always be the how. Methodology and modality will change. Modify old methods. What will reach and not reach. People change location, address, emails, therefore targets. External implies print, electronic media Snail mail is outdated but not to be ruled out. There is rarely mail in marketing. Modality form the early 1900s to the millennials. | | |
| **ITEM 4** How long did it take for these hurdles to be surmounted, if they have been? | Constant gradual upgrade | TMC strategy |
| I don’t know they have all been. At the start of the school year, we pause and recalibrate, while we are always updating. Some are under review; with respect to social media, it became popular but to this day we are still fine tuning consistently. The duration, I don’t know we can say we overcame. | | |
One we overcame was internal communication; once we informed students and alumni of things on campus, and send out notices again as they came in, they would pop up. This implied many emails often, sometimes too often. At the end of 2014 we consolidated this. Two consolidated from 1am to 1pm. It would be sent out to make a deadline at 10am.

It was done tastefully in collaboration from all sectors, with relevant information. People would look forward to it. In 2014/2015 it really took off. Some don’t read it but others were happy to receive e-bulletins and notifications to open the day.

The weather. It comes via my office, and it would go on the FB page, to persons in the diaspora, students and alumni. So we are always getting to keep the email and get weather updates. They update them on hurricanes etc. That worked very well, I started it in 2015.

ITEM 5 What is the weighted importance of your company mission?

Our mission weighs in and congeals all that we do. We’ve had a mission from the university came into being, the very founding of the institution. But we have modified it since there is a new president in January. He asked us to review and revise. “Find on the internet” “term is to improve by providing” was added in January. It was felt that the statement before that students did clarify who the audience was. It was implied, but the question was who. We are judged all day by the mission. Judging [sic] used that’s our mission. We had a long discussion. We had to agree.

It must impact the student, communication, the nation, the world and human being and all dimensions. Though we knew it, it wasn’t said categorically. If students were not making life better, others would have failed the mission.

ITEM 6 What is the weighted importance of your company vision?

Mission and vision are separate. Mission statement puts vision in a time context.

It pulls out of the mission how the university wishes to see itself in a global context. Where we will see ourselves, how we impact the Northern Caribbean. Interconnect mission, prepares students in a holistic manner. If fulfilling the mission, it is such a God-given mission. It is carrying out the mission, we ought to be the premier institution, and we are working on it.
ITEM 7  *In reflection, at what stage is credibility most important? At the visionary stage? At the transactional stage? A combination? Throughout?*

At every stage, because we are a Christian institution of Higher learning. If we lose credibility at any area. How we acknowledge things, if we are wrong, and erred. Credibility is important. If secular, Christ is not at the judgement seat. When we fail it just does not affect corporate because people say "and they say they are Christians. Things are considered blasé and normal in the corporate world. We couldn’t think that way as we are not measured that way, but by what people expect us to live by. Even in places we would not have thought people were looking. It a totally different set of rules we have to judge ourselves by a higher standard.

ITEM 8  *On average, how often do you attempt communicating the corporate message to premium stakeholders?*

Contact the public in different ways. On a daily basis in some instances. Where we have a marketing area, for example through corporate business, through media house, FM radio, televisions, and social media. Goes out to people, and impact positively. Ratings included from 1st to 11th place in market of 30. We are now at number 7 in a very competitive marketplace. Without all the big corporate funding. Even via the station we are not as well funded as other advertisements;

in the corporate world they are very clear that NCU have standards for example no tobacco. We are always renewing and recalibrating. Perpetually fine-tuned. Those who do business with us are so aware that for example the prime minister, the opposition and businesses have an expectations based on who we are and reiterate

ITEM 9  *When you do make contact, what determines the content of the communication?*

It is not just a radio station. But the recruitment team is very active almost every day in the country. Undergraduate and postgraduates. We interact and share with young people. Discover your destiny and NCU can help. Many are not clear on what they should. What’s my calling, or love to do/ There is a consistent message we put out: it is come to NCU and we will help you to find the way...a work program including a farm, radio station, offices...equally if not doubling the workforce

ITEM 10  *When you do make contact, what is the content of the communication?*
By the time they have left university, they would have had experience to prepare them for the work world.

ITEM 11 When you do make contact, is there a preferred mode of the communication?

Layered. In office to process information but at schools with exhibits. A Myriad. Then FB. We keep it dynamic.

We provide software for universities here and overseas also. Interesting videos, photographs. FB is well populated. Twitter. Because we did not have a social media person some of those modalities we didn’t focus on. We didn’t want Instagram or Snapchat to be hit or miss. Can extend FB and YouTube but others tuned now that we have staff. We don’t want to take on what we can’t manage.

ITEM 12 What determines the preferred mode?

We hardly ever advertise for ourselves for example high school, badminton, sporting facility training for the national team. It is like a drawing card. We have to build a new place without even advertising.

A lot of places don’t come as they know our mission

ITEM 13 What have you found to be most important to build trust?

Openness, honesty, transparency. When things go wrong you admit and seek to correct. Sometimes things go wrong and trust is permanently broken.

Humbly admit when a mistake is made. When we fail we make a mistake and trust is broken.

ITEM 14 Based on interactions with premium stakeholders, how important are bearers of brand messages?

Student workers when things go amiss and go off the path, we have to seek to correct. The brand will be damaged to the extent that all of us at the community…it all reflects on the brand. One of my most important task is to get that message to them. It’s like a hamster, a wheel never ending, keep reminding, internal, public, dynamic new coming, old leaving, implying it is not a message they reject.

ITEM 15 How important is it that premium stakeholders understand the reputation of the decision maker?

What I said in the very beginning because SDA, my private life and public life need to mirror each other. At the bank, at home. Neighbours’ observations, at
church, consistency of conduct. The higher a monkey climbs, the more people see at the top level.

ITEM 16 *Between the time communicating to stakeholders and engaging in transactions, what potentially changes?*

It puts a heavy responsibility on the leadership team, on what they say themselves to be.

ITEM 17 *If there is no change, what measures are taken to ensure the initial corporate brand message holds true?*

NCU workers...agreed to respect what the university stands for. One standard.

ITEM 18 *In comparison, how effective are TMC (online) and DC (FTF networking; including by phone)?*

Generally can be positive. When persons come what changes are experienced on the ground transcend what we do. When that is breached or other disappointments, we take it badly. The extent it takes is when a particular team member forgot who we claimed to be and the person is dissatisfied. The expectation level is higher. Whatever is said, we have entrenched and automatically, implies when they stand and *(sic goes)* through the roof.

ITEM 19 *When do you consider them appropriate or not?*

That is an ongoing work, just like the online modalities, to see what we are doing. The university is like an organization that comes together to get things done in a way I’ve never seen. Every single area of university life that could impact parents. Students etc. We sit together in a team (all key team leaders) what we need to do to make it operate better than the last time. We do strengths and weaknesses, mitigate like the cafeteria. To the extent that they work like a charm. If there’s a gap, if we work in a collaboration, and I see I can go, and say “can I help you?”

ITEM 20 *Can TMC or DC sufficiently stand alone to build trust and credibility?*

For example, graduation relating to university communication. The registrar’s office is extremely detailed in every iota. Students to graduate know of the website, e-bulleting, registrar, sends emails
ITEM 21  *How does your organization effect the connection between TMC and DC, if you do so?*

Also graduation, including family meetings. Also meetings and assemblies, and informed the school life. Registrars do the meeting. The registrars at the regional sites do the same thing. Our registrar is so thorough, if you didn’t before, you would find everything there.

ITEM 22  *Is the transition a timed or spontaneous process?*

We have to get to the place where TMC can get with our far flung places. DC is heavily buffered by online. I am of the view that we must do video message, telephone would stand alone. It has to be greatly built out for example staff. At the base there is God.

ITEM 23  *What trends external to your organization might have affected your corporate communication mode?*

In a structured way because strategic plan and operations call for us to operate in a certain way in a certain time. Build out campus infrastructure. When we do, it would be defeating the purpose of who we say we are. Trends are welcomed. It was an extremely gifted area of strength, even before. Things were exploding extensively. We had them even before. We tried having software solutions. Students software/HR made them available to other entities. As they became consolidated e.g. radio station, implying not a spectator but a part, for example we have provided CMI, UCC and USC.
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<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Category label</th>
<th>Theme label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ITEM 1 <em>What do you consider to be the most critical aspect of communication at the corporate level?</em></td>
<td>Corporate does not always listen to the problem.</td>
<td>Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Info is not always explained clearly to staff so it creates frustration and lack of productivity.</td>
<td>Information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Time sensitive info is late in getting to others.</td>
<td>Spreading message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM 2 <em>In your tenure at the organization, have communication strategies changed? If so, how?</em></td>
<td>Yes - More awareness. The corporate hierarchy has shifted from the old pyramid-made system to a more flat functional system. Info gets to management faster because the communication is more direct, clear and timely improving productivity and cash flow.</td>
<td>Decision maker hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM 3 <em>What challenges if any have been encountered?</em></td>
<td>It can be challenging to implement changes on a timely basis and communicate to those involved when people in the workforce do not embrace the change, especially if they have worked in the position for a period of time and cannot justify it. Morale can also be an issue if the changes are not accepted.</td>
<td>Implementing communication strategies</td>
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<td>Employee resistance</td>
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<td>Perception</td>
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<td>Accepting change</td>
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<td>ITEM 4 <em>How long did it take for these hurdles to be surmounted, if they have been?</em></td>
<td>Over a period of 1 to 5 years based on short term and long goals of the organization.</td>
<td>1 – 5 years</td>
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<td>Length of goal</td>
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<td>ITEM 5 <em>What is the weighted importance of your company mission?</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To serve customers and stay competitive in the market place. Meet stakeholder demand Business viability

Always perusing new markets to improve or add new products. Innovative novelty Knowing the market

Provide surveys to gain customer’s feedback to ensure we are meeting their needs in producing a great product. Customer opinion Feedback

Implement incentive for employees and ensure products are safe for the environment. Staff-product security Ethos

ITEM 6 What is the weighted importance of your company vision?

Improve shareholders equity. Shareholder equity Potential reputation increase

Increase productivity by looking to increase market share in specialized field of the corporation. Increase stakeholder engagement Specialty reputation

ITEM 7 In reflection, at what stage is credibility most important? At the visionary stage? At the transactional stage? A combination? Throughout?

Its number one!! The Corporation needs to build trust with the community and market place. Build trust Importance of trust

Its built on credibility and runs on an ethical standard. Credibility Trust

ITEM 8 On average, how often do you attempt communicating the corporate message to premium stakeholders?

Documentation is sent out to shareholders once a year. Written communication Once per year

ITEM 9 When you do make contact, what determines the content of the communication?

Contact is made as necessary. Contact time As necessary

When info is not clearly understood by one or more party a contact is made to clarify info and to keep all informed – on the same page. Mutual understanding Clarity of communication

ITEM 10 When you do make contact, what is the content of the communication?

The content of the communication is usually the solution to the problem /issues raised. Satisfying customers Solving issues
It could also be the recommendation of an alternative/similar product.

ITEM 11 When you do make contact, is there a preferred mode of the communication?

Written communication and direct contact from a person rather than electronic voice message for confirmation is preferred.

ITEM 12 What determines the preferred mode?

The shareholders stake in the company. Transaction value Equity

Also the company’s goal is to satisfy every customer. Mission Customer satisfaction

ITEM 13 What have you found to be most important to build trust?

Keep your word regardless. Consistency of message Trust

Ensure customer is happy at all times with both product and delivery. Time consistency Customer satisfaction

ITEM 14 Based on interactions with premium stakeholders, how important are bearers of brand messages?

Very Important. The brand is the corporation. Corporate brand identity Importance of medium

It needs to be recognizable. Reputation Recognisability

ITEM 15 How important is it that premium stakeholders understand the reputation of the decision maker?

Premium stakeholders must understand and trust the brand and the direction that the company is going

and that the Board/decision maker is competent to manage the organization. Decision-making Competency

ITEM 16 Between the time communicating to stakeholders and engaging in transactions, what potentially changes?

None Consistency Consistency

ITEM 17 If there is no change, what measures are taken to ensure the initial corporate brand message holds true?

Promotions, advertisements of brand. Communication on a regular basis to management to ensure brand locality and increase market share. Business growth Business communication
Get employees on board and make sure they understand, support company’s mission. Brand is communication at all levels of the origination.

ITEM 18 In comparison, how effective are TMC (online) and DC (FTF networking; including by phone)?

Face-to-face is always number one. Technology is next which can be done in video conferencing and WebEx meetings.

ITEM 19 When do you consider them appropriate or not?

TMC is effective in making long distance and international contact. It can also be more cost effective.

