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An evaluation of the impact of event attendance on perceptions of the host organisation's reputation: a university case study

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**An evaluation of the impact of event attendance on perceptions of the
host organisation's reputation: a university case study**

By

KATIE ANGLISS

A thesis submitted to Plymouth University in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Volume 1 of 2

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Sub-Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at the Plymouth University has not formed part of any other degree either at Plymouth University or at another establishment.

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Katie Angliss

An evaluation of the impact of event attendance on perceptions of the host organisation's reputation: a university case study

Abstract

Reputation is an important asset for organisations worldwide. Many researchers have attempted to develop a measurement construct to assess an organisation's reputation, with the RepTrak System being recognised to be the world's first tool that assess reputation across multiple stakeholders and areas of the organisation. Nevertheless, the characteristics, methods and stakeholders to include within an assessment of this intangible asset continues to be widely debated. Organisations are under intense scrutiny by their stakeholders, with reputation being an organisational asset on which many opinions are formed. Universities in the UK are no different, as they compete for students from around the world, with the institutions thought to have the best reputations, attracting more students. Nevertheless, no agreed measure for assessing a university's reputation exists, with many organisations relying solely on league table rankings. Thus, this thesis evaluated existing reputation measurement characteristics, to determine their applicability in assessing the reputation of a UK university.

The antecedents of reputation are also widely debated. Authors suggest that stakeholders' prior knowledge and experience, and communication they receive from an organisation contributes to their perceptions of that organisation's reputation. The Media Richness Theory suggests a hierarchy to this communication, with face-to-face communication recognised to be of increasing importance due to its 'rich' nature. Consequently, the use of events as a strategic communication tool for marketing and public relations purposes has become increasingly popular. Nevertheless, the impact of these events on an organisation's reputation has yet to be assessed. Thus, the aim of

this thesis is to evaluate the impact that these events have on stakeholders' perceptions of a UK university's reputation.

A case study methodology, using mixed methods, and underpinned by a pragmatic philosophical perspective was adopted. Five semi-structured interviews were held with senior managers during the first phase of data collection and analysis. Results from these interviews were used to determine the strategic purpose of events as a communication tool. In phase two of the research, the study's main variables (Reputation, Event Influence, Knowledge and Familiarity, Future Intentions) are combined into a model to assess their relationships. These are tested using Structural Equation Modelling, and data collected from 23 university events and 592 event attendees, using a quantitative questionnaire.

This study contributes to our knowledge and understanding of the benefits of using events as a form of communication, and highlights the necessity of using a variety of communication channels to inform different stakeholder groups. Findings within this research contradict existing knowledge within the UK Higher Education Industry, by suggesting that university league tables were not the most frequently used method of assessing a university's reputation, and that rather stakeholders base their perceptions on their personal experience with the institution. Consequently, attending events is found to have a positive influence on attendees' perceptions of the university's reputation, however a threshold level exists for stakeholders with high levels of familiarity with the university. Therefore, evidence of the impact of using events as a communication tool is found with a positive return on investment in terms of reputation gains. Thus, findings can be used to inform communication strategy within the higher education industry within the UK.

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|----------------|--|
| AMOS | Analysis of MOment Structures |
| ASV | Average Shared Variance |
| AVE | Average Variance Extracted |
| BoG | Boards of Governors |
| CA | Conversation Analysis |
| CFA | Confirmatory Factor Analysis |
| CFI | Comparative Fit Index |
| CPR | Corporate Public Relations |
| CR | Critical Ration |
| df | Degrees of Freedom |
| EFA | Exploratory Factor Analysis |
| EI | Event Influence |
| EM | Expectation Maximisation |
| FA | Factor Analysis |
| FPO | For-profit Organisation |
| GLS | Generalised Least Squares |
| GT | Grounded Theory |
| HE | Higher Education |
| HEFCE | Higher Education Funding Council for England |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| IFI | Incremental Fit Index |
| IPA | Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis |
| KF | Knowledge and Familiarity |
| KMO | Kaiser-Meyer-Onkin |
| MAR | Missing at Random |
| MCAR | Missing Completely at Random |
| MI | Modification Index |
| MLE | Maximum Likelihood Estimation |
| MNAR | Missing Not at Random |
| MPR | Marketing Public Relations |
| MSV | Maximum Shared Variance |
| NC | Normed Chi-Squared |
| NPO | Non-profit Organisation |
| PBDA | Pattern-Based Discourse Analysis |
| PCA | Principle Component Analysis |
| PR | Public Relations |
| QAA | Quality Assurance Agency |
| R ² | Squared correlation estimate |
| RMSEA | Root Mean Square Error of Approximation |
| ROI | Return on Investment |
| SE | Standard Errors |
| SEM | Structural Equation Modelling |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| SQ | Service Quality |

| | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| TA | Thematic Analysis |
| TLI | Tucker Lewis Index |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| ULS | Unweighted Least Squares |
| VIF | Variance Inflation Factors |
| WOM | Word of Mouth |
| X ² | Chi Square |

“The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear” (Socrates)

1 Introduction

Reputation is regarded as the single most valued intangible asset that an organisation can have (Andrea, 2015, Barney, 1991, Cho et al., 2012, Deephouse, 2000, Fertik and Thompson, 2015, Rao, 1994, Wæraas and Maor, 2015, Gibson et al, 2006 cited in Walker, 2010). This has been true for for-profit organisations (FPOs) for a number of decades, however this has also become perceived to be increasingly important for organisations in the non-profit sector over the last decade, due to increased competition. Universities, as part of the non-profit sector within the United Kingdom (UK), have faced similar competition and commercialisation to FPOs, which has resulted in numerous attempts to assess their reputation, and the emergence of multiple performance rankings in the form of university league tables. However, the characteristics, methods and stakeholders to include within an assessment of this intangible asset continues to be widely debated.

Reputation measurement research has been extensive within the for-profit sector, with multiple studies setting out to determine the characteristics that should be used within a measurement scale (Andreassen and Lanseng, 1997, Dowling, 2001, Dowling and Gardberg, 2012, Dowling, 2004, Dowling, 2016, Fombrun and Low, 2011, Fombrun et al., 2015, Gardberg and Fombrun, 2002, Helm, 2005, Helm and Tolsdorf, 2013, Ponzi et al., 2011). Research into the determinants of reputation, for this sector has also become increasingly popular, and thus a wealth of information is available, evidenced by a journal (Corporate Reputation Review) dedicated to the concept. However, the reputation of non-profit organisations (NPOs) has only recently become a topic of interest for researchers, with the number of articles being published in this area steadily increasing (Ivy, 2001, Mahr and Schwaiger, 2016, Plewa et al., 2016, Verčič et al.,

2016, Vidaver-Cohen, 2007, Yang et al., 2008). Nevertheless, there is still no single agreed upon measure for university reputation, with existing scales differing according to their measurement characteristics and stakeholders measured. Furthermore, the determinants of a positive reputation within the non-profit sector have scarcely been tested.

Perceptions of reputation are formed from stakeholders' past experience, word-of-mouth from others, and communication originating from the organisation (corporate communication). The Media Richness Theory (Daft and Lengel, 1986) suggests a hierarchy of importance for transmitting and receiving information, with face-to-face communication perceived to be the most important, due to its 'richness'. Events have become an important communication tool for many organisations, as they provide a platform for 'rich' face-to-face communication to take place. Yet, limited research assessing the impact of face-to-face corporate communication on stakeholders' perceptions of reputation exists, with no research (to the authors knowledge) undertaken in the context of a UK university. Thus, events as a communication tool will be assessed, to determine their impact on a university's reputation.

The research context of UK universities is set out in the following sections. This addresses the key differences between FPOs and NPOs, and recognises UK universities as being a part of the non-profit sector. Measuring NPO reputation is discussed, and an analysis of existing university performance measures is presented. The multitude of stakeholder groups that form part of NPOs is identified as a primary difference between NPOs and FPOs. Consequently, consideration of these stakeholder groups, when assessing reputation, is necessary to develop an accurate measurement of an organisation's reputation. The chapter concludes by identifying the main aim for the thesis, and the objectives needed to achieve this aim. Finally, the structure, laying out the logical sequence of the thesis, is presented.

1.1 The research context

1.1.1 Non-profit and for-profit organisations

The key differences between for-profit organisations (FPOs) and non-profit organisations (NPOs) are thought to be Finance, Ownership, and Vision (Euske, 2003, Hull and Lio, 2006, Nutt and Backoff, 1993). These areas affect the way these organisations operate and are assessed. They are discussed below, to determine how these characteristics affect the operation of an organisation, both in terms of its stakeholders, and performance measurement. This is done as a means to determine if existing characteristics for measuring FPOs reputation would be applicable to measuring the reputation of an NPO. However, definitions of FPOs and NPOs are offered first, to clarify what this research means when referring to these terms.

For-profit organisations are recognised as commercial organisations that have a focus on making money, which is a definition that is widely accepted (Euske, 2003, Hull and Lio, 2006, Macedo and Carlos Pinho, 2006, Moore, 2000, Nutt and Backoff, 1993). However, a definition of non-profit organisations is somewhat more complex, due to the scope of organisations that it includes, such as hospitals, charities, religious organisations, colleges and university, and governmental organisations (Andersson and Getz, 2009, Young, 2013). A simple definition for a NPO is suggested as an organisation that is prohibited by law to distribute profits to individuals with a beneficial interest in the organisation (Courtney, 2002, Young, 2013). While Salamon and Anheier (1992) suggest that an 'operational' definition, which includes five characteristics, is more suited when defining an NPO. This definition states that NPOs are 'formal/organisational, private, non-profit-distributing, self-governing and voluntary' (Salamon and Anheier, 1992, p. 125). This definition incorporates the range of organisations classed as NPOs, and highlights many of the key differences between NPOs and FPOs. As such, this is the perspective adopted for this research.

The first key difference between these types of organisations is the distribution of profits (finance). A key characteristic of FPOs is delivering a product or service to create a profit (Moore, 2000, Sandler and Hudson, 1998, Sansing, 2000). The profit, which can also be raised from private investors, is then distributed to shareholders (Chen, 2013). NPOs generate surplus income, through government subsidies and donations (Baruch and Ramalho, 2006, Chen, 2013, Oster, 1995), or through links to commercial operations. However, the surplus income is used for salaries or reinvestment (Baruch and Ramalho, 2006, Sandler and Hudson, 1998) into the organisation, rather than distributed to the organisation's shareholders (Anheier, 2005). Thus, a strong financial performance, rather than simply profitability, is important for NPOs to ensure the longevity of the organisation.

The primary purpose of NPOs is not to raise a profit but instead are formed, according to researchers, for any of three purposes (Ben-Ner and Van Hoomissen, 1991, Hall, 1987). The purposes include 1) performing public tasks delegated by the state, 2) performing public tasks for which there is a demand, and 3) influencing the direction of policy in the state (Ben-Ner and Van Hoomissen, 1991, Hall, 1987). These purposes cause NPOs to adopt a distinctive set of goals, which include a number of community and support roles (Andersson and Getz, 2009, Baruch and Ramalho, 2006), promoting areas of 'public interest' and public purpose (Anheier, 2005, Hull and Lio, 2006, Moore, 2000). As a result, NPOs have operated nearly exclusively within service industries, and have traditionally provided key services in education, research, arts and humanities, religion, and health care (Andersson and Getz, 2009, Benz, 2005, Waters et al., 2009, Young, 2013). Nevertheless, the purpose of all these organisations differ in their context. Thus, the development of a performance measure to assess all NPOs becomes problematic (Boateng et al., 2016, Frumkin and Keating, 2001).

The ownership and governance of these organisations also differs. NPOs are generally self-governed, and are founded and controlled by stakeholders who have an interest in, or can benefit themselves from the services they provide (Ben-Ner and Van

Hoomissen, 1991, Salamon and Anheier, 1992). Courtney (2002, p. 47) suggests that “voluntary non-profit organisations usually have to satisfy multiple funders, individuals, corporate and statutory, as well as regulatory bodies, customers, trustees, volunteers, staff, the media, and the local community.” Thus, highlighting the multitude of stakeholders that could be responsible for an NPO.

Some NPOs are controlled by governmental organisations or private businesses; however, the NPOs themselves are non-governmental organisations (Anheier, 2005). An example of such an organisation includes the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). These organisations are also referred to as quasi-autonomous-nongovernmental organisations (‘quangos’), which are separate organisations that operate as an extension of government, and adopt government procedure (Anheier, 2005). Although some NPOs operate as an ‘extension’ to the government, NPOs generally have a degree of autonomy, and are able to control their own activities (Salamon and Anheier, 1997).

In contrast, FPOs are founded and controlled by their shareholders. These shareholders usually only include a single group of people, who supply capital, and have a primary interest in a return on investment (ROI) (Ben-Ner and Van Hoomissen, 1991). Furthermore, Hull and Lio (2006) identify that FPOs are predominantly responsible to their shareholders, whereas NPOs are responsible to all their stakeholders. Thus, the diversity of stakeholders that NPOs are responsible for brings about a far greater complexity for organisational management (Anheier, 2000, Macedo and Carlos Pinho, 2006), than managing an FPO. Subsequently, the number of stakeholder groups that an NPO needs to satisfy when assessing performance and reputation is higher than FPOs. Therefore, suggesting the measurement of NPOs performance and reputation may be more complex.

1.1.2 Measuring NPO success (and reputation)

The demand for NPOs services is continually growing (Rojas, 2000), and they are facing similar competition to organisations in the for-profit sector (Kaplan, 2001, Sarstedt and Schloderer, 2010, Schloderer et al., 2014). This has increased the importance of measuring NPO success (Chang et al., 2002, Ittner and Larcker, 1998). As a result, NPOs have become more aware of the importance of the role, and effective management, of intangible assets, such as reputation (Schloderer et al., 2014, Venable et al., 2005). Organisational success and performance has traditionally only been measured in the for-profit sector, with the measurement focusing on financial achievements and profitability (Oster, 1995). However, as profitability is not the main goal of NPOs, using this as a measure for success would be inaccurate (Oster, 1995). Thus, alternative measures are needed to measure success within this sector.