ITEM 20 Can TMC or DC sufficiently stand alone to build trust and credibility?

No – I believe there needs to be both – I believe productivity is better when they are used together.

ITEM 21 How does your organization effect the connection between TMC and DC, if you do so?

Positive communication in both ways result in a positive outcome.

ITEM 22 Is the transition a timed or spontaneous process?

A timed process. Different time zones and logistics needs to be compatible.

ITEM 23 What trends external to your organization might have affected your corporate communication mode?

Economic and environmental changes in market trends and consumer preferences.

4.12 Summary of coding and findings

The most important consideration upon the evaluation of the case studies’ data, was to reconcile how the coding related to the measures of value - BAV (Young and Rubicam, 2003) and reputation (Feldman, Bahamonde and Bellido, 2014). The former writers had determined that relevance, esteem, knowledge and...
differentiation were essential and it would appear that the themes in the case studies were directly in support of these dimensions to value or at the very least, facilitated their development. All eight of Feldman, Bahamonde and Bellido’s (2014) markers of reputation were present throughout the study. However it is clear that for all case studies, in particular where corporate communication rather than marketing communication, or working conditions appeared more salient, only a portion of these measures were relevant. Accordingly, as indicated in Chapter 3, five measures took precedence; this fact contributes to fulfilling research OBJ 3, to examine factors relevant to reputation building.

Indeed, if the global or in some instances virtual workplace, and the speed by which TMC is achieved were factored, this means that the other three measures (see Chapter 1) are less important to how a good reputation is carved. Even so, it might said here that the sample size of this study may be too small to confirm that excluding consideration of these remaining measures is appropriate. However, from the data collected, the distinct emphasis placed on the other five measures, to an extent, corroborates the findings of Feldman, Bahamonde and Bellido (2014); this indicated that some work may yet remain to be done on refining how reputation is accounted for. But at the same time, the congruence of the data suggests that less focus on the three measures would not have significantly impacted whether the objectives of this particular thesis were met. How TMC and DC affect or impact the desired outcomes of communication that is, perceived value and reputation, will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter. This is while seeking to find more definitive answers for reputation in a technologically driven world.
CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS
5.0 CHAPTER FIVE - ANALYSIS: ABSTRACT

“Define” as used in the ultimate research objective, captures what the thesis can achieve by delineating parameters to a tangible communication strategy. Via analysis of results, along with theories as found in their latent state then synthesised in the analyses, will have been developed to form a context within which postmodern communication and strategy is more efficient or effective. This is given the plethora of existing communication modes. In short, analysis in a postmodern context often applying theory, is about re-appraisal, challenge, and being sceptical of modern assumptions - in this case constructionist views of the millennial communication landscapes. Organizations under investigation are experiencing one or more forms of change; this suggests any superimposed communication strategy must be fundamentally flexible to achieve aims of communication, and robust enough to withstand change itself. Theory enables flexibility and application of critically analysed brand data and industry stakeholders; values and reputation brands have or desire, can be maintained or promulgated as contemporaneously relevant to the case studies undertaken.

5.1 Introduction to the Analytical Process

Postmodernism, which also reflects change of thought in relation to conserving reputation, and theory which binds those thoughts together, remain crucial to this discussion about fundamental components of trusted communication. The main philosophical position engaged in this discussion, is constructivism, although there is some pragmatism and post-positivism involved. So, what is held as absolute regarding technology from the 20th into the 21st century, is
contested and interrogated further through analysis of data collected. Yet this must be contextualised by theoretical syntheses and application of the theories.

5.2 The Basis for Analysis leading to Theory Building in Communication

A restated succinct synoptic summary of the research aims and objectives of the research would invoke various influencers of, and dimensions to technologically mediated and direct corporate communications; they impact whatever positive components stakeholders will perceive about a brand. These parts are examined, in the context of change within a brand’s experience which when combined, potentially determine the pathway to a better brand reputation as understood by premium stakeholders.

One relevant wide paradigmatic approach is deconstruction, originating in the 1960s, which paved the way for many modern theoretical and empirical positions that can lead to the perceptions of trust that are essential to developing brand reputation. However, real time is also essential for two reasons: to anchor theory-building, while comparing or contrasting communication in the three geographical regions outlined in the methodology, and secondly searching for commonalities or differences there, critiquing definitive information garnered.

The key commonality recognised by way of both primary and secondary data, was centred around credibility and assurances that stakeholders could take advantage of, in order to develop the desired perceptions of value and reputation, or essential trust of the brand. These, the case studies indicated,
could be developed in different ways. However, it may be primarily via a clear understanding of the brand and developing confidence in it; the propensity for feedback from the stakeholders to the decision makers in the organization associated with the brand is also critical. An underlying query is whether or not these components of trust could be elicited via TMC, as the newly established norm: this thesis proposes fundamentally that it could not be so, as a social constructivist position belies a linear approach to communication as typical of TMC; on the other hand, constructivist approaches demand interaction. Critical theory explored below, and as introduced in the literature review, sheds further light on how to deconstruct this paradigm, and the components needed to rebuild a true communication paradigm.

5.3 Critical theory: Communication Context or Geographical Relevance

Critical theory researcher Callaghan (2016) outlines that the role of this juxtaposed theory is not only to unpick established norms, but to at least question how these norms came into being, contest prominent positions, and make room for new discoveries. The writer establishes that many technological assumptions must be challenged in the light of the methods engaged in knowledge creation, generation of new theory, and possibly disrupting power structures in management of information.

This would appear to be better facilitated with an early application of broad schema theory as also described in the literature review; that is information can be addressed in discrete packages that make the overall process of analysis applicable, streamlined, and relevant. So firstly, critical theory historically
primarily began as an antagonist to readily identifiable social and political theory, challenging the status quo. Critical theory has also evolved to include critique of positions considered perennial in any subject discipline that has a seemingly equal impact on society. The theory is therefore considered to be powerful enough to penetrate, yet also facilitate boundary setting in the schema of cultural expectations within these socio-political constructs. The review ably explored this with respect to the private and public sectors; and herein relevant information that is culturally applicable to TM and direct corporate communication strategies, were summarily derived. The process might be compared with Habermas’ theory of communicative action (1985) which embraced linguistic and other forms of communication or routes to communication success, within the social contexts they exist.

In this thesis, specifically and accordingly, critical points about cultural expectations of communication within the three socio-political domains in their respective geographical regions, were interrogated and became evident. In particular, they involve perceived rights to information that assist in making decisions; so stakeholders focused on access to current information rather than any artefacts that would not have certainly helped the interpretive process. Subsequently, the key to discussions can be regarding how to reinforce or alter views without the background details of how stakeholders across these regions came by these views. Together they create a good point of departure when discussing data, and define boundaries of the discussion as implied by further application of the schema theory.
Another relevant way in which schema theory is used in this thesis was via dyads as previously divulged in the methodology chapter. In this instance the sociological pairings (dyads) of service and manufacturing case studies, that is, an industry organization and an HE/FE institution especially known for the specific industry, were investigated. This opens the discussion to further include the importance of business cultures and expectations unique to the industries or ecosystems in which they exist. It also involves what may be communication strategies that will support and enable the reputation of these businesses. Using these categorisations further contextualised what is absolutely essential about communication, and demonstrated transferable similarities in eventually formulating a flexible, yet robust communication strategy within the stakeholders’ ecosystem.

Combined with business culture and regional cultures within which the final case studies exist, it is seen how social media is perceived, and engaged. Overall, this also matches closely with the concept of discourse and interactive corporate communication leading to understanding strategic planning and decision-making. Yet, since information is now more easily accessible and dynamic through TMC, it means that engaging in praxis that is consistently effective, and at the same time revolutionary, is the proposed and projected postmodern path of communication for the businesses involved.

The major philosophical positions of constructivism, as well as those philosophies embraced by the organizations themselves, further highlighted in the literature review, and methodology respectively, are combined with the
analytical and theoretical posturing above. This unequivocally facilitates the application of the overarching systems theory to business. This theory governs the point of praxis as is relevant to this study of primarily autonomous organizations. These organizations are capable and responsible for internal feedback and self-induced change (Bertalanffy, 1956), and for this reason, the systems theory places suitable relatable, fixed, yet dynamically situated boundaries in which new theory can be created.

Re-stated, the systems theory purports that there are inter-related systems which may be natural or man-made, and that system is influenced by environmental factors on different levels. In the involved process of communication in business, two basic levels are identified as the decision maker and the premium stakeholder, who exist in clearly defined parameters. The former will execute counteraction and purposeful personal behaviour, while the latter is about amplification and a perpetuation of social constructivism as previously discussed. The ability to coexist and flourish depends on how well adjustments are made in the environment, especially if that environment has changed over time. Throughout each stage of this thesis, there were underlying expectations and perceptions of trust: these are the precursors to communication, and if there is no trust, there will be communication breakdown. These perceptions, it was found, refer to social perception rather than individual or psychological perception. This was first evidenced in the pilot study.

This effectively introduces various components of the narrative analysis, which was best facilitated through the process of the ethnographic review, from the
initial stages of the thesis. The analysis stretched to the end of the investigation where there were specific cases within established ethnographic backgrounds, therein providing an overview of how communication occurred, and what from the perspective of key decision makers may line the ideal path to future communication. This methodological analysis to a degree, has implicitly considered personal construct theory in relation to comments from decision makers in various companies and their premium stakeholders, as well as statistical analyses of these comments.

5.5 Narrative Analysis Summary of Ethnography (online; face-to-face)

Analysing how, why and with whom staff within organizations communicated in relation to premium stakeholders, gave a snapshot of how highly relevant they perceived communication is to business success, or to values they espoused. These often demonstrated there is much information available via different social media, but corporate communication is at the base, as is any shift in what clients respond to favourably.

Foci in corporate communication were accurate critical information; where that data is found, decision-makers and their engagement were paramount. Further, in relation to how successful brands emerged, not many exemplars as decision makers originally used extensive means for sensitisation and decision-making in the public domain. This was whether brands or current offerings were emerging from small to large, in new geographical areas, online or into public spheres. The fact that they mostly came from humble beginnings or went
through significant speedy transitions in history, was of interest, and the selected research methodology later elucidated the process.

5.6 Final Analyses from Stage One

Results show that communication theory is splintered. This is reflected in the range and low saturation level of responses in early stages of collecting data on what was most important in communication; yet correct information from the organization, and the value of time, seem to co-exist as crucial to customers. There are regional cultural implications in the budget and time expenditures for communication. Organizational culture may factor heavily in the relative importance and size of communication budgets; most respondents, including those from the same organization, could not give an exact figure regarding this expenditure. Responses were indirect or implied budget flexibility. Yet customer and company values alike, are critical in negotiation processes in the short term and long term, or where there is an established brand reputation.

5.7 Introduction to the Grand Narrative Analysis of the Case Studies

With regards to the three regions, there are recognisable comparisons where theory may support differences as well as similarities; therefore theory can help to create one cogent strategy that connects the brand value to its reputation.

5.7.1 Key similarities and differences of the contexts of the case studies

The case studies used in this thesis span three geographical regions the UK, USA, and the Caribbean, in this instance represented by the two largest island nations, Jamaica and Trinidad. According to the Global Information Technology
Report (2016), all three have had equal exposure to internet technology since its international inception. This included the concurrent introduction of TMC as well as the equivalent rate of penetration of TMC throughout the regions. The three areas also share a similar democratic voice (see Chapter 2); with regards to communication from a cultural perspective, the populace expects to be informed and be involved in decision making processes around any social, economic, political or environmental matters affecting them. It is in this broad context that the PESTEL tool is engaged.

5.7.II The PESTEL Tool for Analysis

For the best appraisal, it is appropriate to use a PESTEL analysis that also includes legal and the all-important technological factors. Altogether, they address macro-economic influencers on an organization’s management and operational systems. At the same time however, a brief evaluation showed that while the regions are similar politically, they differ substantially in the other five ways explored below: national economic stability, geographic accessibility and boundaries (environment), how technology is used and socio-cultural nuances.