The concept of measuring NPO success is relatively new, however it has become a topic of increased interest among researchers and practitioners over the last decade (Boateng et al., 2016). Despite this increased interest, relatively few studies specifically addressing organisational success and measuring NPO reputation, in comparison to the for-profit sector, have been published (Boateng et al., 2016, Helmig et al., 2014, Poister, 2008, Sarstedt and Schloderer, 2010, Sawhill and Williamson, 2001a, Sawhill and Williamson, 2001b, Schloderer et al., 2014, Taylor and Taylor, 2013). Boateng et al. (2016), note that demand by donors and charity stakeholders for information on performance has increased, and yet, a consensus on the best measure for non-profit performance has still not been reached.

Some of these studies, have attempted to adapt existing FPO reputation measurement models to the non-profit sector. These studies have taken a focus on stakeholder's 'willingness to donate' or their 'willingness to volunteer' for that organisation (Sarstedt and Schloderer, 2010, Schloderer et al., 2014). These characteristics are intended future intentions by the stakeholder, and are thought to be indication of a positive reputation. Other measurement dimensions include constructs such as quality,

performance, organisational social responsibility, attractiveness (Sarstedt and Schloderer, 2010, Schloderer et al., 2014), financial measures, client satisfaction, management effectiveness, stakeholder involvement and, benchmarking (Boateng et al., 2016). Thus, further highlighting the complexity of measuring an NPOs reputation, and the extent of dimensions on which it can be assessed.

1.1.3 UK Higher Education Sector

The higher education sector in the UK generates over £30 billion of revenue for the UK economy each year (Mercer, 2015). Universities are responsible for advancing knowledge and understanding through teaching, research and public services (Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016). This is done through teaching degree qualifications that have a theoretical underpinning (QAA, 2008), and qualify graduates to be employed within professional fields (Greenwood and Levin, 2005, NiDirect, 2014). Consequently, the higher education sector plays a critical role in societal development and economic growth (European Commission, 2017).

In the UK, there are 159 HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) (excluding further education colleges) (Universities UK, 2016b), and all but 'around 20 HEIs' have charity status (HEFCE, 2016b), and are therefore part of the non-profit sector. While these organisations are non-profit, governmental higher educational boards (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)) oversee them. These boards approve changes within the programmes of study and monitor development and growth of HEIs within the country (British Council, No Date). Nevertheless, HEIs remain legally independent organisations, managed by their governing bodies, and are ultimately accountable for themselves (HEFCE, 2012).

The Higher and Further Education Act 1992 was developed as a result of the education reform in late 1980s, and was introduced in 1992. This act established the Privy Council, who are responsible for granting university status to education institutions

within the UK (British Government, 1992). This was the first big change in UK Higher Education since the introduction of the Robbins Report in 1963, and resulted due to the opinion change that universities were becoming more important. This caused a significant growth in student numbers from 200,000 in the 1960s to over two million in the 2014-2015 academic year (Universities UK, 2016b). As a result of the Act, 35 Polytechnics were awarded university status (HEFCE, 2011), and funding bodies for higher (HEFCE) and further (FEFC) education in England were established (British Government, 1992). The new, post-1992, universities have become 'branded' as modern universities, and are recognised as having subtle differences to traditional, pre-1992, universities (HEFCE, 2012).

Universities are recognised to have diverse missions, with a number of universities forming 'mission-groups' with those that have a common interest. These groups include Million+ (a university think tank working to solve complex issues in HE and policy making); the Russell Group (including 20 major research-intensive universities); University Alliance (launched in 2007 with a balanced focus on research, teaching, enterprise and innovation); and the Cathedrals group (consisting of 15 universities supporting the church's role in HE) (Universities UK, 2015). However, there are universities that do not belong to any of these groups, and instead, are only members of Universities UK (Universities UK, 2015). The case study university used within this research (discussed in Section 5.2.2), is a part of the University Alliance group.

Traditional universities are suggested as having a greater research focus (Bowl, 2001), and lesser teaching focus, than modern universities. As a result, traditional universities dominate the higher education market (Archer et al., 2013). Universities with a specific research focus, such as those within the Russell Group and Million+, generally receive greater levels of research funding than modern universities, and are reliant on this as a primary source of income. Whereas, modern universities, such as those within the Alliance Group, are more reliant on student tuition fees as a primary source of income (Shattock, 2013). Although, the focus and levels of funding differ between universities,

the sources of income generally remain the same for all universities (Shattock, 2013). All universities accept contributions from students as their tuition fees; this was introduced in 1998 at £1,000 per student for an academic year. However, as government contributions have decreased, the annual fee has increased to £9,000 per student per year (Blake, 2010, Shattock, 2013). In addition to this, universities receive funding from funding bodies such as HEFCE, the government and research funding councils, as well as accepting donations from business partners, sponsors, and alumni (Dearlove, 2002). This highlights a diverse range of stakeholders involved in the funding of HEIs, demonstrating their complex nature in comparison with other types of NPOs.

Boards of Governors (BoG), or councils, have the responsibility to manage their institution within the higher education industry. These councils have control of policy; developing performance indicators, generating maximum value for all stakeholders (Barrett, 2001), and creating annual reports for review by the QAA (Dearlove, 2002, HEFCE, 2016a). However, recent trends within the higher education industry identify that governors are expected to play an increased role in quality assurance, strategy development and effective risk management for their institutions (Rushforth, 2016). BoG are generally made up of a diverse group of stakeholders, including staff, students and university partners (Kerlin, 2006). They are recognised as being equivalent to a board of directors within a FPO, with Melewar and Akel (2005) suggesting that BoG management behaviour increasingly resembles that of commercial organisations. However, unlike directors in FPOs, governors do not receive any financial incentives, as it is a voluntary position (Committee of University Chairs, 2009). Furthermore, similarly to many FPOs, Universities adopt a hierarchical staffing structure (Greenwood and Levin, 2005), operating across multiple departments. Staff roles include both academic and non-academic positions at varying levels of seniority, which highlights the diverse range of staff working at any institution.

1.1.3.1 Increased marketization of UKHEIs

The higher education sector has endured a number of fundamental challenges over the past decade (Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016). Governments have made significant cuts in public spending (Schlesinger et al., 2016), resulting in increased pressure on HEIs (Bryant, 2013). This is exacerbated by the continuing deregulation of the sector, which has enabled private organisations to compete within this industry (Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016). The increased marketization within the non-profit sector, over the last three decades, has prompted universities and HEIs to become more competitive and commercialised (de Haan, 2015, Hemsley-Brown et al., 2016, Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2015, Marić, 2013, Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016, Steiner et al., 2013, Tait and De Jager, 2009). This has happened as a result of the expansion and globalisation of the education and training sector, with globalisation changing the prominence that academic institutions have among their publics (Steiner et al., 2013, Verčič et al., 2016). As a result, institutions are needing to adapt to the changing market, with it becoming an acceptable practice to adopt a similar business ethos to FPOs (Chapleo, 2017, Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016, Rauschnabel et al., 2016, Veloutsou et al., 2005).

Universities are now recognised as a global service that is marketed worldwide with more competition than ever before (Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003, Melewar and Sibel, 2005, Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016, Suomi, 2015). As such, university strategies need to become more flexible in order to compete within the current competitive HE market. Furthermore, the need to assess their position and reputation has become increasingly important to determine the opinions of their key stakeholders (Times Higher Education, 2015b). This need has become ever more important since the result of 'Brexit', which Universities UK (2016a) suggests to pose a significant threat to UK higher education. Consequently, Feldman (2016, p. 1) recognises that 'UK universities are working in a challenging, and often uncertain climate'.

The increased globalisation of HEIs has resulted in universities competing for students, not just in their own country, but from around the world (Cubillo et al., 2006, Hemsley-

Brown et al., 2016, Padlee et al., 2010, Verčič et al., 2016). Universities within the UK, have over two million students¹, 19% of which are non-UK students (HESA, 2014). It is recognised that both UK and non-UK students will often choose a leading university (Melewar and Sibel, 2005), and with nearly 160 UK universities to choose from (British Council, No Date, Universities UK, 2016b), universities have recognised the need to stand out from their competitors. Thus, scholars have accepted the requirement for effective management to build a positive reputation (Gibbs, 2002, Hemsley-Brown, 2011, Hemsley-Brown et al., 2016, Kazoleas et al., 2001, Lowrie and Hemsley-Brown, 2011, Suomi, 2015). Anholt (2010, p. 20) suggests that 'reputation counts for a great deal' within society today. It has also become an important asset for universities, with managers and organisations recognising the importance of having a positive reputation within the higher education sector (Hemsley-Brown et al., 2016). Furthermore, it is suggested to be critical for institutional success in attracting and retaining students from around the world (Plewa et al., 2016).

Students are increasingly regarding their education as a 'business asset', and consider the ranking and reputation of their university to add to the value of this asset (Grewal et al., 2008, Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2015, Marginson, 2014). Consequently, the importance of higher education has increased, leading to the development of university and college ranking systems around the world. These systems, also referred to as league tables (Morrison et al., 1995), have provided a method for potential stakeholders to differentiate between institutions. Nevertheless, these ranking systems are criticised due to varying importance placed on measured characteristics, and their target stakeholders (discussed in Section 1.1.3.2 below).

¹ 2,299,355 undergraduate and postgraduate students for academic year 2013/2014 (HESA, 2014)

1.1.3.2 University and College ranking systems

The concepts of university and college ranking systems have been around for nearly a century, with the first ranking system developed in 1925 by Professor Donald Hughes (Shin and Toutkoushian, 2011). This ranking system measured graduate programmes based on peer review of reputation within the United States (Shin and Toutkoushian, 2011). Although this is the first recorded ranking system within education, the first institutional ranking system (US News and World Report) was only developed in the 1980s (Shin and Toutkoushian, 2011). From this point onwards, a number of rankings were developed in different countries, measuring university performance within those specific areas (Marginson, 2007, Usher and Medow, 2010). However, the first world-wide ranking system (Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)) was only launched in 2003 (Baty, 2014, Marginson, 2007, Marginson, 2014). This globalisation of rankings, is suggested to have transformed higher education (Marginson, 2014), with universities being unable to 'avoid national and international comparisons' (Rauhvargers, 2011, p. 68). However, in spite of ranking systems being popular tools for comparisons, there are ongoing criticisms, such as their target audience and measurement characteristics, regarding their validity (Bowman and Bastedo, 2011).

These ranking systems are regarded as being of great importance to stakeholders and universities, by providing 'useful information' (Ehrenberg, 2003, Marginson, 2007). It is suggested that performing well within the ranking systems affects both institutional and student behaviour, by attracting better quality students, increasing alumni donations and attracting new donors, and recruiting top academics and administrators to institutions (Bastedo and Bowman, 2010, Grewal et al., 2008, Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001a). Furthermore, rankings are increasingly being used to assess institutional performance by government agencies, and can influence funding opportunities available to institutions (Salmi and Saroyan, 2007, Sponsler, 2009). As a result, Hazelkorn (2007, 2008) suggests that institutional rank is being used as a policy

instrument, and has become a key performance indicator for many vice-chancellor's and presidents as it serves as a universal performance indicator across institutions. This is evidence of rankings being used for more than what they were originally intended for (creating a hierarchical list (Safón, 2013)), which Locke et al. (2008) warn as being an issue which cannot be ignored.

Nevertheless, these ranking systems measure academic and research performance, rather than an institution's overall reputation, although some suggest they do (Times Higher Education, 2012). Consequently, this raised a methodological issue, due to differences in definition and the measured construct (discussed in Section 2.5 and 2.6). A further criticism of existing rankings is the use of single stakeholder groups (students or academic staff). This too presents methodological issues, especially for those measures suggesting to measure reputation, as reputation is a concept that should be assessed across multiple stakeholder groups (discussed in Section 2.3) (Bundy and Pfarrer, 2015, Chun, 2005, Cravens et al., 2003, Davies et al., 2004, Deephouse et al., 2017, Fombrun, 1996, Highhouse et al., 2009, Lange et al., 2011, Walker, 2010). Thus, an effective measure of university reputation should take into account the range of stakeholders associated with a HEI (discussed in Section 1.1.3.3).

These ranking systems differ in their format, content and methodologies (Dill and Soo, 2005), with many of the world's main ranking systems 'bearing little relationship to one another, and using very different indicators and weightings to arrive at a measure of quality' (Usher and Savino, 2006, p. 3). As such, it appears to be widely accepted that no ranking is perfect (Marginson, 2014), with many being criticised for their statistical inaccuracies, and selection of chosen attributes used to measure academic quality (Bowden, 2000). While the importance of academic reputation is steadily increasing, measuring and managing reputation within an academic setting is still underdeveloped (Rauschnabel et al., 2016, Šontaitė and Bakanauskas, 2011, Verčič et al., 2016, Watkins and Gonzenbach, 2013). Thus, scope for creating a reputation measurement specifically for HEI's exists.

1.1.3.3 Identifying University Stakeholders

The number of stakeholders associated to NPOs and UK HEIs adds to the complexity of these organisations. Stakeholders within the non-profit sector are suggested to have a greater importance than in business organisations, due to their significance in achieving organisational objectives (Gallagher and Weinberg, 1991, Knox and Gruar, 2007). Researchers identify that to develop a sustained competitive advantage, the perspectives of all stakeholders should be considered (Holmes and Moir, 2007, Post et al., 2002). This enables the possibility of enhanced relationships to be developed in line with organisational strategic objectives (Morgan and Hunt, 1999, Palmer et al., 2005). Through building relationships, organisations are able to improve the possibility of satisfying stakeholder needs, and thus reduce the risk of negative effects on the organisation (Bryson, 2004, Burrows, 1999, Stone and Cutcher-gershenfeld, 2001). However, for organisation's to understand their stakeholder's needs, they first need to identify who their stakeholders are.