Gross domestic product (GDP) the most applicable measure of economic stability is as shown below (Office for National Statistics, 2018), in USD Billions. This takes into account output of goods and services produced by an economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>14.03 (fluctuating around the same figure since 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>20.99 (on a decrease over the past 2 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2647.90 (slight decrease in 2016 though previous quarter had 0.4% increase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>18624.48 (steady increase since 2009)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GDP is relative to demographics, so smaller populations will generally have a lower GDP number; at the same time if the GDP increases with the population of that nation, it reflects no overall improvement in wellbeing. Furthermore, the distribution of wealth across the social strata in these three westernized countries is not typically uniform (GITR, 2016). So GDP though applicable, is more relevant when considered with other parameters of the PESTEL. It might be argued for example that the environment plays a significant role: both the Caribbean nations and the UK are islands, albeit variable in population. They are not landlocked, and therefore have fairly easy access to other regions with which to build sustainable trade relationships. The UK can maximize even more so, located between North America, and eastern global regions. Yet because the USA can readily trade from all cardinal directions, also means it might be equally or more economically stable as the United Kingdom. If that is the case, it was therefore be suitable to consider how the regions engage with technology, which is an established postmodern means used to bridge physical gaps, whenever they seek to enable trade.

Access to technology measured by the percentage of the population having internet at home, stands approximately the same (60 – 70%) across all three regions (Global Information Technology Report, GITR 2016). Albeit, primary data from the preliminary stage and stage 1 of this thesis as well as GITR secondary data, demonstrated that engaging technology in both public and private sectors in the UK and USA is more widespread than the Caribbean. Despite these anomalies in relation to the latter, the same information sources show that the government and persons of more affluent backgrounds will
engage technology in necessary public education as well as corporate communication, in a more consolidated way than the majority of the populace (see Figures 12 – 15 below).

![Networked Readiness Index - Jamaica](image1)

Figure 13: Networked Readiness Index - Jamaica

![Networked Readiness Index - Trinidad and Tobago](image2)

Figure 14: Networked Readiness Index - Trinidad and Tobago

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Initial analysis of the case study data across all regions indicates that this networked readiness relates to decision makers' uniform recognition of the need for widespread communication as required; this requirement is for premium stakeholders are to be kept informed and involved.

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In the Caribbean, from a socio-cultural perspective as observed in all stages of data collection in this thesis, technology also appears to have been used for social or networking purposes such as creating and maintaining trusted business relationships. This approach is supported by (Beugelsdijk, Van Shaikz and de Groot, 2004) who earlier had emphasized the importance of trust in relation to economic growth.

However as clearly shown in the case studies across all the geographical regions, irrespective of the type of industry, using technology is either prefaced or complemented by face-to-face communication as part of the trust-building process. Nevertheless, it does not certainly amount to the platform by which business is undertaken or embedded; and furthermore data analysis of the case studies suggests the degree of inclusion of technology after initial interaction may vary with industry.

So if all mentioned observations were to be collated, it could be concluded that TMC has been integrated in some way as part of national expectations of how communication is administered. This as well as industry relevance, might not however be fully captured by the PESTEL tool. It means that yet another perspective of how similarities and differences between them may be evaluated and initially aligned, should be appropriately considered.

5.7.III The CAGE Tool for Analysis

CAGE is an acronym for cultural, administrative, geographic and economic disaggregated categories. In this context, the CAGE distance framework for
analysis, is proposed. The associated method of analytic probing as designed by Pankaj Ghemawat (2016), was geared towards investigating differences across regions into which one organization was expected to operate. The application of this framework would develop core cross-border strategies that address these differences, by creating a forum for synchronization, with the aim of achieving overall compatibility of communication. Accordingly, in closing gaps left by PESTEL analysis as outlined above, theory can be appropriately applied to join the two, where CAGE becomes directly relevant via the corporate reach and expectations of communication within the organization.

The CAGE involves two levels of application – country and industry levels. However, using the explanation given by Ghemawat (2016), the industry level of analysis does not capture what is part of the foundation of corporate communication in the context of the values, behaviours and latitude of premium stakeholders. Nor are CAGE explanations relevant to industries under investigation (finance, health and wellness), as these explanations would have been associated with building communication networks and a technological imprint in other industries. A summative analysis therefore remains at the country level. From the categories outlined, matters relevant to corporate communication considering the how, what, where and why of communicated messages, require application of outcomes of such an additional analysis.

CAGE reifies that the communication landscape took a radical turn towards online modes and platforms at the beginning of the twenty-first century, especially where it was relevant to administrative modus operandii. This means
it quickly became a staple in the three geographical regions of the case studies; it might be argued that in response, organizations in their national and therefore economic contexts, as relevant in the cultural contexts in which they exist, should change accordingly.

This inevitably will introduce organizational theory (Hatch, 2006) as an approach to how the institution is structured and, makes decisions. If this theory were to be applied to the systems theory, the contingency theory as one such organizational theory, would be most pertinent. It implies that there is no one specific way to address organizational issues, but to respond appropriately to internal or external forces or situations as they arise. Technological landscapes for example have birthed and changed over time; some changes as related to platforms or media used by the cases, are briefly outlined below.

Table 19: Noted Social media ownership changes, and new communication mandates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL MEDIA</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP CHANGES AND NEW MANDATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twitter (2006)</td>
<td>Morphed from Social Networking to include News Highlights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram (2010)</td>
<td>Bought by Facebook in 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only is this relevant to the success of the online platforms themselves but it also relates to how the case study organizations choose to align these platforms, to maximize their own benefits. From both perspectives, aligning platforms, and facilitating dissemination of information that appears to be most trusted, is the organization’s implicit aim. However, even as much of this has been investigated in previous studies (Shin, Pang and Kim, 2015) the writers believed more in-depth analysis is warranted.
5.7.IV Content Analysis of Corpora and Online Content of Case Studies

5.7.IV.i Case Study 1

Church Teacher’s College’s ambitions and expectations were fully promoted online with a significant degree of detail, albeit within the confines of the college’s webpage (2018). There did not appear to be any additional promotional material, in hard-copy format that was available for perusal. This suggests there is some reliance on TMC for information purposes, a feature which may be directly related to the nature of the institution’s provisions. As a teachers’ college service provider, of necessity it requires detailed documentation of curricular programmes, matriculation requirements and reference material for preparing academic papers. However, it was evident, given that for sourcing other information about the college and courses as implied in the interview, some direct or implicit FTF communication with senior managers was unavoidable, a combination of both modes was essential.

Church Teachers College uses Facebook to most regularly chronicle the activities in which the institution is involved. This platform matches the historical tendencies and the importance that the college places on its reputation throughout its relatively short (50-year) history. YouTube and to a lesser extent Twitter are also engaged, the latter reflective of the limited new information offered through the interview. The former however did record significant larger events that also showed how the school interacted with its community. This appeared to be selective to immediate environs, and those members who could help the institution in some way or form a relationship that from indications, would benefit CTC directly via investments, and other methods of security.
5.7.IV.ii Case Study 2

When Henry’s delight was featured on the Innovators (2016) and Scotia Achievers (2017) televised entrepreneurship programmes, the company received valuable feedback. Rather than any major concerns about the product, the visual method of communicating through packaging eventually took some precedence. As an entrant in Innovators (2016) and getting initial brand exposure, the organization secured more public attention: the TV program is now syndicated across the Caribbean (2017-2018). Innovators serves a wide cross section of the region and takes with it, the details about Henry’s Delight products, philosophical inspiration, and business journey.

Henry’s Delight also prides itself in benchmarks of success, and the organization’s endeavours and successes as a client of the Scotiabank as a financial institution, were highlighted and uploaded to Facebook feeds. Through both entrepreneurship investment programmes, direct and indirect corporate communication modes are used, and the owner meets face-to-face at least once, with premium stakeholders. This is while also being self-publicized via two social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter. These are minimally engaged but are complemented by a newly launched (2018) website, to inform clients about changes and new offerings from the brand.

5.7.IV.iii Case Study 3

With regards to Bolton College’s communication strategy, there has been a marked change from newspaper-like prospectuses in 2012-2013, having only a Twitter handle, to smaller and more colourfully presented material including
Facebook, Instagram and Flickr. Within these new material, there was also significantly more reference to student opinion, and feedback as opposed to a one-sided College staff approach to the content of the communication strategy. Another noticeable difference was that in previous years, there were several specific contact telephone numbers; this is in comparison to 2017 - 2018 where there was only one main line highlighted. Albeit, the same number of social media handles were present, and an indication of a greater dependence or sensitivity to a high proportion of the college clientele – the younger generation.

There was now a discretely designed prospectus for such learners and their interests, intimated as follows. Bolton College employs Facebook and Twitter in addition to Flickr, and YouTube; while Bolton University utilises Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as well as YouTube. In most instances, the media platforms for the college, displayed the planned activities taking place or, for still shots on Flicker, events that had taken place in the distant past.

The university chose to separate its Instagram icon from its Facebook parent, although with the exception of commencement services, there were no videos, but only still photos of students’ activities mostly around the campus. The content evolved from more light-hearted to increasingly academically inclined topics and themes, which it would appear matches closely with the university’s aim of becoming a TIRI institution. Its YouTube channel was in the past, almost exclusively used to highlight its international campus.
Yet, with the opening of the new centre for Motorsport and Engineering there has been emphasis on this discipline in the institutional context. The university’s Twitter pages are multidirectional; contrary to news-type information updates as noted for its counterpart, Bolton College, the university uses this platform predominantly for publicizing the courses and events in the university, and environs, as it relates to its academic offerings. In the detailed case study interview with the marketing and communications manager at the college, sensitizing the public to its academic offerings were not digitized to a greater extent. In fact, rather limited information may be found on its website. However, there was a significant amount of investment in face-to-face recruitment within communities, and open days where prospective students could speak one to one with department heads. Additionally, over the past 5 years, there have been different and regularly updated hard copies of prospectuses, in which the greater degree of detail about the course offerings could be exclusively found.

5.7.IV.iv Case Study 4

Initial public sensitization processes during Metro Coaching’s transitions, included fliers as well as internet advertising via Facebook with still images, but fewer videos. This was to make clear to the readers, those who are involved in METRO, the new organizational style, and the gradual headway that the organization has made in its short history. Metro Coaching primarily uses WhatsApp and text messaging services for more regulated communication.

In its industry, the organization has recognized the value of emails, in particular by whom, how, and the timing of when they are sent. Special importance has
been attached to disseminating emails and texts initially and exclusively to heads of training facilities or senior staff members. This creates the required professional operational space, and enables the process of formalizing relationships, and establishing trust or accurate information with partners, through written communication. However, as soon as this is confirmed as established, as also clearly stated during the interview, most communication is face-to-face, and direct, especially in the physical contexts, such as boxing matches, in which the core of the business is to take place.

5.7.IV.v Case Study 5

Over 100 years of its existence, NCU would have had to change its communication strategies to adapt to cultural developments, as it relates to educational and other newer integrated community services it offers. Yet, since the university adopted a philosophical stance that “True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study”, this suggests traditional markers for success were given equal weight as other less traditional ones.

This is directly related to what exists and can be objectified as defined by ontological realism, which means that what is in the mind is just as real as what is tangible. Ontology is essentially encapsulated by a continual desire to find truth, or a close relationship with and reflection of what is truth. This is more recently reflected in the university’s change of its mission statement to clearly depict the parameters of its purpose. Additionally, the institution’s leaders engaged ontology as the university’s core philosophy is to contextualize the writings of great teachers in the sect. The NCU website (2018) claims education
means “more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man”. Within its multinational and multicultural contexts, NCU welcomes cultural divergence and adapts accordingly; its mandate is about self-discovery, and deciphering truths. So the cultural implications of communication as relevant to this thesis, can be suitably analysed and possibly extrapolated from this case study.

The university’s dedicated website appears to be for general information purposes on new programme offerings and updates on events held at the organization. This basic website does not divulge details of the specific changes occurring at the faculty or departmental level. There are individual pages that give a synopsis of what such faculties may be undertaking. As discussed with the assistant vice president as the interviewee, the persons responsible for such departments have the overall responsibility of conveying this information, by speaking with their stakeholders. The discussions also revealed that at the end of the learners’ study experience, the registrar’s department is extremely effective in communicating with students directly via emails about the commencement (or graduation) procedures.

This appears to differ from some institutions, which predominantly post generic information regarding this event on their websites or social media platforms. The interviewee clearly pointed out NCU’s approach on the other hand, made graduation procedures very efficient, mostly stress or error free, and contributed to the overall reputation and sense of satisfaction with its stakeholders.
The assistant vice president however has indicated that until the overall purpose and dedicated trained personnel who understood fully the institution’s goals had been identified, online social media methods of communication would not be undertaken. Further, the importance of maintaining the platforms factored heavily in decisions regarding when entirely adopting such methods of communication, would have been finalized. Also one aim of the institution is to have a fully functional online provision for its distance learning programmes. The case study information however did not indicate that corporate communication would have been assigned equal weighting. Rather, the overarching presumption was that the value of word of mouth networking (WOM) and snowballing via contact liaison persons with trusted disseminated data about an organization, significantly outweighed any reliance on TMC. So now the only social media platforms actively engaged are Facebook and Twitter. NCU also has YouTube, Flickr, and Google Plus on its website, but these are less actively used.

5.7.IV.vi Case Study 6

Implied by the type of financial business engaged by The Hartford, it is essential that trust and efficient communication mechanisms are engendered, to optimize on the long-term, sizeable and impactful investments with premium stakeholders. It is regardless of whether or not these are initial encounters; ultimately managing stakeholders money is crucial. In context, it means this case is well positioned for providing accurate information about what is most relevant to communication strategies, applicable in similar industries.
With the mantra “Together we prevail” the Hartford uses Facebook, Twitter - in addition to LinkedIn for professional profiling, Google Plus that helps to build a social network and YouTube. Through these media it keenly portrayed an ethical approach to operations, and had many highlighted posts and tweets, including video clips, via Facebook and Twitter respectively. Crisp clear still images on Linkedin and GooglePlus showcased the Hartford’s mission and ethos, while YouTube had several long videos to describe what they do. When compared with the responses to the case study questions, there was a clear correlation with how and what staff felt needed to be part of ethical accurate DC and TMC with premium stakeholders.

5.7.V Interim discussion of findings: precursor to Thematic analytic account

To be specific, as intimated by the case studies, this premise might only be facilitated by the human interaction (DC) as one part of this thesis’ discussion. As discussed earlier, it surrounds the critical matter of trust with respect to knowledge gathering about goods and services not only at an industry level, but also at a national level. This is located in a business culture and country culture respectively. Yet in either instance, the degree of trust is crucial to creating fora in which the premium stakeholders will feel confident and free to do business. The manifestation of trust potentially indicates understanding and opens the opportunities for further dialogue and continuing trade. So it brings initial discussions of theory building full circle to the importance of deconstruction and location and verification of knowledge. Where or how is trusted communication construed? If this was extended to a continuum over business, a sense of accomplishment in achieving ideal communication,
appears to be developed with direct human contact. In the context of this continuum, further details in the case studies are analysed. Using NVivo data management software, the table below shows the word frequency of the top twenty words and stems of these words, used by all six case studies. There is substantial insight available as consequently discussed.

### 5.7 VI Qualitative Account of Case Studies

Table 20: Frequency key words used by respondents in case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Weighted %</th>
<th>Similar Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>communicate, communicated, communicating, communication, communications, community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>time, timed, timely, times, timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>student, students, students’</td>
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<td>message</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>message, messages, messages’, messaging</td>
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<td>get</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td>mission</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Mission</td>
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<td>consistent</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>consistence, consistency, consistent, consistently</td>
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<td>TMC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.82</td>
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<td>reputation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.80</td>
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<td>people</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>information</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>information, informed</td>
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<td>DC</td>
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<td>trust</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.60</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>importance, important, importantly, imported</td>
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<td>change</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>change, changed, changes, changing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>things</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>thing, things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persons</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>person, personal, persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stakeholder</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>stakeholder, stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In reference to Table 20, as would have been expected, the word communication was most highly represented, in as much as it is the most referenced word in the items and subsequently the corresponding responses. However, the next most frequent word was “time”, which as evaluated in the
context of each respondent, indicated that when a communication strategy was engaged, and the time dedicated to using this strategy was of utmost importance. As far as the stakeholders were concerned, “students” as opposed to business stakeholders appeared to require greater attention with regards to receiving or “getting” the accuracy of the message being delivered. This was also reflected in the number of mentions. At the same time, the mission, which would have been common to both educational and industry institutions, also factored highly, indicating that the consistency of communicating what the organization was about was equally valuable across all the cases.

The next most frequently used term was TMC, alongside the notion of reputation. However, while promoting the reputation of an organization may be achieved physically faster through TMC, the fact that the word “people” generally and next “appropriation” followed, suggests that TMC cannot be isolated, but must engage the very broad group of associates the company is trying to reach. The respondents in the case studies provided practical examples, of how the information that needed to reach stakeholders could take place, and that it would be engendered by DC along with trust and its importance. These words were shown to occur together for the most number of times than any other pairs of words. Yet also importantly, was that the word “change” was more featured than was the word “stakeholder”, while both were less featured than the overarching consistent theme of reputation. This might be interpreted to mean that though change is expected and should be managed before engaging stakeholders, maintaining reputation and perceived value by appropriate measures, is even more important. It could also be questioned (via
a process of elimination) if the views of people inside the organization or in the wider public, may be at least equally as important as what premium stakeholder may perceive. This is given the word “stakeholder” as used in the interview instrument, was the least featured of the twenty words mentioned most often.

5.7 VII Thematic Analysis of Outcomes of TMC and DC within Case Studies

The theme of the narrative as in the case of the pilot study, clearly suggests the importance of time when communicating the brand message. It is also bound by the consistency of the message of the mission, which is underpinned by the importance of the message being taken as credible and truly reflective of what the organization wants to be over the duration of its operations. This is indicative of the concept of trust being built, and so the notion of trust was predominant. In fact of the top twenty most common words mentioned in Table 19, half of them incorporated either the word trust, or words that connoted trust and the respective players in building trust. These ten words included “communicate, time, mission, consistent, reputation, people, appropriation, trust, persons and stakeholders”. This was irrespective of whichever organizational dyad, which would also mean that no industry or size of industry that was being represented in the sample was excluded. The decision makers’ in dialogues about what would make the organizations successful, went through great lengths to explain or depict in their online presence, that trusting them, and their institutional goals or missions was important. Similarly, the longevity and truisms of their visions, were core to business, and their business acumen. For each organization, trust was factored at one point or the other; it also appeared to be the most fragile component of the strategy behind what the
organization believed it could and should achieve. This was evidenced when each respondent undertook different approaches to building trust and corresponding believability in what they claimed was their mission. However, from initial descriptions, the emerging theme of the organizations’ main aim was to ensure that the trust was visible, tangible, relatable and fundamental. Essentially, for the brand to succeed, trust had to be the backbone to either how business was done, the service or product offered or a combination of both.

As implied previously, the methodology of considering case studies and data are closely aligned; so joining analyses and the founding theoretical framework is ideal. This is in order to capture the crucial points and components of time involved in communication in a postmodern and contemporary context. There will be an understanding and explicit expression of the dynamic between the data gathered and the data gathering process. By nature of the topic under investigation, the process, within the context of a changing, fluctuating and easily pliable multimodal communication platform, is as important for the veracity of the data, as is the validity and reliability of the data itself. Through the flux as argued between Glaser and Strauss (1967), about how deduction and induction may be relevant to the data analysis, there will be some tensions; however, within those tensions, the best representation of truth emerges. The understanding is that there will not be any exclusive choice between the two, but rather, as the topic suggests, a balance between them. This balance with regards to the time that both are engaged in the business processes is most plausible. There will be a point however, during or towards the end of the flux between the two positions, that communication participants may take a
reductivist approach. Where the traditional definition of communication in one instance is held, but is bypassed elsewhere, marks a point of departure; it is if the assumption is made, that all or most that is possible was attempted, within the ambit of available TMC, DC or time. Then conclusions about the efficacy and veracity of ongoing communication processes will most probably be drawn.

5.7.VIII Interim Summary Breakdown of Analysis

All purported to be true will reflect both empirical and secondary data, and what those who experience the dynamics of communication (that is, decision makers) will proffer. They are the persons who are most familiar with business performance targets, and how premium stakeholders contribute to these within the competence and communication frameworks to which each party aspires. The context of communication is even more relevant to dyads, as it delivers information about industry expectations, or what will be successful operations.

In particular, the repository of subject knowledge, proficiency in how things should be done and, TMC awareness or ways it can be used to communicate, are the implicit and in some cases explicit expectations of industry and academia. Industry expects this of their staff and academia expects this of their students and other stakeholders. These observations are based on data responses about core expectations of each, for example, industry expects to be ultimately credible for success of its business transactions; it tries to show and achieve this by varied direct or indirect means enabled by communication. Similarly, educational institutions invest in human capital to give value to learners’ money, time and methodology to communicate the most credible
direct information, and present themselves as ideal to do business with. Clearly, high is worth attributed to feedback many premium stakeholders can provide.

A further analysis of the primary quantitative data from earlier stages of the thesis, at the point when specific theory had been determined to anchor the case study questions is also appropriate. For example, as indicated in the empirical data of section 4.9, there is an anomaly between the degree to which different aspects of TMC are used by stakeholders, in comparison to what the case studies’ interview data implied could be achieved. Synthesising these observations, the implication therefore would be that how the online modes are used, their format and or appeal may more likely be of greater value or interest to both parties than the quantity. Then a good picture bound by communication theory and discourse may be derived, with key reference to the process by which a good reputation and trust are built. These hark back to Feldman, Bahamonde and Bellido’s (2014) markers of reputation, in relation to how ready and accurate information is available to staff, and subsequently the premium stakeholders of the organization. It is framed by a period for retrieving this information that is of adequate length to formulate this trust. The case studies suggest that while TMC is essential, a quick succession or intervention of DC is crucial; or in some circumstances, DC precedes TMC. Either way, DC is key.

5.7.IX Discourse Analysis and connections between trust, truth and reputation

The three case study responses from educational institutions with culturally situated curricula, were the most detailed and extensive. As mentioned in the methodology, in the absence of case study focus groups with such high-ranking
decision makers, a comprehensive and global view on the requirements of communication strategies was possible via a discursive approach to analysis. With a good understanding of how as institutions their reputations were evidence of the quality of students transferred to industry, and how effectively they functioned in immediate cultural spaces, the decision makers interviewed prefaced their responses with the importance of trust. This was underscored by how they could best build that trust through a variety of means; these responses served the thesis’ purpose, which essentially is about a coherent search for a trusted balance between DC and TMC inherent in a new millennium or beyond.

Trust is necessary to bridge the gap between stakeholders at different levels within and outside of the organizational structure. In the circumstances of this thesis’ emphasis of corporate communication, the gap is not particularly wide between decision makers and premium stakeholders. But in contrast at lower staff levels, a perception seems to exist that management needs to be better equipped to deal with staff, then they can relay quality in the standard of work and by extension the best reputation of the organization. Trust is easy to lose but hard to gain, and therefore care must be taken when seeking to maintain the trust in all stakeholders. So one of the most salient points from the discourse about trust, is that it is the aim and the key to the communication strategy, rather than a search for solutions to related problems an organization may encounter.

5.7.X Summary of the Outcomes of the Analyses

A theme may be developed and the relevant question may be asked regarding what clearly contributes to configurations of the brand messages, and by extension, what speaks to the establishment trust of the brands. From prior discussions and the synopsis above, the following appear to hold true:
1. Real trust is palpable, and so cannot be separate from its industry context.

2. Time will be invested to develop trust.

3. Trust is flexibly responsive between participants yet leads to decisive action.

4. Trust is to be continually evaluated for its veracity.

5. Understanding trust should not be separated from theory.

While the pervasiveness of direct communication to engender trust for all the case study organizations is undeniable, they equally had different approaches or preferences for using or choosing from the four selected (and adjunct) forms of TMC. Each TMC appeared to serve a different purpose, but the commonality is the primary purpose of projecting their authenticity as a component of a trustable mission. For example, projecting the ethos for the Hartford via vivid still and moving images was crucial. Appropriate wide scale transmission of accurate information through a WhatsApp group as opposed to emails or consistent texts for CTC and METRO coaching were vital. NCU was careful not to aggressively embrace social media without thorough vetting; NCU used a joined up style to disseminating its mission and other information for example via corporate emails, and Facebook. Henry’s Delight positively manipulated social media (Facebook, Twitter and a new website) to reify accolades and positive internal changes, though with fewer posts than the other organizations. Bolton College decided to revert mostly to FTFC, given that the institution lost money when less researched technology had been mandated. The major observation is that a firm narrative is maintained throughout – the theoretical paradigm of communication which at some point involved real time communication was always apparent. It creates a cohesive argument in support of trustworthiness that is embedded in good communication via multiple means.
CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

AND

CONCLUSIONS
6.0 CHAPTER SIX - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS:

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about a coherent culturally situated search for the balance between direct traditional communication methods and TMC inherent to the new millennium and beyond. The area of expertise investigated involves business communication between decision makers and their key stakeholders. The PMFCM involves appropriated technologically mediated communication as well as direct communication in different geographical regions, to best ensure that brand messages are lucid and resonate with premium stakeholders. The thesis has explored the efficacy of relevant communication strategies and how they translate into building reputation. This is after these strategies have contributed to premium stakeholders’ perceived brand value, and essentially, developed trust as enabled by accessible and clear communication. The overall aim is to fulfil both the mission and vision of the organization in the process.