By recognising the similarities and differences of FPOs and NPOs, it becomes evident that stakeholder groups that exist for commercial organisations may also be relevant for NPOs. Commercial organisations can distinguish their stakeholders as part of five key groups (customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders and communities) (Barrett, 2001, Clarkson, 1995), whereas NPOs are able to classify their stakeholders into three groups (lending/ funding members, beneficiaries/ users and, volunteers) (Kerlin, 2006, Thomas, 2004). However, due to the complexity of organisations such as UK HEIs, it is recognised that these three groups do not fulfil the depth and breadth of stakeholders associated with these organisations (Chapleo and Simms, 2010, Mainardes et al., 2010, Marić, 2013). Furthermore, it is often acknowledged that their complex nature leads them to have a far greater number of stakeholders than traditional commercial organisations (Etzioni, 1964 cited in Mainardes et al., 2012). Thus, identifying all groups of stakeholders for HEIs can be a difficult task.

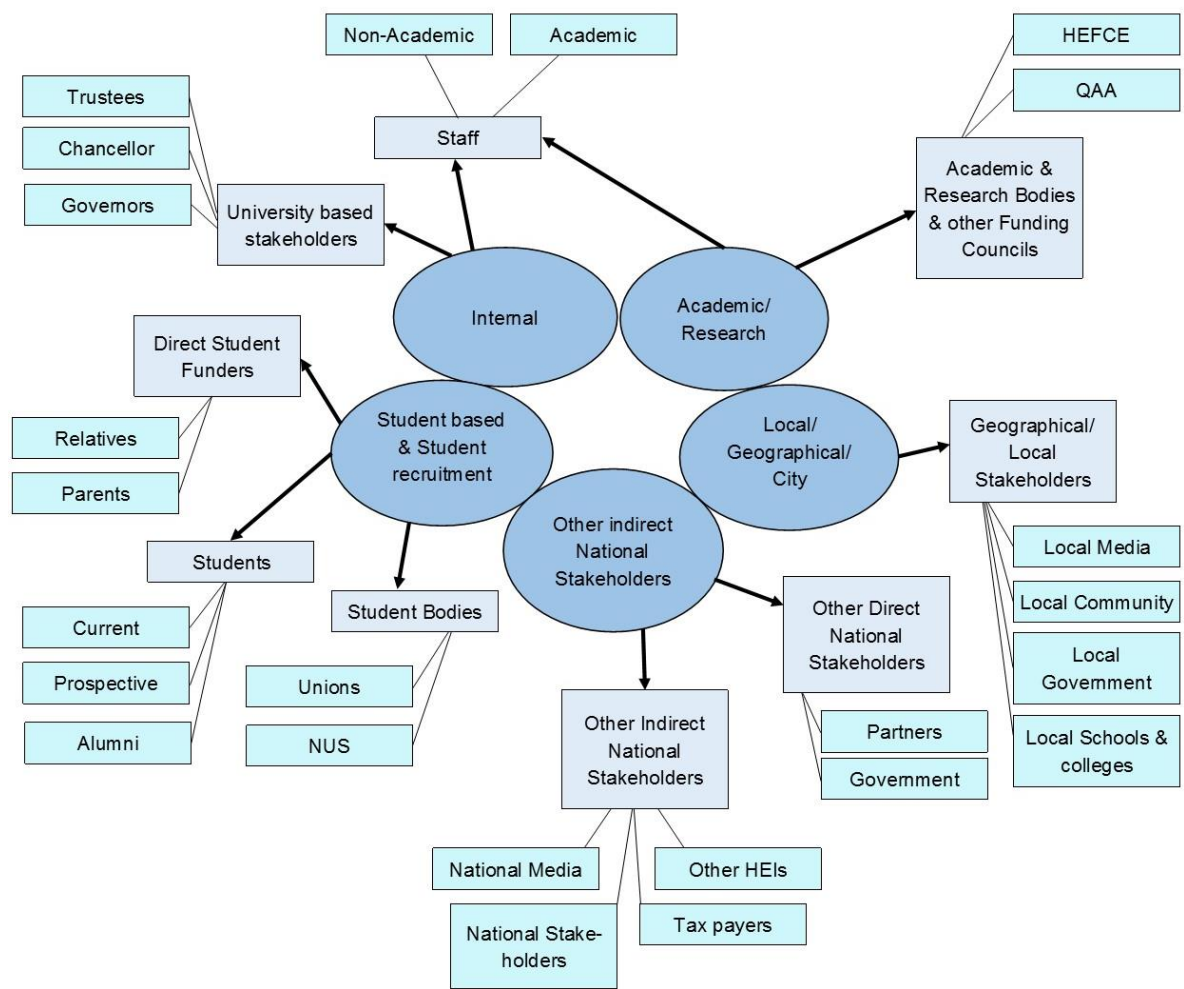
There are few studies that specifically identify all stakeholder groups of Universities (Avcı et al., 2015, Burrows, 1999, Chapleo and Simms, 2010, Jongbloed et al., 2008, Marić, 2013). Within these studies, researchers have simply listed potential stakeholders, without specifically grouping them (Trim, 2003); classified stakeholders according to internal and external audiences (Bartell, 2003); or according to their relationship with the organisation (Avcı et al., 2015, Burrows, 1999, Chapleo and Simms, 2010, Jongbloed et al., 2008, Mainardes et al., 2012, Marić, 2013). In addition to these studies, a number of authors attempt to clarify the ‘customers²’ of HEIs (Weaver, 1976; Conway, 1994; Melewar, 2005; Trim, 2003), however, Trim (2003) suggests that customers of the education sector are not homogeneous. This diversity of stakeholders is suggested to be a key characteristic of HEIs (Bartell, 2003). Thus, causing great complexity when attempting to measure their performance, and more specifically their reputation.

Through these existing studies on HEI stakeholders, it becomes evident that a number of potential stakeholders and stakeholder groups exist. Universities have traditionally focussed their attention on specific groups of stakeholders, including ‘faculty, administrators, trustees, donors, accrediting agencies and students’ (Burrows, 1999, p. 5). In research conducted by Chapleo and Simms (2010), a case study of a post-1992 UK university was used, to identify all stakeholders of a university. This was done through in-depth interviews with key ‘opinion leaders’ of the university, who identified the stakeholders shown in Figure 1.1. Similar results were found by other scholars, who conducted research on a Portuguese and American university (Avcı et al., 2015, Mainardes et al., 2013, Mainardes et al., 2012), and who investigated stakeholders within the HE environment in general (Burrows, 1999, Jongbloed et al., 2008). However, due to the similarity in institution type, to the case study institution used for

² Students are not recognised as customers and are rather termed as partners – however, many compare students at HEIs to customers for commercial organisations (Chung, 2000, Conway, 1994, Gummesson, 2012, Melewar, 2005, Trim, 2003, Weaver, 1976).

this research (discussed in Section 5.2.2), results from the study by Chapleo and Simms (2010) will be used as a foundation for identifying university stakeholder types for this research. Through adopting this framework, the perspectives of all groups of stakeholders can be sought, and therefore attempts to address criticism presented in other research.

Figure 1.1 Groupings and typed of university stakeholders (adapted from Chapleo and Simms (2010))



An organisation’s diversity of stakeholders can generate a number of positive opportunities, and managing these relationships effectively can create many benefits for that organisation (Chapleo and Simms, 2010, Clarkson, 1995, Freeman, 1984, Mainardes et al., 2010). Within more recent marketing literature, higher education has

been recognised as a service (Arpan et al., 2003, Díaz-Méndez and Gummesson, 2012, Kazoleas et al., 2001, Melewar and Sibel, 2005, Suomi, 2015, Yazıcı et al., 2016), as opposed to a product (Conway et al., 1994, Nicholls et al., 1995), and as such utilises different marketing approaches than products (Nicholls et al., 1995). According to Mazzarol (1998), a key characteristic of service marketing, is that they are inherently 'people-based'. This highlights the importance of building relationships with customers, and therefore adopting more of a relationship marketing approach. This method is based on establishing trust-based relationships to meet customers' expectations (Grönroos, 1997, Morgan and Hunt, 1999, Morgan and Hunt, 1994, Palmer, 1996, Palmer et al., 2005). However, research applying the principles of relationship marketing within the higher education sector are scarce (Frasquet et al., 2012, Schlesinger et al., 2016).

As HEIs are service based organisations, it is suggested that the people delivering and interacting with the service can either improve or damage the organisation's reputation (Roper and Fill, 2012). Thus, an effective approach to controlling these interactions is needed. However, because different stakeholder groups have distinct concerns relating to the organisation, their expectations and assessment may differ (Babiak, 2009, Tshivase and Kleyn, 2016, Willems et al., 2016), resulting in different perspectives of reputation for each stakeholder group (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012, Ali et al., 2015). Therefore, knowing and managing stakeholders perceptions effectively, can affect perceptions of an organisation's reputation and consequently its success (Mitchell et al., 1997, Parmar et al., 2010). Nevertheless, a measure to assess multiple stakeholder's perceptions of a university's reputation has yet to be created.

1.2 Researcher's background and motivation for the study

The motivation for undertaking this study stems from the researcher's personal experience of organising and assessing university events. Having previously worked

within the External Relations team for Plymouth University, the difficulties in assessing the outcomes of public relations events became apparent and of great interest to the researcher. The University's communication strategy, which includes organised events as a form of communication, identifies four key objectives for its communication: Relationships, Revenue, Recommendations and Reputation. While key performance indicators were used to assess the first three, no measure existed to determine the impact of the university's communication (including events), on its reputation. From this, the concept of measuring reputation and the impact that communication, in the form of events, has on the university's reputation was investigated. Given the importance of university reputation within the competitive higher education environment within the United Kingdom, this topic was considered particularly pivotal, with this research intending to provide practical benefits to Universities.

1.3 Aim and objectives

Reputation has become increasingly important to Universities since the increased marketization of HE's (discussed in Sections 1.1.3 and 2.3-2.6). Perceptions of reputation are partly formed from communication originating from the organisation (Section 2.4), with face-to-face communication recognised to be of increasing importance due to its 'rich' nature. Thus, events have become an important communication tool for many organisations, as they provide a platform for face-to-face communication to take place, and for organisations to positively shape their key messages (discussed in Section 3.3-3.4). Nevertheless, the impact of events (as a form of communication), on an organisation's reputation, has yet to be assessed.

Thus, the main aim of this research is:

To establish the extent that events impact on a university's reputation, as perceived by event attendees

In brief, the key concepts within this thesis are outlined as follows. Reputation, while a debated concept, is perceived as the collective perception of an organisation, by multiple stakeholder groups (discussed in Chapter 2). Many reputation measurement scales exist within the literature, however these have been criticised due to their focus on a single stakeholder group, and thus a gap between definition and measurement becomes evident. Furthermore, university reputation has traditionally been measured through league tables, however this too has been criticised due to their measured characteristics and target audience. Thus, a gap in the literature is presented, for a university reputation measurement scale, which assesses the perceptions of multiple stakeholder groups.

Perceptions of reputation are formed from stakeholders' past experience, word-of-mouth from others, and communication originating from the organisation (corporate communication), all of which inform stakeholders' knowledge and familiarity of the organisation. Nevertheless, limited research assessing the impact of corporate communication on stakeholders' perceptions exists, with existing research primarily focussing on traditional and new media's impact on reputation. However, face-to-face communication, which is perceived to have the greatest influence on its audience, has not (to the authors knowledge) previously been studied, in the context of its impact on reputation. Thus, a further gap in the literature is perceived to exist.

Events have become an increasingly common form of direct (face-to-face) communication, due to their ability to provide 'rich' messages. Measuring attendee satisfaction, by assessing service quality characteristics, has previously been used as a means of determining event success. Furthermore, satisfaction, has been recognised as a determinant of a positive reputation, with positive future intentions resulting from both visitor satisfaction, and a good reputation.

Therefore, to achieve the aim of this thesis, the objectives for the research are:

1. To determine the role of university events as a strategic communication tool
2. Determine the validity of existing reputation measurement characteristics to measure a university's reputation
3. Analyse to what extent stakeholders' knowledge and familiarity of the organisation, influences their perceptions of the organisation's reputation
4. To ascertain the impact that event attendees' satisfaction of a university event, has on their perception of the organisation's reputation
5. To analyse the impact event satisfaction has on stakeholder's future intentions
6. To analyse the impact of an organisation's reputation on stakeholders' future intentions

By addressing these objectives, this thesis will contribute to, and develop greater understanding to the Event Management and Reputation literature. This will be achieved by drawing on theoretical and practical findings from this study.

1.4 Thesis structure

To address the aim and objectives of this study, the structure of this thesis will follow a logical manner. This is set out in ten chapters, including the current introduction chapter (Chapter 1), which highlights the research context.

Chapters 2 and 3 present a literature review for this research. The concept of reputation, its definition, determinants, and existing measurement scales forms the focus of Chapter 2. How reputation is formed is also discussed, which identifies that perceptions are partly formed from communication originating from the organisation. Communication, and events as a communication tool, is discussed in Chapter 3. Media Richness Theory, motivation for attending events, and measuring event satisfaction is

also addressed within this chapter, with the aim of finding a common link between an organisation's reputation and the events that they hold.

Following a review of the literature, the aim and objectives for this research are justified, and the conceptual framework is proposed in Chapter 4. This chapter presents the structural and measurement models used for analysis in Chapter 8, from which, six assumptions were presented. These assumptions represent the relationships between latent variables discussed within the literature review, including Reputation, Event Influence, Knowledge and Familiarity, and Future Intentions.