One area of innovation in this thesis has been the use of dyads, that is, sets of samples that are connected closely in some sociological construct. In this instance, it was a higher education or further education institution, and an industry, all matching the mutual disciplines of curricular culture and business strengths respectively. Together, the information was applicable across the three industries in which these dyads are found, given that the communication strategies within said industries also have traditionally been comparably similar. Additional novelty of the research bears on the geographical and cultural contexts in which the organizations exist as explored by PESTEL or CAGE, and what enables premium stakeholders with ready or immediate access to
information. So though this access was further contextualised by indirect modes that are trending in TMC, these modes have been shown to be less accurate or sometimes obsolete for the intended purpose. The fact that the organizations were situated in regions where technology had been uniformly introduced or been part of the social infrastructure, meant that in this thesis, some attention could have been diverted to how they approached DC.

The more specific outcome of the research lies in communication strategy for the management of information that enables premium stakeholders to make decisions about their degree of engagement with an organization's brand. This was quite often facilitated by direct communication.

6.1 Newer theory regarding factors impacting communication processes

The literature, findings and some analyses adequately showed that the use of TMC especially social media either independently or with a high frequency or intensity would correlate with outcomes of the economic theory of consumerism and consumptive emotions. These are mostly independent of categorically understanding details of goods and services on offer or making well-informed choices. Additionally, building trust that organizations’ decision-makers strive for, in improving or maintaining high standards of their reputation might be compromised if there is absolute TMC. In comparison, all respondents in the case studies, and the premium stakeholders who gave quantitative feedback indicated that including direct communication would have facilitated increased trust. In some cases DC may be considered retrospectively, after extensive use
of TMC; but with the result of DC’s action being a forward movement of the communication process, the coined term “retro-forward theory” may be applied.

For all organizations, it could not be said that any interaction between staff, or staff and stakeholders, operates in a vacuum. That is, interaction did not optimally occur without robust conferrals, referrals or recommendations. Thus it is argued and concluded in this thesis, that ideal communication can only be done through some degree of association with plural players who cannot only give information, but must testify and attribute to the trust that is so essential. This is not optimally done exclusively through TMC, and so there is an expectation of reverting to some degree of traditional real time communication. The “retro-forward theory” therefore has another dimension to its application, that is, going back to the original concepts of communication where there is interaction. The term “retro-forward” is also applicable more widely as is culturally appropriate and expected in the geographical regions and organizations where certain communication strategies are used. Relevant and pivotal expressed quotes sourced from the case studies include those below.

Sample quote 1:

“Feedback is significant because this is how you get a sense if what you’ve said is understood.” CTC (Church Teacher’s College).

The theme of feedback was predominant throughout the coding process for this case study. With feedback, which involves the complete communication cycle as described by van Dijk (1998), both the speaker and receiver have the
opportunity to understand the message, through initial and follow-up utterances. The fact that the interview respondent used the words “get a sense” also indicates that there is fertile ground for the facilitation of mutual understanding and by extension, trust. This is so because the opportunity to demonstrate or check understanding through feedback is afforded.

Sample quote 2:

“Talk in person; I don’t really by phone. Only a follow-up feedback by phone.”

Henry’s Delight.

The method of choice for active communication in this case study was face-to-face. The respondent consistently clarified that in doing so, the desired degree of authenticity was arrived at. This was evident in the fact that this business owner had no difficulties in communicating what she wanted to divulge about her products, and similarly, what the corporate entities needed to know about said products. The respondent also became relatable and trustable; so if for example, arrangements needed to be made for regulatory bodies to visit her manufacturing site, this was readily facilitated face-to-face. Only after successful initial transactions, then solely for the purpose of essential feedback, was a telephone call made; although less direct than face-to-face, this additional real time method of communication, meant the premium stakeholders could be assured that their concerns or compliments were being heard and most probably addressed by the appropriate person. It cannot be ignored however, that the organization got valuable exposure to build its credibility and public awareness, via successful participation in two
entrepreneurship programmes, snippets of which were uploaded to its two social media platform, complimented by a website with fresh up-to-date images.

**Sample quote 3**

“Online is becoming more and more important but we’ve managed to hit our target by doing face-to-face.” *Bolton College.*

This organization was aware that TMC could not be disregarded, however, made the conscious strategic effort to try and meet communication targets face-to-face. This was attempted not only because the organization fell short of enrolment goals without DC but it could be more financially prudent in doing so.

**Sample quote 4**

“*More verbal communication. More than online.*” *METRO Coaching.*

Where the essential coaching service provided by this case study requires direct contact, similarly there appeared to be proportionate focus on this method of communication. Evidently, the verbal elicited more positive and desirable results than TMC methods would do initially, or independently; and so more time was dedicated to appropriate oral communication.

**Sample quote 5**

“*It was done tastefully in collaboration from all sectors, with relevant information.*” *NCU (Northern Caribbean University).*

In accordance with organisational vision and mission, it was reified throughout this case study, that a wholesome approach to its communication strategies
was essential. This decision makers felt, was in order to meet all the component
requirements of the brand message as relayed in the vision and mission. This
was achieved through a two-pronged approach of collaboration of multiple
partners, and appropriate information that justified the organization’s position
and commitment to its premium stakeholders.

Sample quote 6

“Written communication and direct contact from a person rather than electronic
voice message for confirmation is preferred.” The Hartford.

The focus here is clearly feedback from the stakeholders. The nature of the
business as a financial one, necessitates written feedback. However the fact
that direct communication is also mentioned indicates that at least two methods
are desirable, and that DC adds to the authenticity and completion of the
communication cycle, wherein both sender and receiver in their associations
are satisfied with the content of their communication. This reflection led to the
conclusion that this is ideally so with an organization’s decision makers, or
secondarily other informed staff, as defined by social constructivism. It
complements innate gradual processes of shared knowledge creation with their
premium stakeholders. On the other hand, the premium stakeholders should at
the very least, know that the decision makers are consistent, capable, at times
accessible and armed with accurate information attesting to their credibility.

Each of these features outlined above, are also indicative of being trustworthy.
Further the six case study respondents when asked about the importance of
decision makers’ reputation, gave the following relevant specific, telling replies:
Sample quote 7

“Very important extremely important. It is critical we have persons; stakeholders recognise them as authority to send out information, then secondly the co-requisite knowledge.” **CTC (Church Teachers College).**

The undeniable fact is that roles in an organization and the function of the roles as a repository of reliable and trusted knowledge, were essential to success.

Sample quote 8

“It is and remains in competition, market not to lose customers and business level consistency maintained.” **Henry’s Delight.**

The decision maker is most familiar with the organization’s offerings, and this underscores the fact that the sustained high performance of the business, which is to a significant degree reliant on this person, will maintain viability.

Sample quote 9

“Usually important. Previously the principal always used to start the meeting and go through mission, vision and values or organization and why it is important. Embedded at the senior level.” **Bolton College.**

If a senior member of staff ensures calibration or recalibration of other staff through repetition of its values, this indicates, that the mandate of the organization to remain relevant and reputable in the eyes of its premium stakeholders is well placed at the corporate level.
Sample quote 10

“Very very important, because they are the ones running the club, portray image, sending message to parents, boxers and members of the public. And boxing fraternity ABA”. **METRO Coaching.**  
The assertion of the importance of decision makers is evident through the range of examples cited; these exemplify what the impact of their actions will be, and who will be influenced, many of whom are the premium stakeholders.

Sample quote 11

“What I said in the very beginning because as Seventh Day Adventist”, my private life and public life need to mirror each other.” **NCU (Northern Caribbean University).**  
From a faith perspective and a corporate perspective, the consistency of the values that the decision makers portray must be consistent, if the stakeholders are to trust the authenticity of the organization.

Sample quote 12

“Premium stakeholders must understand and trust the brand and the direction that the company is going, and that the Board/decision maker is competent to manage the organization.” **The Hartford.**  
In addition to the mutual understanding between stakeholders and the organization with regards to the offerings and trajectory of reputable business, the importance of competence is also highly ranked.
The functions or personal involvement of decision makers as implied above, as well degrees of interaction internal and external to the organization in order to build that trust, differ. This although important to all, may vary in expression across industries. It was seen that in finance services for example, even more one to one contact is appreciated, in fact an essential component of communication for the premium stakeholders. Either way however, it still appears that the human element is a component, and as such should be used in direct communication as well as when making good choices for using TMC.

At the same time, this body of research concludes that direct communication is not an add-on to TMC but it is necessary and required. This complements the culturally affected factors for example, regarding the right to information. This must be available in the shortest available time that premium stakeholders have to establish trust, in particular when they are undergoing change.

For all case studies, this also appeared in algorithms of two. So how the decision makers understood the process and felt that stakeholders would appreciate this in communicating their brand messages, demanded at least two people, two attempts at communication, two technological media, two forms of direct communication, once for two weeks, or two opportunities for feedback. Although for some case studies, the changes were effective over four years, this algorithm of two, still applied.

Moreover, given the precedence set with the implicit understanding that technologically mediated methods together at some point in the organizations
history, comprise an absolute necessity for effective communication in modern day, direct communication may at times appear to be disadvantaged. Albeit, this does not negate the fact that DC as an interactive route, is an advantage to communication broadly; and it benefits the facilitation of a favourable perception of value and reputation.

Greenberg, Greenberg and Mahenthiran (2010) for example have written about interaction, in comparison to interactivity. Interaction is an action that results when two or more objects have an effect upon one another. This the writers suggest is relevant to the affective way that TMC, and management control systems as a form of DC, are integrated to create a synergy of how things are done in the organization. This can be with the aim of altering employees’ behaviour, while motivating them to achieve the goals of the organization. However, this interrogation and subsequent findings were not to categorically demonstrate that TMC and DC influence each other to manage people per se and therefore change a culture that is internal or external to the organization.

On the other hand, the important outcome of this thesis is how purposeful existing behaviour might be, with the premise that information is available to direct the behaviour. The thesis therefore highlights largely, that interactivity that is information seeking, as would be better facilitated via direct communication interaction between parties, is given more attention. There is a dynamic user (human) controlled nonlinear non-sequential complex information behaviour and representation. This can only be achieved if there is an element
of human involvement in the manipulation of TMC, rather than reliance on two-
dimensional TMC as an artefact in itself.

The challenge therefore has been to find governing theories and subsequent
groups of theories that will guide how the potential impact of DC can be aligned
with a somewhat dominant discourse of TMC. A summary of a path analysis
to define a potentially flexible model or PMFCM, is shown in Figure 17 below.
This model prototype gives basis for a synopsis of the way forward for the
application of theory in future research as discussed in the final chapter 7.

Figure 17: Postmodern Flexible Communication Model indicated by Path Analysis
Importantly, the use of dyads showed that once there is a mutual understanding between each component of these sociological pairings regarding the desired knowledge and competence of each, premium stakeholders are likely to assign value. As one dyadic component is categorically in education, and both components in separate organizations are undergoing change albeit in similar industries, adequate expeditious knowledge creation, and the ease of processing knowledge respectively, meant value assignment was particularly useful. Allocating value requires appropriated time, and some confidence in the organizations within the ecosystems of the industries they represent.

So for example, if students as premium stakeholders of educational institutions believed they were in receipt of the highest value in relation to the industries they were preparing to engage in for work, this value was assigned. Similarly, in industry and education, the leaders interviewed expressed that if they provided information during the changes that their brands were undergoing in adequate and appropriated ways, then their mission would be effective and the stakeholders would respond positively to what they had on offer. The common denominator is clarity of shared knowledge.

From the results, it is concluded that for either manufacturing or service industries similar to those chosen in this thesis, shared knowledge between decision makers and stakeholders is important. Their being convinced of the value of an organization enables the knowledge creation, and this is more likely through direct and multiple opportunities for feedback via either decision makers or other informed staff. Then over time, the stakeholders develop the
required trust of the organization, as well as its perceived high reputation. If however that mutual understanding is not achieved, although trust may be assigned, only through consistent appropriated communication through DC and TMC will the good reputation be engendered. Effectively then, the communication cycle potentially goes through a full rotation, having begun the process with two premises: that in the current communication paradigm, multiple sources of information on the brand message are important, and that the cycle is completed with the understanding that both DC and TMC may still be necessary nearer the end of the cycle. However, as shown in Figure 17, DC is a component of the critical feedback stage, where there may be many players - stakeholders and staff at different levels - involved in the communication process. So DC acts as a spur to action on the heels of the stakeholders’ adaptive behaviour towards an increasingly positively perceived organization, and decision makers’ purposeful behaviour to drive business.