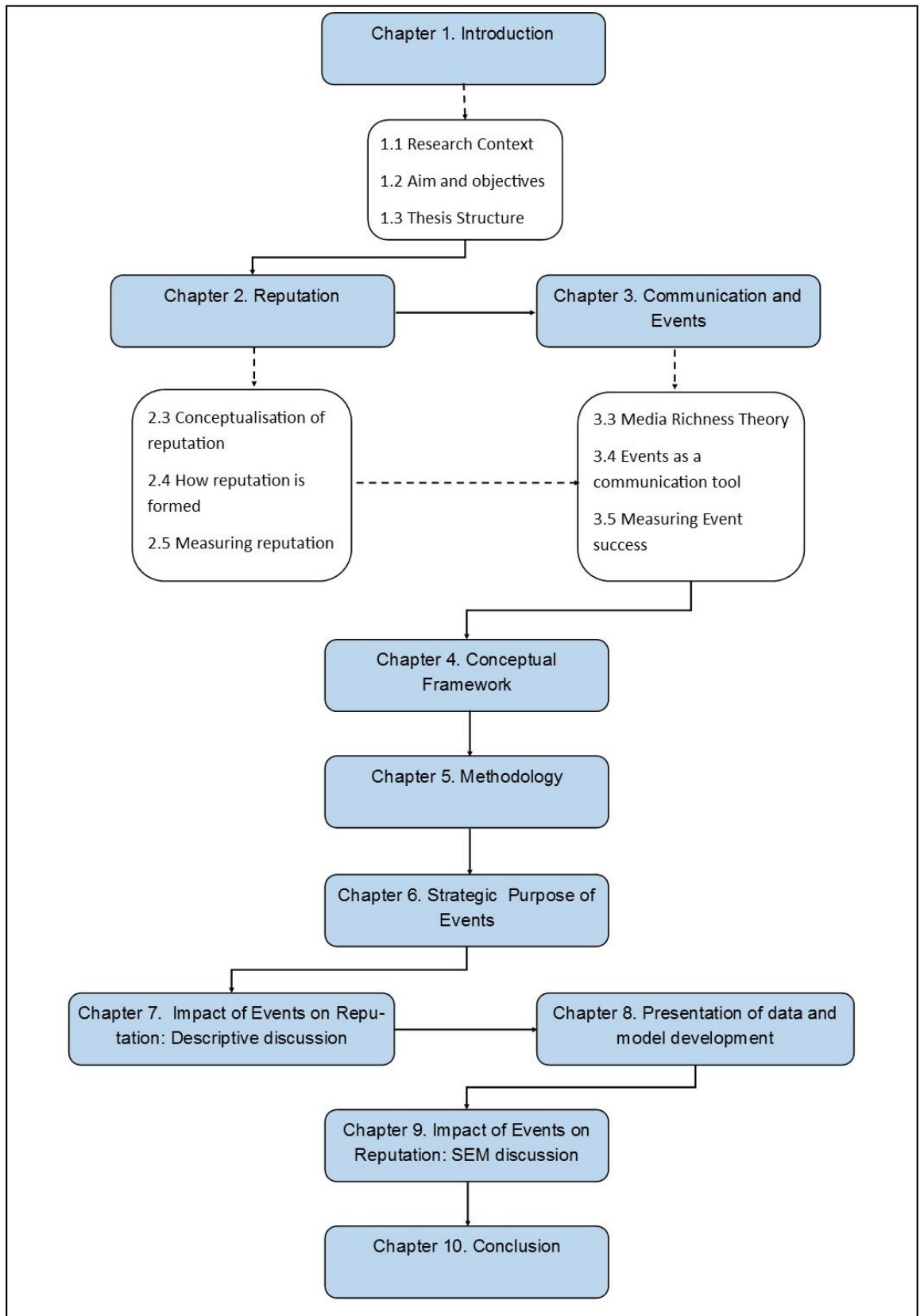
Chapter 5, the Methodology, justifies the adoption of a pragmatic research philosophy, and a case study methodology, which follows a mixed methods approach. The first phase of research uses qualitative interviews, analysed through Thematic Analysis, for the purpose of achieving objective 1 and informing phase two of the research, a quantitative questionnaire. The questionnaire design, pilot study, distribution and population are discussed, and the use of structural equation modelling as an analysis technique is justified.

Analysis of the qualitative interviews takes place in Chapter 6. This chapter addresses objective 1, and determines the strategic purpose of using events as a communication tool at a post-1992 university. Responses were also used to inform the research questionnaire (phase 2), and as such, a revised conceptual framework is proposed. Finally, the sample to be used during phase 2 is identified.

A descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data is completed in Chapter 7, which recognises the significance between variables under examination. Chapter 8 completes the primary analysis of the quantitative data through structural equation modelling, enabling the research assumptions to be accepted or rejected. An operationalisation of the key findings is also offered prior to the discussion of the main findings in Chapter 9. Objectives 2-6 are achieved in Chapter 9, which addresses the main findings of this research in relation to relevant literature.

Finally, the conclusion, Chapter 10, puts forward the main conclusions of this thesis. It recognises the theoretical and practical contributions of this research, addressing the limitations, and further research to be carried out. As an overview of this thesis, a visual representation of this thesis structure is presented in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 Thesis Structure



2 Reputation

2.1 Introduction

Corporate reputation has become an important concept for organisations worldwide (Deephouse et al., 2016). The concept of corporate reputation has been disputed within academic literature for the past five decades (Carroll, 2016, Gotsi and Wilson, 2001b, Verčič et al., 2016). The focus of many of these discussions is fixated around identifying a definition for corporate reputation, which would be generally accepted across disciplines. These discussions have stemmed from the number of authors and articles that identify reputation to relate to different concepts, concerning different groups of stakeholders and different organisational issues (Chun, 2005, Gotsi and Wilson, 2001b, Kanto et al., 2016, Walker, 2010). This number of definitions has created much ambiguity within the literature, causing a debate among authors in identifying a suitable definition, and in pursuing research (Carroll, 2016, Caruana, 1997, Cornelissen and Thorpe, 2002, Fombrun and Riel, 1997, Fombrun, 1996, Gotsi and Wilson, 2001b, Verčič et al., 2016, Walker, 2010, Wartick, 2002). As such, this chapter addresses the benefits of a positive reputation, the history of the definitional debate (recognising current views of reputation), and clarifies the differences between corporate image, identity and reputation.

The way reputation is formed in the minds of stakeholders is identified, with several authors suggesting it is influenced in multiple ways. These include personal experiences, the experiences of others, communication originating from the organisation, and mass media communication (Carroll, 2013a, Fertik and Thompson, 2010, Govender and Abratt, 2016, Mahon and Wartick, 2012). This highlights the complexity of and variety of ways that an organisation can be perceived.

The measurement of reputation has also been debated within the academic and professional world; with no single agreed on measurement scale existing. Each scale

measures reputation based on varying characteristics and stakeholders. A key difference between measurement scale types include corporate character-based measurement and corporate role-based measurement. The differences between these types of measures are highlighted, as a means of justifying the use of a corporate role-based measure within this research. One of the most recent corporate role based measures is the RepTrak System, which is recognised as addressing many of the weaknesses and criticisms of other scales (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007). Existing measures of university performance and reputation are identified. The weaknesses of these models are addressed, and therefore the use of a for-profit reputation measure, the RepTrak System, to measure university reputation is justified. Finally, in addition to using role-based characteristics to measure reputation, familiarity, visibility, communication and service quality are also argued as determinants of reputation. Furthermore, potential future intentions that result as a consequence of a positive reputation are also deliberated.

2.1.1 The importance and benefits of a positive reputation

Although the definition and measurement of corporate reputation has been debated extensively in the literature, its benefits have been recognised with researchers repeatedly finding a link between reputation and organisational performance (Brown and Perry, 1994, Carroll, 2016, Deephouse, 2000, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Saeidi et al., 2015). Reputation is recognised as an organisation's intangible asset (Albers, 2015, Cornelissen and Thorpe, 2002, De Castro et al., 2006, Grant, 1995, Hannington, 2016, Highhouse et al., 2009, Pfister and Schwaiger, 2016, Raithel and Schwaiger, 2015) as it is based on stakeholder's perceptions/ beliefs (Cornelissen and Thorpe, 2002, Deephouse et al., 2016, Wartick, 1992). It is increasingly suggested as having positive effects on an organisation's tangible assets such as employee retention (Deephouse et al., 2016, Highhouse et al., 2009) and product sales (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Saeidi et al., 2015). Resulting in corporate reputation being argued to

be the single most valued organisational asset (Andrea, 2015, Barney, 1991, Cho et al., 2012, Deephouse, 2000, Fertik and Thompson, 2015, Rao, 1994, Wæraas and Maor, 2015, Gibson et al, 2006 cited in Walker, 2010).

A number of authors recognise that a 'good reputation takes time to build' and once established can have many strategic benefits across all areas of an organisation (Gray and Balmer, 1998, p. 696, Helm, 2011, Helm and Salminen, 2010, Highhouse et al., 2009, Raithel and Schwaiger, 2015, Walker, 2010). It is suggested that reputation acts as a valuable resource for attracting and retaining employees through valuable employment opportunities, and job satisfaction (Albers, 2015, Almeida et al., 2015, Deephouse et al., 2016, Dijkmans et al., 2015, Fombrun, 1996, Highhouse et al., 2009, Turban and Greening, 1997). It enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty (Fombrun, 1996, Hannington, 2016, Helm and Tolsdorf, 2013, Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2016, Nguyen and Leblanc, 2001b, Saeidi et al., 2015, Walsh et al., 2009b), thus attracting more customers and partners (Fombrun and Low, 2011). As a result, an organisation can experience improved investor awareness and competitive ability (Abimbola and Vallaster, 2007, Almeida et al., 2015, Davies et al., 2010, Deephouse, 2000, Ewing et al., 2010, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Fombrun, 1996, Hall, 1992, Highhouse et al., 2009, Pfister and Schwaiger, 2016, Rao, 1994, Saeidi et al., 2015).

A positive reputation enables organisations to lower operating costs (Deephouse, 2000, Fombrun, 1996), and to charge premium prices for its products and services (Borda et al., Deephouse, 2000, Dijkmans et al., 2015, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Fombrun, 1996, Raithel and Schwaiger, 2015, Rindova et al., 2005). Furthermore, reputation is suggested to provide a barrier against competitive attacks (Baker et al., 1998, Hoffmann et al., 2016, Kotha et al., 2001, Shamma, 2012). These advantages of a positive reputation are suggested to improve financial performance (Deephouse et al., 2016, Raithel and Schwaiger, 2015, Roberts and Dowling, 2002). However, the lack of theoretical explanation of cause and effect leads researchers to question whether reputation improves these characteristics, including profitability, or vice-versa (Andrea,

2015, Dowling, 2006, Sabate and Puente, 2003). These benefits have created much interest within the reputation field, with a number of authors discussing its history, definition and measurement.

Although a good reputation has many benefits, it can be damaged very quickly in a crisis situation or as a result of short term actions (Chun, 2005, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Gibson et al., 2006, Griffin, 2008, Helm and Tolsdorf, 2013). These can be intentional or accidental and can cause a negative impact on customers, investors and organisational performance (Bernstein, 2009, Fombrun and Low, 2011, Sarstedt et al., 2013). Crisis communication is essential to repair/ limit the damage to reputation (Coombs, 1995, Coombs, 2013), in order to limit negative effects on the benefits identified above. In these situations, a positive reputation has been viewed by some authors as a burden to organisations, as organisations that have a high reputation are thought to suffer more when a negative event occurs, in comparison to organisations with a lower reputation (Helm and Tolsdorf, 2013, Zavyalova et al., 2016). However, it is difficult to assess the exact effect a crisis may have on an organisation's reputation without having previously measured it.

2.2 History of Reputation – The Image vs Reputation debate

Reputation is a commonly used term however, the definition of this intangible construct is still highly ambiguous (Ji et al., 2017). In the early writings of reputation, authors were split into two distinct groups of thought, which were identified by Gotsi and Wilson (2001b) as the analogous school and the differentiated school. The analogous school is mostly associated with Martineau and the original definition of reputation; this school recognised reputation and image as the same concept (Alvesson, 1998, Dowling, 1993, Martineau, 1958b). Whereas the differentiated school, which is linked to authors such as Fombrun and Balmer, understand image and reputation to be different concepts, but recognise that both are related (Alessandri, 2001, Balmer and Wilson,

1998, Brown et al., 2006, Davies and Miles, 1998, Fombrun, 1996, Gotsi and Wilson, 2001b, Gray and Balmer, 1998, Walker, 2010). The differentiated school identifies the dynamic relationship between reputation and image, which many authors adopt within their current work.

The analogous school, which viewed reputation and image to be the same concept, defined corporate image synonymously with definitions of corporate reputation (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001b). This is the original school of thought associated with the early writings of corporate reputation and was predominant in the 1950s to 1970s; however, there are authors that supported this view well into the 1990s. Authors from this school focused on the term corporate image when actually referring to, what is currently believed to be, the concept of reputation (Crissy, 1971, Kennedy, 1977, Martineau, 1958b). This is suggested by Gotsi and Wilson (2001b), to be due to the term 'corporate reputation' only becoming popular in the 1980s. A number of authors adopted this perspective of using the two concepts interchangeably (Dichter, 1985, Dowling, 1993). Which has been criticised in recent research for not acknowledging that the two concepts are different, causing much ambiguity within the literature (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001b).

In the 1980s and 1990s, several authors recognised that the two concepts (corporate reputation and corporate image) were different, but interrelated. This way of thinking was identified as the differentiated school, which Gotsi and Wilson (2001b) suggest to include three dominant areas of thought. All three areas emerged at similar times causing a further definitional debate. These views are identified in Table 2.1 below, and the schools of thought, as well as their authors and proposed definitions for image and reputation can be seen in Appendix 1. The third view (recognising image and reputation to be related, but different terms), has dominated within recent research, and as such is the perspective that is adopted within this research.

Table 2.1 The three areas of thought from the differentiated school (Adapted from Gotsi and Wilson (2001b))

| Area | Main principles | Supported by others | Authors |
|------|--|--|--|
| 1 | Image and reputation are different: Reputation reflected as positive perceptions Image reflected as negative perceptions | Not widely supported: many authors disagree that one concept is positive and other is negative | (Brown and Dacin, 1997, Grunig, 1993) |
| 2 | Image and reputation are related: Reputation influences organisation's image | Not widely supported: little evidence confirming this view | (Mason, 1993) |
| 3 | Image and reputation are related: Organisation's image influences its reputation | Widely supported and is the dominant school of thought within the discipline | (Bromley, 1993, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Fombrun, 1996, Gray and Balmer, 1998) |

2.3 Conceptualisation of Reputation

The relationship between image and reputation is still discussed within the literature. However, the majority of authors have adopted the third view from the differentiated school in their definitions (Table 2.1). This shows recognition that image and reputation are different, but related concepts and that the image of an organisation can influence its reputation (Alessandri, 2001, Balmer, 2001, Balmer and Wilson, 1998, Bromley, 1993, Cornelissen et al., 2007, Davies and Miles, 1998, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Fombrun, 1996, Gotsi and Wilson, 2001a, Gray and Balmer, 1998). A further misconception within the literature is that corporate image and corporate identity are the same concept, which has resulted in these terms also being used interchangeably within the literature (Brown et al., 2006, Clardy, 2012). A recent study conducted by Walker (2010), compared definitions of corporate image, corporate identity and corporate reputation, which identified the main differences between these terms.

This comparison of definitions suggested that the stakeholder group related to each concept formed the main difference (Walker, 2010). The definitions identified that corporate identity related mainly to internal stakeholders, corporate image referred to external stakeholders, while reputation could be concerned with both internal and external stakeholder perceptions. This view is supported by many authors (Davies and Miles, 1998, Fombrun, 1996, Gray and Balmer, 1998) with these concepts and their relationship to reputation discussed below.

2.3.1 Corporate identity

There is no clear origin for the corporate identity field, however it is believed to have been established when Margulies coined the phrase corporate identity in the 1960s (Alessandri, 2001, Margulies, 1977). He defined corporate identity as the 'sum of all the ways a company chooses to identify itself to all its publics,' and differentiated this from image by defining image as the 'perception of the company by these publics' (Margulies, 1977, p. 66). This view, which is largely agreed within the literature, still forms the basic underpinning of many authors' definitions (Abratt, 1989, Abratt and Kleyn, 2012, Alessandri, 2001, Govender and Abratt, 2016, Gray and Balmer, 1998, Harvey et al., 2017, Margulies, 1977, van Riel and Balmer, 1997). Many of these authors recognise corporate identity as the answer to the questions of 'who we think we are' or 'how we see ourselves' (Brown et al., 2006, Chun, 2005). The summary of corporate identity definitions (Appendix 2) was assessed to establish additional characteristics that may form part of the corporate identity subgroups (Table 2.2). This demonstrated the connection between an organisation's values and strategy, and how this influences the culture and subcultures of the organisation (Alessandri, 2001, He and Balmer, 2007). These connections highlight that corporate identity is formed as a result of the organisation's culture, visual presentation and employee behaviour interacting.

Table 2.2 Characteristics of Corporate Identity

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Alessandri (2001) | Corporate mission | Visual Presentation | Corporate Behaviour |
| Balmer (2007) | Organisation Identity | Visual Identity | Organisational Identity |
| Characteristics from definitions | Strategy, Philosophy, Values, Culture and Sub-culture | Visual presentation and symbolism (logos, colour palette, slogan), physical environment, dress code | Behaviour including dress code and management activities, culture and subcultures within organisation |

There are two characteristics commonly included within the corporate identity definitions. The first is communication of messages to internal audiences, and from internal to external audiences (Gioia et al., 2000, van Riel and Balmer, 1997). The second is the recognition that identity represents the uniqueness of an organisation, enabling it to be distinguishable from others (Abratt, 1989, Abratt and Kleyn, 2012, Gray and Balmer, 1998, Gregory and Wiechmann, 1999). The first characteristic suggests that an organisation’s identity is communicated between internal audiences, and as identity is derived from an organisation’s mission and vision, indicates the presence of top-down communication (i.e. from top management to other organisation members) (Fill, 2009, McQuail, 2010). Furthermore, it is communicated from employees, including management, to external stakeholders and the public, as a deliberate attempt to influence perceptions of the organisation (Barick and Kotler, 1991, Gioia et al., 2000). The organisation does this by identifying themselves as unique from other organisations (through their visual and behavioural identity). This enables the organisation to construct and control the messages that are communicated, in order to reflect their strategy (Christensen and Askegaard, 2001, Leitch and Motion, 1999). The result of this process is the communication of an organisation’s corporate identity.

Although it is possible for organisations to control what messages they send, it is not possible to control how it’s stakeholders will interpret these messages (Margulies,

1977). This highlights the need for organisations to understand their audiences to communicate the desired messages correctly (Fombrun et al., 2015, Gioia et al., 2000). The interpretation of corporate identity by external stakeholders is recognised as corporate image and is discussed below.

2.3.2 Corporate image

The origin for the concept of corporate image is thought to have been developed in the 1950s (Kennedy, 1977). However, the concept of image was established long before this. It is thought by Furman (2010) that the idea of image was founded in the 19th century within the art and architecture disciplines, with people able to recognise certain traits within paintings and buildings that were attributed to the style of those who created them. This idea evolved to include interior and product design and was adopted by large organisations, creating brand recognition to establish a unique image, differentiating the company from its competitors. These messages were largely visual, which is a possible source for image being predominantly thought of as visual attributes of an organisation within the general public (Alessandri, 2001). This led to the development of corporate identification, which influenced the general public to create stereotypes of how companies were viewed based on the messages they communicated (Furman, 2010). As a result of this view, Pierre Martineau introduced the term corporate image and published one of the first articles to specifically use the term entitled 'Sharper Focus for the Corporate Image' (Martineau, 1958a).

The introduction of the concept of corporate image sparked a debate among authors and researchers. This resulted in a proliferation of articles attempting to establish a suitable definition, measurement scale, and identifying the key components of corporate image (Abratt, 1989, Bernstein, 1984, Crissy, 1971, Dichter, 1985, Dowling, 1988, Dowling, 1986, Eells, 1959, Kennedy, 1977, Mitchell, 1984, Spector, 1961). This debate, which is still evident in the work of current authors, began from some of the first

definitions given. This recognised corporate image as the total perceptions of a corporation's personality (Bayton, 1959 cited in Furman, 2010); the attitudes towards the company held by its various stakeholders (Martineau, 1960 cited in Abratt, 1989); or the overall impression formed as a result of signals originating from the company (Bernstein, 1984). The evolution of these definitions has caused many authors to suggest that corporate image is the immediate impression of an organisation (Fombrun, 1996, Gray and Balmer, 1998), formed from perceptions held by an external audience (Bromley, 1993, Chun, 2005, Cornelissen and Thorpe, 2002, Davies and Miles, 1998, Grunig, 1993, Hatch and Schultz, 1997, Williams and Moffitt, 1997). Thus, corporate image is often referred to as 'how the public perceives the firm' (Alessandri, 2001, Morgan et al., 2011, Walker, 2010). Essentially, corporate image is identified as the way people view the organisation (Barick and Kotler, 1991), and includes what people are saying about it, as a result of what the organisation is saying about itself (Dowling, 1993).

Many researchers accept the concept of *image* as being an external view of an organisation, and that this view is formed from interpretations of both direct and indirect communication with the organisation (Dowling, 2001). It is also acknowledged that this communication is derived from an organisation's corporate identity, in an attempt to positively influence the perceptions of external stakeholders (Schuler, 2004). Visual symbols, architecture, employee behaviour and management behaviour, are identified as forms of direct communication from the organisation and together contribute to an external audience's perception of an organisation's image (Bitner, 1992, Nguyen, 2006). Furthermore, external audiences can be influenced by indirect communication as a result of media stories or word-of-mouth, which similarly contribute to an organisation's overall corporate image (Barick and Kotler, 1991, Dowling, 1993, Melewar and Jenkins, 2002, Nguyen, 2006). By recognising the differences between corporate identity and corporate image, it is possible then to identify their relationship to corporate reputation.

2.3.3 Corporate reputation

The majority of current day definitions for corporate reputation support the premise that image influences reputation, which is in line with Gotsi and Wilson's (2001b) third area of the differentiated school. However, Chun (2005) has more recently suggested a reputation paradigm, including an additional three schools, to further help define reputation. These additional schools focus on the stakeholder group and area concerned with the formation of reputation, rather than the differences between image and reputation. Many of these definitions were created by authors from different disciplines, in an attempt to define reputation according to their subject area (Dowling, 2016, Gotsi and Wilson, 2001b). The differences of these interdisciplinary perspectives, shown in Table 2.3, identify that the reputation of an organisation can relate to different areas of the organisation (Fombrun and Riel, 1997). These areas include the financial performance and the benefits that an intangible asset can bring (Dutton et al., 1994, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Kotha et al., 2001) and brand and image (Lippman, 1922 cited in Bromley, 1993, Fombrun and Riel, 1997). Additionally, experiences of stakeholders linking to the organisation's culture (Friedman, 2009), and the prestige of the organisation brought about by its social system (Shapiro, 1987 cited in Fombrun and Riel, 1997). These schools of thought are discussed below, identifying their main differences, as well as attempting to establish where these schools are derived from.

Table 2.3 Reputation paradigm: the three schools of thought (Chun, 2005, p. 95)

| Approaches | Key audience | Discipline | Key focus | Example authors |
|---|---|------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>The Evaluative School:</i> Reputation as the evaluation of organisational | Single stakeholder (investor or managers) | Finance | Investor behaviour | Fryxell & Wang (1994) |
| | | | Ranking based on CEO's peer opinion | Annual Fortune Studies |
| | | | Investor | Srivastava et al. (1997) |

| Approaches | Key audience | Discipline | Key focus | Example authors |
|--|--|--------------------------|--|---|
| financial achievement | | | Linking reputation to financial/strategic performance | Fombrun and Shanley (1990); Weigelt and Camerer (1988) |
| | | | | |
| <i>The Impressional School:</i> Reputation as the overall impression of an organisation | Mainly a single stakeholder view | Marketing | Image/corporate identity | Abratt (1989); Bromley (1993); Balmer (1997); Brown et al. (2005); Dowling (1993) |
| | | | Linking reputation to buyer's intention | Yoon et al. (1993) |
| | | | Customers' view of company and salesperson image | Weiss et al. (1999) |
| | | Organisational Behaviour | Linking reputation to employee identification | Dutton et al. (1994); Dutton and Dukerich (1991) |
| | | | Management perception of image and identity | Gioia and Thomas (1996) |
| | | | Media linking reputation to favourableness of media coverage | Deephouse (2000) |
| | | | | |
| <i>The Relational School:</i> Reputation involving gaps between internal/external stakeholders' views | Comparison of multiple stakeholder views (Mainly internal stakeholders' vs. external stakeholders' view) | | Multiple stakeholders in general | Fombrun (1996); Post and Griffin (1997) |
| | | | Linking internal views (identity) and external views (image) of corporate reputation | Hatch and Schultz (2001); Davies and Chun (2002); Chun and Davies (2006) |
| | | | Linking reputation (external view) | Fiol and Kooor-Misra (1997) |

| Approaches | Key audience | Discipline | Key focus | Example authors |
|------------|--------------|------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | and identity (internal view) | |

The first school, linking to earlier research, is the Evaluative School (Chun, 2005, p. 94) of thought, which defined reputation as an assessment of an organisation's financial achievement according to a single stakeholder point of view (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Fryxell and Wang, 1994, Weigelt and Camerer, 1988). The disciplines this school identified with are linked to investment, finance and strategic performance. This view of reputation is not one that is widely discussed in current literature as many authors now acknowledge that reputation involves more than a single characteristic of an organisation (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012, Bromley, 2001, Caruana, 1997, Chun, 2005, Walker, 2010). However, this school of thought does support the view that an organisation can have multiple reputations.

The second school within the reputation paradigm is the Impressional School (Chun, 2005, p. 94), which defines reputation as the overall impression of an organisation according to mainly a single stakeholder view (Bromley, 1993, Deephouse, 2000). The disciplines that are linked to this school of thought include marketing, organisational behaviour and the media. These areas focus on corporate identity and image, employee relations and customer satisfaction, and favourableness of media coverage. This school, due to its extensive use and research about corporate image linking to reputation, fuelled the confusion between the two concepts. Consequently, there are many misconceptions within the current literature in terms of identifying a suitable definition for reputation.

The third school, which identifies the research from more recent authors, is the Relational School (Chun, 2005, p. 94). This school views reputation as an overall impression of an organisation from the view of multiple stakeholders (Bundy and Pfarrer, 2015, Chun, 2005, Cravens et al., 2003, Davies et al., 2004, Deephouse et al.,

2017, Fombrun, 1996, Highhouse et al., 2009, Lange et al., 2011, Walker, 2010). It also identifies that reputation is a reflection of internal and external stakeholder views (Davies et al., 2010, Hatch and Schultz, 2001), and that these views are linked. Thus, the Relational School recognises that reputation is formed as a result of corporate identity and corporate image. Furthermore, a relationship between internal (identity) and external (image) stakeholders should exist, to minimise the gaps between perceptions of these groups, for an organisation to achieve commercial success (Davies et al., 2010). This reinforces the importance of communication, derived from the organisation's strategy and mission, from internal stakeholders to external stakeholders, and consequently the need for well-targeted and appropriate communication.

The principles of the Relational School are similar to those of Ferguson's relational approach in public relations (PR), which recognises the importance of understanding an organisation's publics (Ferguson, 1984, Ledingham, 2001). Furthermore, as a purpose of PR is communication between the organisation and its publics (or internal and external stakeholders) (Grunig, 2013, Ledingham and Bruning, 1998), it takes into account multiple stakeholder groups. Thus, a relational approach considering reputation will be adopted.

More recently, authors have suggested that reputation is based on three principles (Table 2.4) (Barnett et al., 2006, Harvey et al., 2017, Lange et al., 2011, Morgan et al., 2011). These classifications do not dismiss Chun (2005) or Gotsi and Wilson's (2001) schools of thought, and instead provide a practical means of defining reputation. A common suggestion between these authors classifications is that reputation is built from an awareness (being known) of the organisation, and an assessment by its stakeholders (Barnett et al., 2006, Lange et al., 2011, Morgan et al., 2011). Harvey et al. (2017) further identify three characteristics that should be considered when assessing reputation. Thus, these principles should be considered in order to develop a suitable definition of reputation.