When embracing the constructivism philosophy, this would mean that to either encourage stakeholders to make decisions or when they actually make decisions about engaging and trusting a business, certain factors of interaction are important. Importantly attempting to do so without the crucial factor of real-time informed communication, does not meet the minimum requirements of communication. This would bypass the core elements of communication, wherein there should be an understanding by both parties in the communication process. Categorically, DC facilitates both real time communication as well as two-way communication. However, it cannot be ignored that given the swift
proliferation of TMC and a shift in the theoretical paradigm of the original meaning of communication, TMC requires attention.

Ideally, TMC should not be delivered without DC, which will assist the very process of meaning making embraced by constructivist philosophy. However, as depicted in Figure 17, the conjoined TMC-DC process requires an appreciation of elements that will affect the whole system within which both decision makers and stakeholders come in contact. At the same time, the parts of this system are flexible enough to filter the relevant components of those factors and discard the rest. This is provided there is enough information initially available for the stakeholders to continue the process by which they will see the value, develop the trust and be convinced of the reputation of the organization. For example, as outlined by Kim, Sung and Kang (2014), consumers as premium stakeholders who potentially persuade others to invest in the brand, will retweet positive information about the brand via Twitter. This is only after they have developed a strong enough brand association and identify with the brand; and therefore the trust in the brand amongst other factors such as social responsibility, are strong predictors of the stakeholders continued TMC support.

6.2 Limitations of this Thesis

The generalizability of results is a limitation. It is probed based on three factors:

6.2.1 A Consideration of Smaller Sample Size

The smaller sample size of the complement of case studies meant that none of the three regions as investigated, it can be said, were wholly represented geographically; this however was not an intention of the thesis.
Rather, to establish expectations of communication first in the broadest cultural sense, then in industry, a detailed ethnographic process was undertaken. This involved both interactive and non-participant face-to-face observations as well as non-reactive online ethnographies, initially across political, economic, social, and technological (PEST) landscapes. These four parameters of the PEST involved a marketing analysis which could inform and impact the planning design of the corporate communication strategy of the organizations. The specific purpose of the ethnographies, was to determine essential factors within the space of cultural and business interactions, which premium stakeholders preferred or required to establish trusted corporate communication channels.

This process was influenced by how respondents replied with regards to the communication construct of the content, and what as a function of this communication, may have impacted the individualised business circumstances. It meant that the outcome of these processes, as a credibly defined and woven context within which data was gathered, could then be applied to elucidate and inform the data analysis. Therefore, an important strength of the thesis is that the purposeful sample was reflective of the regions in which data collection took place. This point of departure relating to how respondents interpreted and effected communication, was established through the data mining and extraction process during the ethnographies. In fact, as intimated by Dickson and Holland (2016), this communication construct is a key tenet of qualitative studies and subsequent data analysis or application of findings. The ascertained context in which the sample exists, must reflect how respondents make decisions, within their cultural systems, and via certain methods of
communication. This then rendered the data gathered rich, reliable and replete with applicable or transferable information. The material stands up to rigorous interrogation, robust critique and analyses, regardless of the degree of generalisability.

6.2.II Industry Specificity

The organizations were from three different industries: well-being, finance and manufacturing which meant that some of the results may have accordingly been industry specific, especially on a micro-economic level.

Yet corporate communication as investigated in this thesis, is closely related to strategy and stratagem, rather than the iota and minutiae of the process (Adami and Kress, 2014). This is of greater importance in the overall context of changes that brands are experiencing, and the overall approach they take in communication strategies to best traverse or manage these changes.

6.2.III The Time Period of Application

The reference point for the case studies and other organizations used in the pilot study and ethnography, was the relevance of data to specific points of change in what the brand offers and in some instances, what it represents. This means data and findings can only be used intermittently at those certain points rather than a continuous application throughout an organization and its products’ or services’ life cycle. For some larger organizations, this life cycle may be relatively stable, as for established and globally recognisable brands; however the target audience of this thesis does not include that complement.
Rather brands that do not have that level of recognisability will benefit most from elicited guidelines in the contextual spaces of change in which they exist.

6.3 Boundaries of the Discussion

While there are evidently many issues to be considered, communication theory will serve to fine-tune information that focuses on meeting research objectives. It is clear that a desired communication strategy is not the grey area that blends public relations (PR) into marketing (Penrose, 2015): PR is about relationship building with regards to upholding a positive public image especially through the media, that may lead to building knowledge of the brand while marketing is about sales.

Contrarily, the data collected in this thesis, lucidly indicates that relationships are not equivalent to knowledge of the brand, nor can the relationship be translated into knowledge. On the other hand, PR may simply be a convenient stop-gap for opening the possibility of communicating about the business. Yet as intimated by Pels, Moller and Saren (2009) it is never ideal to marry the closely linked relationship marketing with business marketing or communication generally. This would not fully encapsulate communication that effectively relays other important aspects of the organization that is, value and reputation, which need to be maintained. Rather, accessibility and accuracy of information in real time to facilitate stakeholders’ adequate understanding, is crucial. Only then – and not before any symbolic representation of communication through the artefact of TMC - will the stakeholders have the requisite information for making decisions about their current and future investments.
6.4 Enhanced Discussion of the Research Outcomes (what was learnt)

The speed and change of the communication paradigm over the last few decades, that is, what can be loosely referred to as millennial communication dynamics, do not unequivocally equate to proficiency and appropriateness of communication. The focus on TMC as communication in and of itself, appears to have shifted the sustained importance of communication in understanding value and reputation of a brand that a stakeholder invests, to short-lived and “in the moment” experiences. Therefore, the mission and vision encapsulated in value and reputation, may be somewhat diluted. For premium high value stakeholders, this is less than desirable and indeed inadequate. This is especially so since the concept of branding actually tells a necessary story of the organization’s brand; and this story however long or short is better facilitated by a combination of TMC and DC. A suitable combination of both offers opportunities for more wholesome feedback from the premium stakeholders. Importantly, the widespread use of TMC does mean that the trend towards increased engagement is unquestionable; however, the use of DC which is indicative of real time communication, provides greater opportunities for in-depth and trusted relay of information. In comparison to mostly TMC when communication will tend to be linear and undeviating given the technological boundaries of the various media, DC potentially opens the avenues to greater understanding and clarity of the communication material without compromising the timeliness of desired outcomes of communication. These not only are applied within industries, but potentially bridge the divide between industries and academia, by demonstrating professional expectations of knowledge, and competence in the discipline within the ecosystem of its premium stakeholders.
6.4 Summary

Communicative constructivism stems from tangible empirical research in social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1991), and to some degree, the Autopoietic systems theory. These theoretical approaches can be paired with propositions from Boromisza – Habashi (2013), who claim new discoveries as part of regeneration processes, are within the conversation metaphor to capture characteristics of communication theorising. An evolving theory-based strategy may be imbibed at corporate levels in both industry and academia; it impacts how values are espoused by organizational leadership and then esteemed by premium stakeholders. Given that case studies were also evaluated as dyads, a distinction of how these values match mutual expectations of academia supplying leaders to the entities were noted. If Personal Construct Theory was herein applied to how incoming stakeholders understood and made meaning of the communicated information, the relevance of the brand message to stakeholders within dyads, becomes more evident. Theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour suggests stakeholders are so enabled to make choices deemed beneficial to them. In contrast however, for example where Jin, Suh and Donavan (2008) and Brabazon (2013) imply pre-publicity in advertising may suppress retrieval of information about a brand, that desired connection with the brand and trust may be compromised. This might not have occurred, had information about the brand been presented at mutually fitting times, and by extension via the best suited media. Triangulated multiple methods of this thesis, showed this not only by way of the instantaneous readily available social media or webpages. On the other hand, corporate communication machinery is best appropriated where a timely directed one-to-one context is involved.
CHAPTER 7
RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS
7.0 CHAPTER SEVEN - RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS: ABSTRACT

A unique theoretical framework incorporating theory, new applications of older theory, and a postmodern alignment of recognisable theories altogether as related to communicating about brands while managing brand change is evident. This has been given greater definition in the discussions. Key factors affecting communication processes are identified, laying a foundation to a forward thinking communication strategy. It involves TMC and DC that optimally do not exist or function separately, but as implied by communication narratives, should transition to complement or balance one another in a historically sound and economically viable way. A unique theory-based strategy will be imbibed at the corporate level, and therefore impact the values espoused by organizational leadership. These values then filter down to other staff, and resonate on how external stakeholders perceive the brand. A verifiable range of mixed methods (Saunders, 2019) used to achieve research outcomes, adds to the body of methodology and business communication research. Importantly, this research demonstrates the efficacy of applying theory across and in industry, academia and the public domain for what can be the benefit of all parties.

7.1 Benefits of the Research

It is proposed that in the PhD component which includes commonalities in three international geographically western areas, responsiveness to unearthed factors affecting communication will be a new postmodern drive.
7.1.1 Contributions to Academic Knowledge

The rigour of the investigation and methodology espoused, in comparison with archival literature, shed light on how communication has deviated from the past century. This thesis embraced a different paradigmatic approach to understanding recent changes regarding how communication was enacted, which essentially shifted the true purpose and meaning of communication.

Critical information that would otherwise have helped an organization increase its value and improve reputation, is shown as being often compromised and relegated to secondary importance, by inordinate reliance or over-reliance on TMC. In understanding this information, the research also revealed other ways that contribute to how reputation can be measured. Accordingly, this research shows in greater detail than is evident in previous literature, that a “burden of social proof” as implied by Google (2016) is needed for communication to be deemed effective. This however is regardless of how much TMC is engaged, but rather to include other ways that DC will ultimately impact the communication process, either through mode, medium, or both. This satisfied research question (4) which acknowledged that both TMC and DC require attention, but needed to determine if TMC was deemed less important than non-computer mediated communication. TMC is not less important, but should absolutely be used in tandem with DC.

Case studies engaged across major western cultures albeit cases investigated along clear philosophical axes (Stanfill, 2012), provided data on how tensions of the communication technology evolution can alienate potential or real
premium stakeholders. In comparison, aligning data or commonalities, by sound theoretically justified positions may achieve the opposite, especially during times of change. This answered research question (2) which sought to ascertain the nature of what would be in online entries that could start or assist in the creation of corporate communication strategies. It was determined that using theory to guide how data was included and the mode by which it was included, was required for the appropriate blend of said data. This would enable rather than disassociate premium stakeholders.

Any identified differences in the communication regimen of the case studies across geographical regions, shed light on the concept of negative differentiation and the purpose of effective communication (van Dijk, 2014), although in a technologically advanced regime. This answered research question (1) regarding what traditionally justified only moderate efforts to refine the use of TMC as an easy mode to engage premium stakeholders. The decision makers as evidenced in the case studies, asserted that TMC had to be fit for purpose; and unless or until purpose and fit were understood and aligned, there was less inclination to explore TMC.

An innovative theoretical framework with new or latent yet re-applied theory was determined. The following relevant sections itemise how the latter, in addition to the methodology may drive future research.
7.1.1.i Application of developed theories in future research (F)

As indicated in section 6.1, the postulated “retro-forward” theory has two dimensions. One is that generally, there will be a potential aspect to a desired action, that was not definitely originally considered to enable the completion of said action. Secondly, that potential aspect to the action was part of previously held paradigms that had been over time relegated to secondary importance, though not negated due to its contributions to inherent meaning or application, and cultural significance. It would appear therefore, that not only was the proposed communication strategy developed in this thesis one that maintains the accuracy of the desired meaning of the content of communication, but it was also feasible in real time, and comparable in its outcomes, to the newer strategies which sometimes could be narrower in scope. The “retro-forward” theory will guide how the new combination of theories in the indicative PMFCM (Figure 17) will operate. Therefore it is suggested that this theory could also be considered to be a meta-theory (that includes theory itself), which guides the turning point of the systems theory (2.6.1.i) to account for how pervasive paradigmatic changes may be managed. Such changes are not unique to communication studies. Therefore the “retro-forward” theory can be applied in a wide array of disciplines, where there is a resurrection of previous paradigms, and a challenge of the current paradigm to include more of the latter in order to achieve the desired progressive (forward-looking) outcome. It is also proposed that the theory can be relevantly engaged across all subject disciplines. This is where in particular, the desired outcomes (be they in academia or industry) rely on a combination of substantial qualitative data, and some empirical data surrounding a topic that is replete with several perspectives. The “retro-forward
theory” can guide the manipulation of data to not only elucidate a splintered topic as was completed in this research and in part as advocated by Boromisza-Habashi (2013), but importantly lead to actionable conclusions.

7.1.I.ii Application of explored methodology in future research (M)

The methodology used in this thesis is considered multidimensional. There was a need to guarantee – within reasonable expectations – that the aim and objectives could be met, and the raft of research questions (1.8.I) answered. This was given the wide scope of the research topic, and the fact that there were major and subsidiary questions that required attention and at different times throughout the study. That said, methodology espoused various stages which included human participants and non-human material, which enabled the researcher to more clearly identify and fill gaps that might have existed in previous research and the literature. This was with regards to changes that had occurred external to the subjects under consideration, as well as internal to said subjects. Therefore, it can be said that the methodology had a sound time component, which makes the methodology applicable to both short and medium term investigations. The contemporary ethnographic approach used (including online ethnography and face-to-face ethnography) was substantiated, and ethically sound. This means that information so gathered could serve as a stepping stone for longitudinal research, which requires an accurate account of cultural and sociological or social phenomena. Further, these phenomena in this study could have been contrasted, given that the similarities in the background cultures were clearly identified, referenced, and
therefore controlled for. These same principles can be applied in other research across cultures, rendering comparative research for example, more feasible.

7.1.11 Intended Outcomes and application in practice to future research (A)

Key factors affecting communication processes are identified, laying a foundation to cutting-edge forward-thinking corporate communication strategies involving realignment of TMC and DC in an almost symbiotic way. It was clear that corporate values will filter to other staff whether in an ideal or non-ideal fashion. However, the desired outcome as the communication framework is expected to achieve, is that these values resonate on outside stakeholders’ perception of the brand. While there may be a very high degree of expectations of stakeholders from the brand, the bottom line will be trust, a connection they can take away for reference when engaging with the brand on future occasions. This novel approach creates a renewed fertile ground for further research for example in service and service dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2006) especially where many organizations will have an online component, that still requires efficient service. This is in comparison to what may become redundant relationship building, where as demonstrated in this study, does not categorically lead to effective communication for the actual purpose of maintaining the value and reputation of the brand.

It would appear as well that the core content of this thesis can be applied in extreme cases where mistrust had been developed, due to miscommunication. The research showed that streamlined incorporation of decision makers and PMFCM, have a reparative dimension especially where premium stakeholders
and their views are at stake. This answers research question (3) about whether online detail could make a difference in ultimate decision-making processes.

7.2 The Future of this Current Research

7.2.1 Possible Impact

If the theoretical framework was to be applied extensively, impacts could be:

- Improved communication techniques that sharply focus a brand’s USP
- Prudence with resources in brands’ macro-environment that informs emerging organizational expansion plans and business practice overhaul
- Staff engagement of embedded concepts, to reflect institutional change and a company culture conducive to communicating brand strengths
- Small industry players contest on a similar brand platform as large ones
- Trust and brand reputation attract clients, and better return on investments
- Heuristic guidelines to design effective efficient communication processes.

It is also probable that given the scope of the PMFCM and the cohesiveness of the inherent principles that bolster trust, the PMFCM may be used effectively in fields outside of academia and industry. This includes as in the literature review, political undertakings: understanding the “brand” is of utmost importance, as is the need to trust or believe those involved have a good reputation.

Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) found that the research into the use of TMC in corporate communication was somewhat hollow, and would benefit from more robust findings and assertions, to then have a lasting impact for decision makers and stakeholders. The points above show the scope of the research in providing a cohesive indicate model that can elicit or reify that potential impact.
7.2. II Areas for further investigation intimated by research outcomes

Buttressed by (i) a sound theoretical framework, (ii) an in-depth understanding of key TMC and DC factors and (iii) a grasp of multiple business culture contexts, further investigations of the details of a future post-modern flexible communication model (PMFCM) are feasible. For example, applying as break characteristics, Pels, Moller and Saren (2009) three configuration overlays of Integrated Marketing Communication (where outcomes of corporate communication may be manifest), is one possibility. Where it might be less complicated to state what is not desired of communication, along with an increasingly intricately developed narrative of negative differentiation (Stage 2: H), increasingly firm tenets of the PMFCM can be posited. To query causality in relation to the first three (i – iii) considerations for creating a PMFCM, the model could undergo testing. Further, it is felt that by nature of current pertinent and relevant available communication theory information (see also section 1.3), the model intimated via the Path Analysis, may have North American nuances. So for general elucidation and other clarifications on the model, a PMFCM can undergo a quasi-experiment in situ via culturally and more tightly controlled applications within the three regions, for a more extended period of time. This tracks the progress of both dyadic components and determines the longer-term impact of a sound communication strategy that benefits industry and academia.

Theory woven into proposed future research will most likely minimise the time to achieve robust empirical results. However most importantly, a well-designed research study for example by action research over a limited though longer time, can demonstrate how resistant and responsive the model is to change. So as
an upgrade to the dyadic considerations in this thesis, the efficacy of the results can be even further enhanced by more detailed investigations into triadic communication; it tracks the completion of longer-term transactions between stakeholders and decision-makers. This is while applying the indicative communication model given, to organizational change and in particular, with the changing landscape of postmodern communication.
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**PDF Documents**


**Dictionaries**


YouTube or Vimeo


Podcasts and archived TV programmes


**Articles publically available on the internet**


**Conference reports and papers**


**Company Data Sources**

**Journals**


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**Dissertations and Theses**


APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1: NDA Pilot questions to distributors (buyers or suppliers) and premium customers

1) How long have you been working in this capacity?
2) What were the best selling items, or what subject area did they belong to?
3) How would you describe the group categories of persons who buy? And who are your best customers?
4) Are there special times of year for good business, or has there been a fall or increase over the years?
5) What strategy or pitch/communication is most effective?
6) Are the questions above reflective, and allow you to give a summary?
7) What one thing do customers seem to want more or spend more time doing?

APPENDIX 2: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: Questions with 7 stakeholder business owners

Exchange (a) Dry-cleaners in Jamaica

LW: You have asked for research on newer biochemical agents used to dry clean clothing. What is the major requirement of the information your customers need?

KC: Differentiating what I do from others. My wife and I travel overseas and can get mild store-bought products; so just foreign things are not what we need. Knowledge of the safe science behind good smelling industrial products that can treat suits which haven’t been cleaned for many years, is key.
**Exchange (b) NDA - Non-disclosure agreement: USA and Jamaica**

**LW:** I’ve been doing some pro bono management consultations regarding the growth direction or potential of your new endeavour; how can communication help?

**ML:** I need (an) ambassador(s) to take the mission of my company into areas I can’t go; and someone to locate and inform/advise on educational resources. I am very particular about what I use for curriculum planning and, teaching aides. The whole thing must relay my unique tested approach to education.

**Exchange (c) NDA in Jamaica, with USA head office**

**LW:** What in communication would make a difference to the current perception of what you offer?

**SH:** There needs to be promotions in churches and, a new physical layout in line with the name change the company now is undergoing. We must initiate health fairs versus just being a part of one … pro-activity. Our overall visibility to the “man on the street” should be improved. We need also to maximise on all known good sales times. So if we know that sales peak a certain time of day or season of the year, most efforts should be directed there. The company could also provide alternatives and fix-it solutions to less than desirable lifestyles. People want to know practically how what products we have on offer actually works to help them physically, or solve a problem.

**Exchange (d) A new food - healthy snacks - manufacturing company in Jamaica**

**LW:** How is your company doing overall and are you ready for me to do anything else for you?
PH: I've no finances and time for anything but investing in chips’ bags and getting them seen in the market.

*Exchange (e) NDA - UK*

LW: What is the core of issues with the staff’s communication?

GF: How online social networks are engaged. The staff conversations or posts are numerous, but very casual. The clients see the posts, and staff may make contacts with clients. But because of the actual nature of the conversation posts, the business of these high worth clients may be lost.

*Exchange (f) Caterer in USA and Jamaica*

LW: I am proposing some research on suitable communication strategies to enhance branding. How relevant is this for you?

CB: Well I have enough clients, as many people know of my work. Yet after scheduling meetings, the timing for completing face-to-face consultations with occasional travel out of town, is a problem.

**APPENDIX 3: REGIONS AND TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS - STAGE ONE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region and number of interviews</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRITAIN (9)</td>
<td>Manager of a Shell petrol station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A UK based Research Company (self - reported by researcher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Bolton (4 managers and decision makers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Manchester (Communications Officer)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Salford (Special needs student services manager)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dencol (Automobile Parts)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jamaica Money Market Brokers (Finance)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Barita (Finance)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Henry's Delight (Manufacturer of Snacks)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Associated Owners (Insurance)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CMS Medical (Medical Supplies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Times (Newspaper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARICOM (7)</td>
<td>C. Brown (Catering and Hospitality)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARICOM AND USA (1)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE INTERVIEWS FROM STAGE ONE

RESPONDENT MU: Introduction: Describe in your own words, the type of business you currently operate or manage, and for how long you have been doing so. Ok so I currently work at the University of Manchester, which is a higher education institute. It’s a Russell Group university so it is both research intensive and teaching focused. I specifically work in a faculty researcher development team and I’m responsible for the communications to academics and postgraduates and post docs around training and development.

1. What was the scope of your organization in the past, and what would you say is its scope now, or in more current times? The university is the single largest university in the UK. It has something like 40,000 undergraduates, 6000 postgraduates and it is the biggest employer in the northwest of all staff both academic and PSS. So we are talking about a significantly sizeable complex organization.

2. What have been your main communication methods or strategies, as far as projecting your brand and, what it offers and represents? Ok, so let me talk specifically about my responsibilities, which are within the faculty of engineering and physical sciences. We have something like 500 postdocs, 500 – 700 academics, and about four to five thousand postgraduate researchers. So I’m not going to include undergraduate or postgraduate taught, because I am not responsible for communicating to them. Just so you have a sense of the size. Our primary communication methods are through list services, emails, the names for those emails are
provided by HR services or student services to populate the emails. And on the basis of that email, we would do for post graduates a weekly bulletin about the training opportunities, both internally and externally to the organization, competitions that we might be running, funding opportunities, general news and awareness about what’s happening with postgraduate degrees and then we will do a similar but it’s a monthly version for postdocs; and the academics will also get copied into both of those versions of the emails. We also then take that form of communication and convert it into a blogpost and we tweet off the back of that blogpost, but we also actively tweet every day and we share the tweet between about the three of us on the team. In addition to that across the university for postdocs, we have something called a newsletter called insight and that is created and managed and edited by a team of postdocs from all faculties but I sit in as an almost silent editor to help manage that process and this is a quarterly newsletter that they produce about what is important to postdocs and…both from an internal to external point of view. It does have once again have a researcher focus to it because we are the funders of that…but it’s got a little bit of a human interest story so we might do a special feature on equality and diversity; and we might capture different case studies across the university for different postdocs who are able to share their story around an issue of equality and diversity. We have a similar thing to insight, which is for the postdocs, called STEPS which is for the postgraduates and the process is the same there. [and that would be for…?] For the postgraduate researchers. And those two publications have probably now been running for about 8 years I would say and the whole ethos of those
publications, it’s about giving the voice and the representation to the audience through that publications; I am really there just to help logistically or to give them some wider strategic thinking or to connect them to things like the national vitae agenda for researcher development, so that doesn’t become too inwardly focused.

3. **Approximately what percentage of revenue is traditionally used in communicating your brand message, as part of marketing?** I would absolutely have to say that when it comes to a cost I don’t manage a budget for marketing and branding. Because the majority of communications that I am doing, are internally focused for the inward audience. But for if for example we are doing a public engagement activity for which I run a lot of organizational activities which is about bringing and external audience into the campus to interact with research, for each of those projects, I would say maybe we have anywhere, depends on the size of the project roughly about 10 percent of whatever the overall budget is, is directed towards marketing and we’ve very much moved away from traditional forms of marketing into the use of social media. That is our main methods of communicating.

4. **Based on background information to your organization, it would have been through critical points in history, especially when for example, expanding geographically, offering new products, changing infrastructure, to name a few. What changes if any, did you make to your communication strategies?** Right. So very much in research development we were ahead of the curve of using social media. We were
one of the first groups in the university to set up a Twitter account, to set up a blog, connect those two things together and then use other forms such as running Instagram competitions, so pretty much dabbled with lots of social media to test. I would say as a whole, the institution has been slower to move towards that, and I think partly it is because it such a big complex organization that they almost, and this is my own personal opinion, needed to kind of check out what was appropriate for a university of this size and stature to use in terms of communications But definitely in the last two years there has been a shift towards social media across the university.