Table 2.4 The three principles of reputation

| Author & year | The three principle of reputation |
|---------------------------|--|
| Barnett et al., (2006) | Reputation as: A state of awareness |
| | An assessment |
| | An asset |
| Lange et al., (2011) | Reputation is: Being known |
| | Being known for something |
| | Generalised favourability |
| Morgan & Pritchard (2011) | Reputation based on: Communication principle (Can be discussed and told about) |
| | Evaluation principle (An assessment of objects) |
| | Distinction principle (Can be distinguished from others) |
| Harvey et al., (2017) | Reputation based on: Performance (reputation for something) |
| | Stakeholders (reputation with someone) |
| | Geography (Reputation in someplace) |

Through recognising that reputation can be different according to each stakeholder group or area of the organisation, it becomes apparent that a single organisation may have multiple reputations (Dowling, 2016, Govender and Abratt, 2016, Harvey et al., 2017). Identifying the stakeholder group and area of the organisation concerned, enables the researcher to answer the question of 'reputation according to what, and to who?' which, Lewellyn (2002) identifies as being a fundamental question when defining reputation. The view that organisations can have multiple reputations is one that has become more widely discussed within recent research (Dowling, 2016, Govender and Abratt, 2016). This is due to the acknowledgement by many authors that assessing reputation as an overall view of an organisation is near impossible (Caruana, 1997, Caruana and Chircop, 2000).

According to many definitions, reputations are a judgement/ assessment of an organisation's attributes (Gray and Balmer, 1998, Mahon and Wartick, 2012). However, to make this assessment it needs to be compared to something. Walker (2010)

suggests that reputation is inherently comparative, and it has been disputed within the literature as to what reputation is being compared to. According to Fombrun's (1996) and Philippe and Durand's (2001) definitions, reputation is compared to 'other leading rivals'. However, this does not account for the research that suggests that reputation can be judged, according to an organisation's prior reputation or against an industry standard of reputation (Helm and Salminen, 2010, Philippe and Durand, 2011, Wartick, 2002). Thus, when assessing reputation, it is important to understand how reputation is formed, and what the measurement is compared to (discussed in Section 2.4).

The confusion over defining reputation as a concept has also caused much confusion in developing a reliable measurement model (Chun, 2005, Clardy, 2012, Jung and Seock, 2016, Kanto et al., 2016, Wepener and Boshoff, 2015). The definition forms an important element in measurement, as how the concept is defined could impact the methods, characteristics, and stakeholders used for measurement (Davies et al., 2004, Dowling and Gardberg, 2012, Dowling, 2016). Corporate reputation is suggested to be an issue-specific aggregate perception of all stakeholders (Flanagan et al., 2011, Jung and Seock, 2016). However, it is next to impossible to measure the perceptions of all stakeholders, and any measurement of reputation is likely to represent only a portion of overall corporate reputation (Walker, 2010). This recognises an important gap between theoretical perception of reputation and our ability to measure it.

A leading author in the reputation field recently identified a key criticism of existing reputation measurement research (Dowling, 2016). This recognised the disparity between researchers' definitions of the concept of reputation and the concept measured, suggesting that much research 'defines A, and measures B' (Dowling, 2016). Therefore, prior to discussions on how reputation is formed (Section 2.4), and measured (Section 2.5) a definition is proposed.

One of the most commonly cited definitions of reputation is from Fombrun (1996, p. 72), who defines reputation as 'an overall impression of an organisation from the view

of multiple stakeholders.’ However, this definition does not take into account suggestions from Harvey et al. (2017), nor does it specifically relate to this current research. Thus, to adhere to suggestions by Dowling (2016), a definition for reputation relevant to this research is proposed as:

Reputation is

- An overall perception of the organisation (based on multiple characteristics),
- By event attendees (made up of both internal and external stakeholders),
- In comparison to their previous perceptions of the organisation

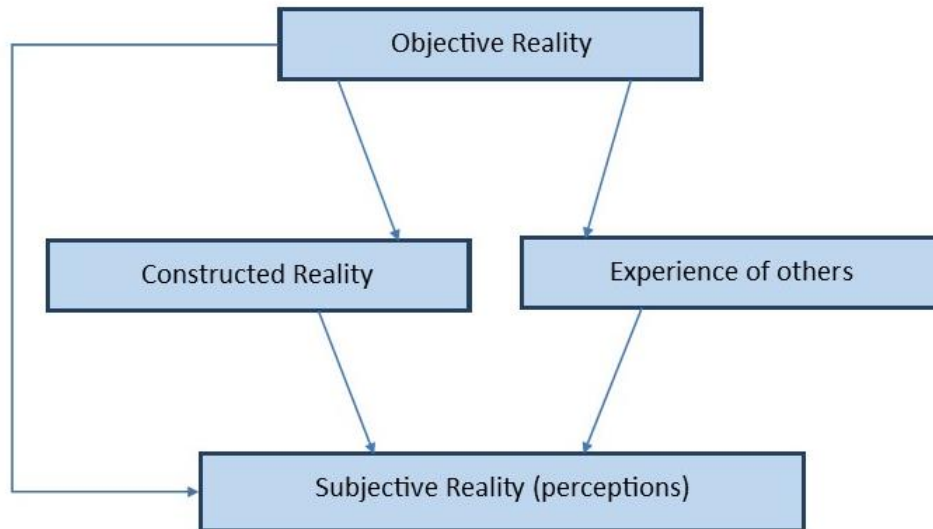
2.4 How reputation is formed

Reputation is based on an evaluation process by stakeholders, with their perceptions constructed on a set of criteria (Ponzi et al., 2011, Wepener and Boshoff, 2015) (the criteria of measurement are discussed in Section 2.5 below). These perceptions are suggested to be formed through cognitive and emotional responses to stimuli, which are shaped by their own past experiences (Caruana and Ewing, 2010, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001a, Yoon et al., 1993). In addition, communication they receive from the organisation, including events, and interactions and information from other stakeholders also aides in stakeholders’ formation of perceptions (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998, Carroll, 2016, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Helm, 2007, Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2016, Willems et al., 2016). Different stakeholder groups may have different perceptions of reputation (Carter and Deephouse, 1999, Gioia et al., 2000, Verčič et al., 2016), as they evaluate criteria based on their interests and experience (Verčič et al., 2016, Zyglidopoulos and Phillips, 1999); such as customers wanting a product/service with good value for money, while an investor may prioritise the financial performance of a company.

Willems et al. (2016) recognise that stakeholders' experiences are developed as a comparison with their knowledge of other similar organisations. Additionally, Antonides and Van Raaij (1998) proposed that prior knowledge of the organisation further influences perceptions, and that those with an increased knowledge and experience of an organisation develop more elaborate expectations, than those with less experience. Therefore, it is purported to be more difficult to satisfy stakeholders with an increased knowledge due to their higher expectations.

A model of how subjective reality, or stakeholder perceptions, is formed, was suggested by Antonides and Van Raaij (1998) (Figure 2.1). While this model was developed to understand how stakeholders perceive brands, it is thought to contribute to the understanding of how perceptions of reputation are also formed. This is due to the close link between branding and image, and therefore, reputation (Davies, 2003). Antonides and Van Raaij (1998) suggest that perceptions are formed based on three things: objective reality (personal experiences based on the person's own interactions and observations), constructed reality (information drawn from planned communications from the organisation), and the experience of others (including word-of-mouth, and information in the media). These pieces of information and experiences are processed simultaneously. However, they recognise that not all information available will be used to form perceptions, as people are only predisposed to processing and accepting information they deem relevant.

Figure 2.1 How perceptions are created (adapted from Antonides and van Raaij (1998: 110))



The concept of this model (Figure 2.1) suggests that beliefs are formed in two ways; including experience and observations, and information received from other sources (Ji et al., 2017, Wepener and Boshoff, 2015). Bromley (2000) proposed a similar three levels of how information is processed when forming perceptions of reputation. The levels include personal experiences, others opinions and word-of-mouth, and information gained from the mass media (Bromley, 2000). These principles have been widely supported within marketing and reputation literature, with authors recognising that reputation is formed through direct and indirect communication, and experiences with an organisation and its products and services (Bromley, 2000, Da Silva and Alwi, 2006, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Wepener and Boshoff, 2015, Willems et al., 2016, Yoon et al., 1993). Direct and indirect communication (discussed in Chapter 3), include information received from the organisation (direct), such as marketing material or face-to-face communication, or information gained from a third party source (indirect), such as the media or word-of-mouth (Bromley, 2000, Shoemaker and Reese, 2013). Direct experiences include those in which consumption has taken place, where consumption translates to a person's experience (Getz et al., 2001). For tangible products, this

experience is formed through using the product, whereas for intangible products such as services, the experience is gained through taking part in the service. This highlights the multiple sources on which a stakeholder's perceptions can be formed.

Advertising literature also offers an explanation of how perceptions are formed, which relates to the combination of emotional and cognitive processes. Da Silva and Alwi (2006) suggest that associations and perceptions are created from both cognitive (based on personal experiences) and emotional attributes (based on direct communications from the organisation). They, and Franzen and Bouwman (2001), propose that the cognitive perceptions are strongest and take place first, and that this is then followed up by an emotional response. This proposition is in line with the sequence of how brand attributes are perceived (Schultz and De Chernatony, 2002). However, some authors suggest that this is only the case when stakeholders are more familiar with the organisation, whereas those who are less familiar may initially base their perceptions on an emotional response (Du Plessis, 2005, Wood and Moreau, 2006). Consequently, stakeholders who are more familiar with an organisation, such as staff and existing customers, may base their perceptions on their own experiences with an organisation, whereas those less familiar, such as the surrounding community, would use information they received from the organisation to form their perceptions. Thus, perceptions of the organisation's image (external) and identity (internal) may be different.

2.5 Measuring for-profit reputation

Perceptions of reputation are formed in multiple ways, however for an organisation to effectively manage their reputation the perceptions of its stakeholders need to be assessed. Authors have suggested that reputation management should be based on evidence (Aula and Heinonen, 2016), and therefore a form of measurement should be employed. This measurement has taken the form of assessment of media coverage

and the use of specific reputation measurement scales, which assess reputation on corporate character or corporate role based characteristics. Both of which are discussed below.

Media coverage from both traditional print media and online media, including social networking sites, has been a common source for assessing reputation, among practitioners within the marketing and advertising industries (Rockland et al., 2010, Watson and Noble, 2007). Furthermore, it has been the subject of many research papers, to determine its relationship with organisational reputation (Carroll, 2013b, Dyck et al., 2008, Eberhardt and Schwaiger, 2016, Kioussis et al., 2007). Using the media to assess reputation has traditionally been done by PR professionals using the Advertising Value Equivalents as an indication of how successful a PR campaign is, in generating awareness and building an organisation's reputation (Jeffries-Fox, 2003, Raupp, 2016, Watson and Noble, 2007). However, Rockland et al. (2010) suggests that the quantity and quality of the media should be assessed as opposed to the Advertising Value Equivalents, as the overall clip counts and general impressions of the articles are usually meaningless. Instead, a form of reputation measurement model is recommended to be used.

2.5.1 Corporate Character Versus Corporate Role reputation

A number of models for measuring reputation exist, which identify the many characteristics associated with reputation (Caruana and Chircop, 2000, Cravens et al., 2003, Davies et al., 2001, Davies et al., 2004, Fombrun et al., 2000, Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004, Kanto et al., 2016, Ponzi et al., 2011). A summary of these models are identified in Table 2.5, which highlights that although all these models are thought of as measuring reputation, some models do in fact measure other concepts, such as brand equity (Caruana and Chircop, 2000, Yoo and Donthu, 2001), and attempt to create a link to associate those concepts as one and the same as reputation. It can be seen

from these results that the depth of measurement varies significantly between the models as some models measure 'reputation' on as few as three characteristics (Newell and Goldsmith, 2001), whereas others use over 30 characteristics (Davies et al., 2004). The differences in the nature of these characteristics, enables the researcher to group the different measurement models into three categories, with the first two groups similar to those suggested by Berens and Van Riel (2004). These groups include measures of corporate reputation (corporate role-based models) and personality (corporate character-based models). The third group that was suggested by Berens and Van Riel (2004) related to 'trust', however, this research identifies these models to relate predominantly to corporate equity.

Corporate role-based reputation measurement methods adopt characteristics used to assess the organisation's fulfilment of social expectations, such as providing good products and services, and being environmentally responsible/ adopting sustainable practices (Berens and Van Riel, 2004, Fombrun et al., 2015, Helm, 2005, Ponzi et al., 2011). Whereas corporate character-based reputation, assesses reputation based on human personality traits, such as agreeableness (including honesty and trustworthiness) and being enterprising (including trendy and innovative) (Davies, 2003). The final group however, used characteristics relating to brand equity, with these models measuring perceptions of brand/corporate awareness and esteem (Agres and Dubitsky, 1996, Caruana and Chircop, 2000, Yoo and Donthu, 2001)

Within marketing literature, the term 'brand equity' has been described as the associations and beliefs customers have about a brand (Feldwick, 1996, Wood, 2000). The models within this category focus primarily on brand and corporate equity, assessing stakeholder's awareness and familiarity of the brand (Agres and Dubitsky, 1996, Caruana and Chircop, 2000, Yoo and Donthu, 2001). While there are similarities in the measurement dimensions from these models and corporate role-based models, it is considered to be methodologically flawed to equate a measure of a brand as an organisation's reputation. Even though a close link between branding and reputation

has been shown (Davies, 2003), these models are thought to be measuring different concepts. This is an example supporting the suggestion by Dowling (2016), who identified that many reputation research studies 'define A, and measure B'.

Corporate character-based models are founded on the principle of human personality traits. Personality has been defined as human characteristics that are generally associated with, and are used to explain consistent patterns of behaviour (Aaker, 1997, Berens and Van Riel, 2004, Pervin, 1989). Within these models, personality traits are assigned to brands and/or companies as a metaphor to explain their behaviour (Davies, 2013, Davies et al., 2001, Davies et al., 2004, Rauschnabel and Ahuvia, 2014, Rauschnabel et al., 2016). However, this approach has been criticised for a number of reasons.