5. **If at all, how have you factored networking, as far as meeting potential clients, suppliers etc. face-to-face and/or by telephone?** Okay because I work in researcher development that means the majority of what we do is to deliver training programmes as part of those training programmes we will always use those face-to-face opportunities as opportunities for publicising other training and development opportunities etc that students and postgrads could get and post docs could get involved with. So we kind of combine the element of having the trainer in the room doing that session but also then…opening up access to what else is available to them in terms of their support and their development…We also increasingly will run social media training and then as part of that training we will use our own communications and approaches as examples for how students could then choose to use that for the purposes of their research [okay so you are engaged for example in training exercises, use that as a platform to do some PR and then…] but it is more than PR because it is actually about
then training those people to utilise for example social media in their own research worlds [ok so you are more or less incorporating in the long run social media anyway] yes [it has to be an integral part of your communication strategies] yes.

6. If at all, how have you factored electronic media, for example, using updated websites, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat etc.) and email shots? Yeah, we don’t use things like Pinterest or Snapchat. We definitely for the postgraduate research community use Facebook. And actually there’s two things: one is a Facebook page that is managed by our team, and separately whoever the postgraduate representative is, which is a student led thing, they will have a separate Facebook so that those communications are very much being driven by that voice, rather than have a top down approach. [and email shots? I think you said you had a mailing list that’s more less administered or you get the names supplied by HR] Yeah so they supply the names to go into the email list, but we manage all the communications. So and they are directly for postgraduate researchers as one group audience and there are the post docs; but then academics get copied into weekly emails but then you know certain events might be happening in between or we might want to do some more promotion about something so then we’ll do extra email shots around things but we are very conscious about not over whelming postgrads and postdocs with emails because they won’t read them. So we have to be really conscious about when we deploy the email and what the content is and how often we are doing it.
7. At what stage did you recognise (if at all) that how the public constructed its understanding of your organization and its changes, could significantly affect business success? I am guessing by public I can choose a particular audience, so for example student communications have very much changed across the university in terms of using the technologies that suit that audience, and I think that has been the big push towards social media. So if for example if we are looking to recruit postgraduates...traditionally it would have all been very letter based or mail based. But now they are actually using methods of social media to engage with people. So I'll give you a specific example...Each year we have a huge intake of post graduates across the university, and international post graduates will have a whole series of induction and welcome events before they even step foot over here we would have already have created Facebook pages, connected people via social media, started to create a sense of community so that when they then get here they are actually already a part of what is going on [ok right, it's almost like the social media is a transporter of the message that you're are trying to get across, your brand] partly but there's a real drive within universities to think about student experience and the creation of community so it's about what...methodologies within communication technologies are most appropriate to help make that happen [and have you found in your experience that its now a given or expected from prospective students that you’d have that kind of intense social media campaign or do they expect something different]. I think there is now an expectation, because even on this grad school if we had done a quick show of hands of who is on now
Twitter, if we had done that two years ago … to capture the learning experience and to share it on Twitter, so to coming back to your business of networking, we would hope that people who come from all different institutes, on this three day course, they would then keep in touch with each other afterwards using those mechanisms that they started to put into play.

8. **What did you figure you need to pay special attention to in your communication strategy?** I think it’s about being very clear about the audience and the appropriate messages and the timeliness of those… And that’s because there are just so many emails bombarding our post graduates and our academics and our post docs. They are literally overwhelmed by information. Alex sends out a regular bulletin very much focused just for that audience. He doesn’t send out anything not of interest but what is good that group of people… so even if though they have never met Alex, they identified that email with a person.

9. **Have any new considerations been in relation to (a) regional and (b) organizational culture? If so, what? To which degree?** – use scale [Mostly/On Average/Very little/None at all] For northwest point of view, researcher development is not limited to a single institution, so the experience of learning and development for early career researchers should transcend discipline specific and do institute specific boundaries. For the organization it particularly in Manchester it has strategic goals. Excellent research, teaching and learning student experience and social responsibility. And the university distinguishes it from other university
through its social responsibility goal. It very clearly says those three things have to come together. It uses the three leg stool to talk about how equal these three goals are. What we have seen from both an internal and external point, is the communication of this goal. But it is more so than just a strategic message. The ethos is to demonstrate that as an institution we are making a difference. This has been the number one thing from an institutional point of view; that has really filtered down through the culture and put towards to other institutions nationally and globally as to “this is what we are about”. Our vice chancellor often says goal 1 and 2 are what we are good at and goal 3 is what we are good for. This at been the biggest cultural change for the institution (Strategy 2011). It has fundamentally changed the practice of the university. Maybe not changed but enhanced and recognised the activity. Look at Manchester’s social responsibility website.

10. Especially with regards to staff communication competence, what would you now change and why? The take of the uptake of the use of social media especially in a university this big was quite slow, but we are now seeing a change in the use of this technology. A year ago we wouldn’t have known who was using Twitter for organizational departments but now we have a Twitter directory. We are still information heavy, but there are now conversations that are starting to emerge, as the Twitter account is coming to life. It is moving that way.
RESPONDENT NS: Introduction: Describe in your own words, the type of business you currently operate or manage, and for how long you have been doing so. [No answer]

1. What was the scope of your organization in the past, and what would you say is its scope now, or in more current times? Awful question. Ask one question at a time or you won’t be able to analyse the results. My organization exists to help entrepreneurs develop skills and understandings for modern business like the name says “Doing The Right Things”. It has always been this.

2. What have been your main communication methods or strategies, as far as projecting your brand and, what it offers and represents? Customer service, Social Marketing, Brand clarity – operationally speaking, Brand assets – logo, livery and the like. Public speaking, Networking, Sales meetings, Interviews for media.

3. Approximately what percentage of revenue is traditionally used in communicating your brand message, and as part of marketing? <3%

4. Based on background information to your organization, it would have been through critical points in history, especially when for example, expanding geographically, offering new products, changing infrastructure, to name a few. What changes if any, did you make to your communication strategies? None – other than the constant drive to increase clarity.
5. If at all, how have you factored networking, as far as meeting potential clients, suppliers etc. face-to-face and/or by telephone? Networking is not very reliable…as conversion is a long tail process. Telephone tends to be a point of conversion for other marketing.

6. If at all, how have you factored electronic media, for example, using updated websites, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat etc.) and email shots? 80% of my marketing is electronic and social.

7. At what stage did you recognise (if at all) that how the public constructed its understanding of your organization and its changes, could significantly affect business success? The very first day. Brand is a promise of an experience. The experience your customers get is all important.

8. What did you figure you need to pay special attention to in your communication strategy? Clarity

9. Have any new considerations been in relation to (a) regional and (b) organizational culture? If so, what? To which degree? – use scale [Mostly/On Average/Very little/None at all] Zero degree

10. Especially with regards to staff communication competence, what would you now change and why? Ongoing training is the core of any staff
retention program in a variety of things. Mainly confidence, decision-making, story telling, objection handling, having creative ideas, not fearing failure.

RESPONDENT ST: Introduction: Describe in your own words, the type of business you currently operate or manage, and for how long you have been doing so. I am the branch manager for a financial services company and I have been in operations and branch management for the past 7 years.

1. What was the scope of your organization in the past, and what would you say is its scope now, or in more current times? The company has grown from a one branch, one country, institution to several branches, a group of companies, regionally (Caribbean).

2. What have been your main communication methods or strategies, as far as projecting your brand and, what it offers and represents? There is active use of social media, use of the local major print media, advertisements, bill boards and presentations, among other tools.

3. Approximately what percentage of revenue is traditionally used in communicating your brand message, as part of marketing? I am not sure. Depending on where in the county you reside and where in the Caribbean, the message is received differently and the results are not always immediately translated into revenue.
4. **Based on background information to your organization, it would have been through critical points in history, especially when for example, expanding geographically, offering new products, changing infrastructure, to name a few. What changes if any, did you make to your communication strategies?** The company has seen a number of changes: moving from a private company to a publicly listed company, the acquisition of smaller financial companies, to having to deal with the financial crisis of 2008, to the sale of a company within the group, entering new markets, re-entering a market, launch of charity/foundation etc. The combination of strategies for communicating the changes – senior team leadership teleconferences, group huddles, email communication, press releases and briefs, town hall type meetings, radio and television interviews and articles providing education on the change(s). This is to be contrasted with original primary means of communicating by staff meetings and emails.

5. **If at all, how have you factored networking, as far as meeting potential clients, suppliers etc. face-to-face and/or by telephone?** We have factored networking to meet new clients and deepen existing relationships. This is usually done through team members seeking out participation and sponsorship of local events and key activities that attract the niche market of clientele. [Social clubs] also facilitate the meeting of potential clients.

6. **If at all, how have you factored electronic media, for example, using updated websites, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat etc.) and email shots?** Electronic media, within the
past year in particular, has been used extensively. The number of followers has grown significantly and of note, is the way that social media allows for the meeting of a new generation more interested in doing business and gather information online rather than visiting agents in a physical building.

7. At what stage did you recognise (if at all) that how the public constructed its understanding of your organization and its changes, could significantly affect business success? Given that the company’s main growth resulted from word of mouth, the large recognition of public perception and its impact would have come about when [it] was publicly listed in 2002.

8. What did you figure you need to pay special attention to in your communication strategy? The way the words and messages were communicated; not just what was said, but how it was said.

9. Have any new considerations been in relation to (a) regional and (b) organizational culture? If so, what? To which degree? – use scale [Mostly/On Average/Very little/None at all] Mostly. My organization recognizes that our unique way of doing business is what has contributed to our success. For this reason, we have been deliberate about preserving and transmitting the culture and the dream of our founder to all of the companies in the group, internationally.

10. Especially with regards to staff communication competence, what would you now change and why? Not sure
## APPENDIX 5: ORGANIZATIONS OR DECISION MAKERS’ ONLINE ETHNOGRAPHY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region and Company/Decision maker</th>
<th>Type of Business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JAMAICAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCB Capital Quest</td>
<td>Bank – led Business Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Innovators</td>
<td>Televised private sector- led Business Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forever Sweet</td>
<td>Cake and confectioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CARIBBEAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keneea Linton Boutique</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The owner also organizes the Mission Catwalk competition with local and international participants, and is the convener of the Guild of Fashion Designers, Jamaica)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bliss Bridal Boutique</td>
<td>Bridal rentals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Participated in the NCB Capital Quest)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Moda</td>
<td>Creative arts collective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Organizes competitions with local and international participants)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewarts Auto</td>
<td>Automotive dealers and parts specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSATLANTIC - THEMED</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dynamic Lifestyle Patrice White</td>
<td>Fitness and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Jamaican/EU/Asiatic/USA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamila McDonald</td>
<td>Fitness and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(USA/Caribbean)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragon’s Den</td>
<td>Budding entrepreneurs (some from international backgrounds) pitch ideas to five millionaire investors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(British, International)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Apprentice</td>
<td>Privately-led by Alan Sugar: Business Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(British, International)</td>
<td>Involves local and international participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bianca Miller-Cole</td>
<td>Current: hosiery and personal branding; previously participated in the “Apprentice” TV Reality Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(British, International)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocent Juices</td>
<td>Healthy Juices</td>
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<tr>
<td>(British, EU)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Harvey</td>
<td>TV Entertainment, Author, Mentorship</td>
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<tr>
<td>(USA, International)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Benjamin Carson</td>
<td>Politics, Author</td>
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<tr>
<td>(USA)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>AIM Educational Services</td>
<td>Education Consultancy/Placements Worldwide</td>
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<tr>
<td>(International)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>VERSAN Education</td>
<td>Education Consultancy/Placements Worldwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(International)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>QUESTION ITEMS</td>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. How accessible were persons who had the information that was important to you?</td>
<td>* Dickson, A. and Holland, K. (2016) Hysterical inquiry and autoethnography; a Lacanian alternative to institutionalised ethical commandments. Current Sociology. pp. 1 – 16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Describe in your own words any turning point(s) in your decision making processes, for doing formal business (e.g. registering at university). With relevant examples where possible, explain how the institution’s communication strategy may have enabled this.</td>
<td>* Caughlin, J. P. and Sharabi, L. L. (2013) A Communicative Interdependence Perspective of Close Relationships: The Connections between Mediated and Unmediated Interactions Matter. Journal of Communication. 63 (5) pp. 873 – 893.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Young and Rubicam’s Brand Asset Valuator – BAV (2003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 7: APPROACH TO EVALUATION OF TMC

(i) Webometrics [Web impact factor – links to sources of information: company webpages, social media (for this thesis: unique to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) that is, who uses, frequency, tags etc. content]

(ii) After clients, suppliers with quantitative survey instruments, and preliminary decision maker interviews:

Discourse, Thematic and Content Analyses of case studies based on initial information from (i) and (ii)

(iii) Detailed comparison of case studies with further SPSS analyses of original quantitative surveys (ii)

APPENDIX 8: GOOGLE WEBOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF CORPORA

Goo.gl/HXEFH1