A key criticism is the legitimacy of factors used due to a lack of theoretical underpinning (Berens and Van Riel, 2004, Block, 1995, Geuens et al., 2009). Other authors have criticised personality scales due to their inability to establish whether a trait is deemed to be positive or negative (Berens and Van Riel, 2004). Furthermore, the use of a metaphor as a methodological approach been criticised (Hunt and Menon, 1995, Wellington, 2015). Thus, the validity and reliability of using a corporate character-based measure for reputation is weak.

Corporate role-based reputation measures are the most commonly used within reputation measurement literature. These models assess stakeholder perceptions based on a fulfilment of expectations of a set of behaviours deemed to be important within society (Berens and Van Riel, 2004, Fombrun et al., 2015, Helm, 2005, Ponzi et al., 2011). These include characteristics such as providing quality products/services, having good people/employees (including management), and sound financial performance (Andreassen and Lanseng, 1997, Fombrun et al., 2000, Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004, Helm, 2005, Yoon et al., 1993). From these measurement scales, it is evident that a number of common characteristics are used; however, the scales all vary

in the number of characteristics used. Two additional differences between all these scales are (1) the methods and analysis of the data (discussed in Section 5.4.11), and (2) the stakeholders used for the data collection.

Many of these measurement scales have been criticised for only using a single target audience, such as CEOs or customers (Andreassen and Lanseng, 1997, Brown, 1995, Cravens et al., 2003, Dowling, 2016, Helm, 2005). Consequently, these scales measure reputation according to the Impressional School (Chun, 2005), due to their focus on a single stakeholder group. However, as this research adopts the Relational approach to assessing reputation (Chun, 2005) (discussed in Section 2.3.3), the existing models pose problems in validity due to their single stakeholder response group. Consequently, it is thought that these scales lack validity in measuring reputation as a whole (Ali et al., 2015). However, one of the more recently developed reputation models, the RepTrak System, is suggested to overcome many of these weaknesses, and as such is used as a foundation point within this research.

Table 2.5 Reputation Measurement Models

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model name | Measures | Measurement characteristics |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Corporate Equity-based models | | | |
| Harris Interactive | Equitrend | Brand Equity | Familiarity, Quality, Purchase Intent, Brand expectations, distinctiveness |
| Core Brands (1990) | Brand Power/ Corporate branding index | Familiarity and favourability | Familiarity, Management effectiveness, Investment potential, overall reputation |
| Chatman and Jehn (1994) | Culture | Not specified | Innovation, stability, people oriented, customer orientation, easy-goingness, detail orientation |
| Agres and Dubitsky (1996) | Brand Asset Valuator | Equity of products and corporate brands | Differentiation (how distinctive the brand is in the market place); Relevance (is the brand relevant to the person); Esteem (its perceived quality and popularity); Knowledge (what the brand stands for) |
| van Riel and Balmer (1997) | NA | Not specified | Integrity, value for money, technical innovation, social responsibility, service, reliability, imagination, quality |
| Gaines-Ross (1998) | Corporate equity scale | Corporate equity | Awareness, familiarity, overall impression, perceptions, and supportive behaviour |
| Lewis (2001) | NA | Corporate brands status | Awareness, involvement, connections, persuasion. |
| Yoo and Donthu (2001) | Multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale (MBE) | Brand equity | Brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model name | Measures | Measurement characteristics |
|---|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Greyser (1999) | Brand Equity | Suggests that it measures corporate reputation, however also states that it develops a brand equity score | Competitive effectiveness (high calibre management, invests strategically, financial strength), Market leadership (industry leadership, well-differentiated products, in touch with market place), customer focus (good value for money, committed to customers, clearly defined image), familiarity/ favourability, corporate culture (high ethical standards, recognise social responsibilities, high quality employees), communications (effective advertising, sponsorship of major events) |
| Caruana and Chircop (2000) | Brand Equity Scale | Brand equity | Quality of products, advertising levels, sponsoring activities, conduct factory tour, long established tradition, highly regarded employment with firm, well-trained employees, well-known products, strong management, cost of advertisement, soundness of company, profitability |
| Newell and Goldsmith (2001) | Corporate Credibility Scale | Corporate Credibility | Measures honesty, reliability and benevolence, corporate expertise, trustworthiness |
| Corporate Character-based reputation | | | |
| Bernstein (1984) | Personality dimensions for Image | Not specified | Integrity, Quality, Imagination, Reliability, Service, Social Responsibility, Technical Innovation, Value for money |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model name | Measures | Measurement characteristics |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Markham (1972) | NA | Corporate personality | Good/bad, unfair/fair, powerful/weak, unreliable/ reliable, distant/friendly, informal/ormal, production orientated/ marketing orientated, irresponsible/ responsible, dull/ bright, high quality products/ low quality products, materialistic/ public spirited, modest/ brash, poor service/ goo service, active/ passive, extrovert/ introvert, efficient/ inefficient, large/small, dishonest/ honest, sluggish/ alert, modern/ old fashioned, flexible/rigid, slow/ fast, inventive/ conventional, artistic/ scientific, narrow minded/ broad minded, world-wide/ local, lively/ dreary, research based/ not reserach based, unenterprising/ enterprising, theoretical/ practical |
| Aaker (1997) | NA | Brand personality | Sincerity (down-to-earth, family orientated, small town, honest, sincere, reality, wholesome, original, cheerful, sentimental, firiendly), competence (reliable, hardworking, secure, intelligent, technical, corporate, successful, leader, confident), sophistication (upper class, glamorous, good looking, charming, feminine, smooth), excitement (daring, trendy, exciting, spirited, cool, young, imaginative, unique, up-to-date, independent, contemporary) and ruggedness (outdoorsy, masculine, western, tough, rugged) |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model name | Measures | Measurement characteristics |
|--|--|-----------------------|---|
| Davies et al. (2001) and Davies (2003) | Corporate Character Scale // Corporate personality scale | Corporate personality | Warmth Friendly - Pleasant, Open, Straightforward; Empathy - Concerned, Reassuring, Supportive, Agreeable; Integrity - Honest, Sincere, Trustworthy, Socially responsible; Modernity - Cool, Trendy, Young; Adventure - Imaginative, Up-to-date, Exciting, Innovative; Boldness - Extrovert, Daring; Conscientious - Reliable, Secure, Hardworking; Drive - Ambitious, Achievement oriented, Leading; Technocracy - Technical, Corporate Egotism - Arrogant, Aggressive, Selfish; Dominance - Inward looking, Authoritarian, Controlling; Elegance - Charming, Stylish, Elegant; Prestige - Prestigious, Exclusive, Refined; Snobbery - Snobby, Elitist; Casual, Simple, Easy going; Masculine, Tough, Rugged |
| Corporate Role-based reputation | | | |
| Financial Times | Worlds most respected countries | Corporate reputation | Strong and well-thought-out strategy; Maximising customer satisfaction and loyalty; business leadership; quality of products and services; strong and consistent profit performance; robust and human corporate culture; Successful change management; globalisation of business |
| Fortune.com | Fortune 500 | Corporate reputation | Asset use, community and environmental friendliness, product quality, investment value, ability to develop and keep key people, financial soundness, degree of innovativeness, management quality |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model name | Measures | Measurement characteristics |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Yoon et al. (1993) | NA | Corporate reputation | Offers a broad array of products and services; is an innovative company; is a leader in designing new products and services; provides consistently high quality service; has world-wide capabilities and resources; provides personalised services; is particularly orientated around business customers; provides help in solving customers problems; offers customised packages of services; is a leader in its field. |
| Brown (1995) | Reputation measure | Corporate reputation | How would you rate company x Compared to all other companies in this salesperson's industry, how would you rate this salesperson's company? (1) the very best – the very worst, (2) the least reliable – the most reliable, (3) the least reputable – the most reputable, (4) the least believable – the most believable, (5) not at all known – the best known, (6) the least trustworthy – the most trustworthy. |
| Andreassen and Lanseng (1997) | Corporate image - views image as overall attitude toward company, therefore reputation | Corporate reputation | Quality, value, choice, satisfaction, core product and dialog, salesforce competence, salesforce communication |
| Fortune (2000) | America's Most admired companies (AMAC) | Corporate reputation | Quality of management, Quality of products/ services, Financial soundness, Ability to attract develop and keep talented people, Use of corporate assets, Value as long term investment, Innovativeness, Community and environmental responsibility |

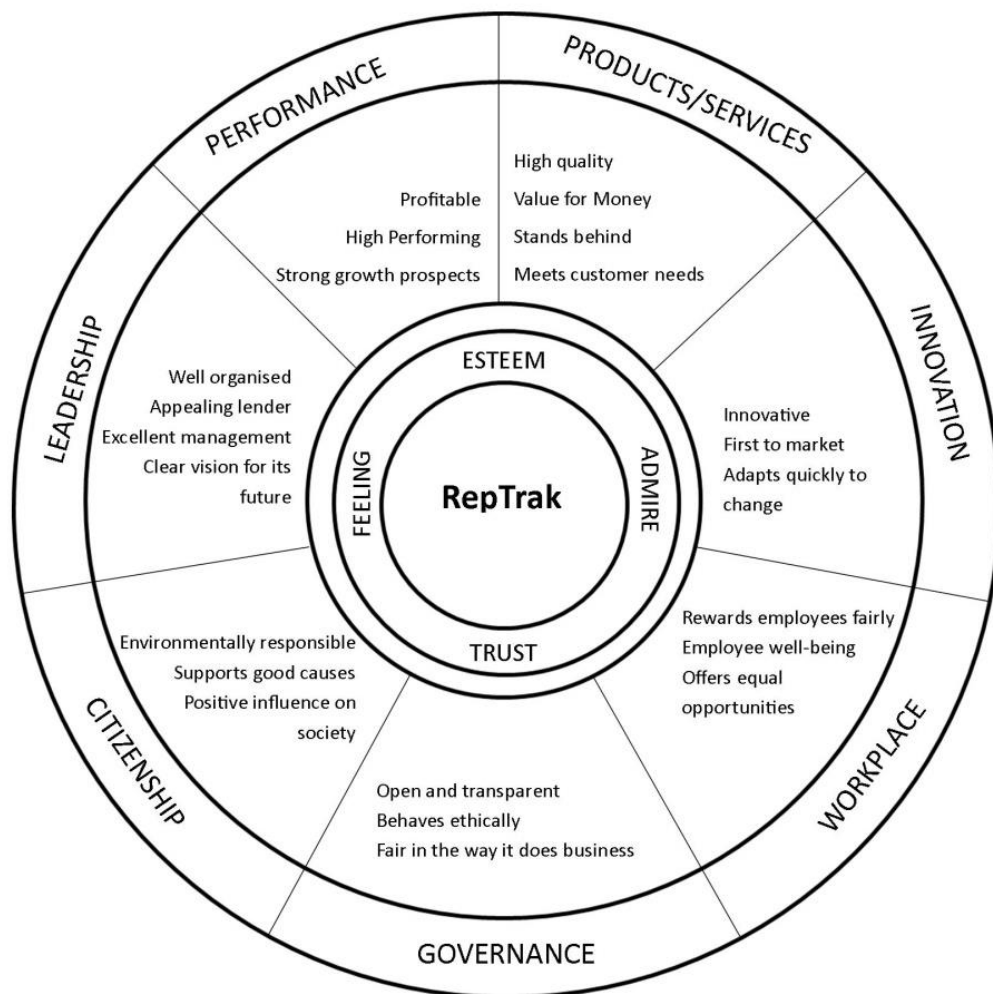
| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model name | Measures | Measurement characteristics |
|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Fombrun et al. (2000) | Reputation Quotient (RQ) | Corporate reputation | Emotional Appeal (feels good about, admire and respect, trust); Products and services (High quality, innovative, value for money, Standards); Vision and leadership (Capitalise on market opportunities, excellent leadership, clear vision for the future) Workplace (rewards employees fairly, good place to work, good employees); Financial performance (Out performs competitors, record profitability, low risk investment, growth prospects); Social responsibility (Supports good caused, environmentally responsible, community responsible) |
| Cravens et al. (2003) | Reputation index | Corporate reputation | High quality products and services, Trustworthy; High-caliber management, Adds value to all customer transaction, Conducts business in a humane manor, Innovator in industry |
| Dowling (2004) | NA | Corporate reputation | a) Market presence, social accountability, corporate capability, corporate personality), b) relationship with org, c) 3 attributes that describe organisation's reputation |
| Helm (2005) | NA | Corporate reputation | Corporate success, Customer orientation, Quality of products, Respectability of activities on, Familiarity of company brands, Sincerity concerning the, Market leadership, Innovation potential, Stability of market presence, Value for money of products, Superiority to competitors, Service offers for customers, Credibility of advertising claims, Commitment to protecting the environment, Consideration of consumer rights, Investment in advertising/ frequency of advertising, Continuity in advertising, Taking responsibility for public matters, Person of CEO, Commitment to charitable causes (eg social or cultural causes), Qualification of Management, Treatment of employees, Financial performance of firm, Attractiveness as investment |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model name | Measures | Measurement characteristics |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Fombrun and Harris Interactive Fombrun, 2006 cited in Vidaver-Cohen (2007) | RepTrak | Corporate reputation | Products and services (High quality, stands behind, meets customer needs, value for money); Innovation (First to market, Innovative, adapts quickly to change); Workplace (Rewards employees fairly, employee well-being, offers equal opportunity); Governance (Open and transparent, behaves fairly, ethical in the way it does business); Citizenship (Environmentally responsible, supports good causes, positive influence on society); Leadership (Well organised; appealing leader, excellent management, clear vision for the future); Performance (Profitable, strong performing, high growth prospects) |
| Fombrun and Harris Interactive Ponzi et al. (2011) | RepTrak Pulse | Corporate reputation | Good feeling about, Confidence, Admire and Respect, Overall reputation |
| Fombrun and Harris Interactive Fombrun et al. (2015) | RepTrak + RepTrak Pulse | Corporate reputation | Products and services (High quality, stands behind, meets customer needs, value for money); Innovation (First to market, Innovative, adapts quickly to change); Workplace (Rewards employees fairly, employee well-being, offers equal opportunity); Governance (Open and transparent, behaves fairly, ethical in the way it does business); Citizenship (Environmentally responsible, supports good causes, positive influence on society); Leadership (Well organised; appealing leader, excellent management, clear vision for the future); Performance (Profitable, strong performing, high growth prospects); Emotional Appeal (Good feeling about, Confidence, Admire and Respect, Overall reputation) |

2.5.2 RepTrak System

The RepTrak System (also referred to as a scorecard) (Figure 2.2), is recognised as the world's first 'standardised and integrated tool for tracking corporate reputation internationally across stakeholder groups' (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007, p. 254). It was developed due to the recognition that other models/ tools used for reputation measurement were identified as lacking significant characteristics; measured reputation according to a single stakeholder view; were not tested to be valid cross-culturally; or lacked significant conceptual links between concept of measurement and its relationship to reputation (Fombrun et al., 2015, Ponzi et al., 2011, Reputation Institute, 2017). It was developed in response to criticisms questioning the validity of its predecessor, the Reputation Quotient (RQ) (Fombrun et al., 2000, Gardberg and Fombrun, 2002, Sarstedt and Schloderer, 2010, Sarstedt et al., 2013, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007), and as such addresses these weaknesses. It is suggested to be the most valid measure of reputation, encompassing the dimensions and characteristics of other well-known reputation measurement scales (such as the America's Most Admired Companies, Reputation Quotient and Reputation Index) (Fombrun et al., 2015, Reputation Institute, 2017). As such, these characteristics will be used as the basis for developing a new measurement scale for a University context.

Figure 2.2 RepTrak System (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007, p. 255)



This model analyses reputation according to 23 key performance indicators divided into seven core groups (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007), shown in Figure 2.2, and discussed in Table 2.6. These characteristics are identified as being corporate role-based characteristics. However, this model bridges a gap between these models and corporate character-based models as it has the addition of emotional appeal attributes of the organisation.

The organisation's emotional appeal is assessed based on four indicators (shown around the centre of Figure 2.2), and includes 'good feelings, trust, admiration and respect' towards an organisation (Fombrun et al., 2000). These characteristics are

suggested to elicit participant's perceptions of corporate reputation (Highhouse et al., 2009), and are assessed along with overall perceptions of an organisation's reputation, as part of the RepTrak Pulse, a 'short-form measure of reputation' (Carroll, 2016, Ponzi et al., 2011). This is due to research supporting the notion that emotional appeal attributes are a valid indicator of an organisation's reputation, with positive emotions towards an organisation, linked to improved reputation (Carroll, 2016, Deng et al., 2013, Willems et al., 2016). Thus, emotional appeal attributes, and overall perceptions of reputation are characteristics considered in developing a new measure.

Table 2.6 Reptrak dimensions (Adapted from Fombrun et al. (2015))

| Dimension | Measured characteristics | Supporting research/ authors |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Products and services | High Quality; Value for money; Stands behind; Meets customer needs | Reputation likely to be influenced by perceptions of products (Rao and Sivakumar, 1999, Smith et al., 2010) |
| | | Company's willingness to stand behind its products and services (Dawar and Parker, 1994, Lange et al., 2011) |
| Innovation | Innovative; First to market; Adapts quickly to change | Innovation is an important company asset (Fang et al., 2011) |
| | | Research supports link between reputation and innovation (Courtright and Smudde, 2009) |
| Workplace | Rewards employees fairly; Employee well-being; Offers equal opportunities | A good reputation is vital to recruiting high-quality employees (Alniacik et al., 2012, Nolan et al., 2013) |
| Governance | Open and transparent; Behaves ethically; Fair in the way it does business | Davis (2005, p. 143) defined corporate governance as the 'structures, processes and institutions within and around organizations that allocate power and resource control among participants'. |
| | | Governance is recognised as a key issue for firms (Ghosh and John, 2009) |
| | | Governance is needed to manage reputation effectively (Casado et al., 2014) |
| Citizenship | Environmentally responsible; Supports good causes; Positive influence on society | Stakeholders respect organisations that perform good deeds (Orlitzky and Swanson, 2012) |
| | | Is used as a buffer in times of crisis (Mio and Fasan, 2012) |

| Dimension | Measured characteristics | Supporting research/ authors |
|------------------|--|--|
| Leadership | Well organised; Appealing leader; Excellent management; Clear vision for the future | Appealing leaders attract favourable media coverage and investor endorsements |
| Performance | Profitable; High performing; Strong growth prospects | Profitability signals to investors about operating success and continued profitability |
| | | Profitability correlates to reputation (Lange et al., 2011) |

2.6 University reputation

Reputation is a key concern for universities and it is critical for institutions that wish to succeed within the global higher education market (Plewa et al., 2016). The increased marketization within the non-profit sector, over the last three decades, has prompted universities and HEIs to become more competitive and commercialised (Hemsley-Brown et al., 2016, Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2015, Marić, 2013, Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016, Steiner et al., 2013, Tait and De Jager, 2009). This has happened as a result of the expansion and globalisation of the education and training sector, with globalisation changing the prominence that academic institutions have among their publics (Steiner et al., 2013, Verčič et al., 2016). Due to this rise in globalisation, universities are increasingly adopting principles traditionally only found relevant in for-profit industries, such as the need to measure reputation (Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016). University performance rankings, suggested by some to measure reputation, have been around for the last three decades (Baty, 2014, Marginson, 2007, Marginson, 2014). Researchers have also made multiple attempts to assess university reputation in terms of student intentions (Ivy, 2001, Plewa et al., 2016, Rauschnabel et al., 2016, Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). However, these have been faced with similar criticisms to measures in the for-profit sector. Nevertheless, studies on an organisation's overall reputation within the HE sector remain scarce (Watkins and Gonzenbach, 2013), and it

is still an area which is largely underdeveloped in comparison to the for-profit sector (Rauschnabel et al., 2016). These existing measures are discussed in Sections 2.6.1 and 2.6.2.

2.6.1 Measuring University Performance (league tables)

A search conducted by Shin and Toutkoushian (2011) revealed a minimum of 33 ranking systems for higher education around the world. These rankings are created by newspapers and magazines, non-governmental organisations, and government organisations (Bowden, 2000), and differ in their format, content and methodologies (Dill and Soo, 2005). Usher and Savino (2006, p. 3) recognise that many of the world's main ranking systems 'bear little relationship to one another, and use very different indicators and weightings to arrive at a measure of quality'. As such it appears to be widely accepted that no ranking is perfect (Marginson, 2014), with many being criticised for their statistical inaccuracies, and selection of chosen attributes used to measure academic quality (Bowden, 2000).

A key criticism by many authors is the use of reputation assessments within the characteristics (Bowman and Bastedo, 2011), which Rauhvargers (2013) suggests as having little impact on performance rankings. This is supported by Volkwein and Sweitzer (2006) who identify that reputational assessments are prone to anchoring effects³ from past rankings, and therefore add little additional value to new ranking scores. Therefore, Bowman and Bastedo (2011) propose that rankings improve reputation, but that reputation bears little impact on performance rankings. This is in contrast to the RepTrack Pulse reputation measure, which includes an overall

³ When making judgments for which the answer is ambiguous, most people will start with a particular value that is available to them, and then adjust their final judgment accordingly. This phenomenon is known as the anchoring effect (also the anchoring-and-adjustment heuristic) (Bowman, 2011: 433).

assessment of a firm's reputation within the measurement (Ponzi et al., 2011). This could be due to the difference in measured concepts, as league tables are suggested to measure performance, while the RepTrack Pulse is a measure of reputation. This may also be a difference between measuring a non-profit and for-profit organisation's reputation. This variable was included within this research, and was found to be a valid indicator linked to other emotion characteristics (discussed in Section 8.3). Thus, providing an indication that measuring university reputation may be more in line with existing reputation measurement research, rather than league table rankings.

2.6.2 Measuring University reputation

Although it is suggested that reputation should not be included as part of the measurement with university performance rankings, there are a limited number of studies that specifically assess academic institutions' image and reputation (Fombrun et al., 2000, Ivy, 2001, Plewa et al., 2016, Rauschnabel et al., 2016, Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). These studies, although looking at institutional reputation, often only assess institutions based on either student or academic staff members' perceptions of academic performance (Times Higher Education, 2012), or student intentions (Bryant et al., 1996, cited in Arpan et al., 2003, Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001a). Consequently, it can be purported that these measure 'academic and research' reputation, as opposed to the reputation of the whole institution. Nevertheless, the characteristics used to determine this type of reputation remain important, as education and research are fundamental characteristics of HEIs.

These studies, identified in Table 2.7, attempt to bridge the gap between management literature on corporate reputation and measuring the institutional reputation of HEIs. All of these reputation measures, with the exception of the Time Higher Education, 2014 - World Reputation Ranking, do not attempt to create a ranking of university reputation, and rather attempt to determine a universities reputation in terms of student decision

making (Alessandri et al., 2006, Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001a, Sung and Yang, 2008, Yang et al., 2008). However, the World Reputation Rankings (Times Higher Education, 2012), is suggested to address criticisms from other university ranking systems (Times Higher Education, 2014). Nevertheless, this measure only uses a single group of stakeholders (academic staff), and is heavily focused on academic and research perceptions. Thus, it is considered to be a measure for academic and research reputation as opposed to the reputation of an institution as a whole.

Table 2.7 University reputation measures

| Author | Measure (Image/reputation) & Based on | Stakeholder | Characteristics |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Theus (1993) | Reputation | Administrators of Universities | Size of institution, location, appearance, scope of offering, excellence of faculty, extent of endowments, diversity of students, campus morale, athletic prowess, contribution to the community, institutional visibility, and prestige |
| Treadwell and Harrison (1994) | University image | Staff, students, faculty | Commitment to academic excellence, having a well-regarded business school, students forming close friendships, graduates proud of their education, school has national image, faculty research has national image, makes cultural contribution to community, students party too much, presence of adequate facilities, problems with athletes academic performance, homogeneity of student population |
| Bryant et al. (1996) | Reputation Determinants of student enrolment | Students | Family connections to the school, rankings of school, overall education quality, size of university and its classes, relative emphasis on sports |

| Author | Measure (Image/reputation) & Based on | Stakeholder | Characteristics |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001a) | Image and reputation Student retention decisions | Students | Has good impression of; has good image in minds of consumers; has better image than competitors; fulfils promises; has good reputation; reputation is better than other companies; would be my first choice for services; will continue to do business with; is the best in the area; would encourage friends and family to do business with them |
| Kazoleas et al. (2001) | University image Uses a cultural studies approach | External stakeholders | Existence of programmes, strength of academic programmes, sports programmes, libraries and technical facilities |
| Ivy (2001) | University image | University staff | Top quality teaching, research output, range of courses, staff reputations; international exchange programmes, student union activities and sports facilities; lower fees, bursary availability, part-time tuition and lecture facilities |
| Arpan et al. (2003) | University image | Current students; adult non-students | Academic: nationally known/excellent professors; students are intelligent; university is tough to get into; nationally known academic programmes/ departments; good resources for students; committed to academic excellence; student body is active in social issues; offers good cultural experience; committed to social service; Athletic: committed to athletic excellence; strong sports programs; famous coaches/ athletes; well-respected coaches/ athletes; fun place; students interested in having fun; Others: attractive campus; well-liked and respected by family members |

| Author | Measure (Image/reputation) & Based on | Stakeholder | Characteristics |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Alessandri et al. (2006) | University identity and university reputation Reputation Quotient | Students | Quality of academic performance: offers high quality education, attracts high quality students, has high quality faculty, looks like it has strong future growth potential, has excellent leadership; quality of external performance: media reports are generally positive, is visible in the mass media, is responsible for members of the community; emotional engagement: has good feeling toward the university, have a strong emotional tie to the university |
| Vidaver-Cohen (2007) | Business school reputation RepTrak System | Multiple stakeholder groups | Performance (Intellectual Performance: Recruits/retains, prestigious faculty, strong record for research; Network Performance: Attracts quality students, obtains lucrative job placements, strong alumni/business ties; Financial Performance: Strong revenues from endowments, tuition and value-added programs); Services (Effective job placement system, Specialized skills training, High quality instruction, Good value for the money); Products (Competent graduates, Stands behind Output); Leadership (Strong and appealing leaders, Competent, well organized management, Clear vision for the future); Governance (Open and transparent, Demonstrating ethical behaviour, Fairness in stakeholder transactions); Workplace Climate (Rewards employees fairly, Shows concern for employee well-being, Offers equal opportunities); Citizenship (Promotes community service, Supports good causes, Exerts positive influence on society); Innovation (Innovative curriculum, Innovative delivery methods, Adapts quickly to change) |
| Sung and Yang (2008) | Image (however defines image similarly to reputation) | Students | Student care, vision, quality management; social responsibility and, financial soundness |

| Author | Measure (Image/reputation) & Based on | Stakeholder | Characteristics |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| Yang et al. (2008) | University reputation | Students | Emotional appeal, products and services, financial performance, vision and leadership, workplace environment, social responsibility, and athletic prominence. |
| Times Higher Education (2012) | Reputation | University academic staff | Asks academics to identify where they currently/ previously have worked, whether they have collaborated with other institutions, which institutions they regard as best for research and teaching |
| Rauschnabel et al. (2016) | University Brand Personality Scale Brand personality measures | Managers & Academics | Prestige, sincerity, appeal, lively, conscientiousness, and cosmopolitan |
| Mahr and Schwaiger (2016) | Business School Reputation | Academics | Research performance, third-party research funds and standing of professors within the academic community. Reputation control measure based on number of Nobel prizes won by University academics |
| Plewa et al. (2016) | University reputation | Students | Has a good reputation within the community, employers have positive things to say about it, is a well-respected university, I have heard positive things about the university, the university's reputation positively influences value for my degree, the university is looked upon as a prestigious institution |

| Author | Measure (Image/reputation) & Based on | Stakeholder | Characteristics |
|---|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Verčič et al. (2016)* | Business School Reputation Reputation Quotient | Students, Staff, General Public | Performance (Employs prestigious professors, Professors have high levels of publishing, Attracts best students, Enables good employment after graduation, High level of income from business projects); Services (Helps students find employment after graduation, Graduates are well equipped for the workplace, High-quality lectures, Gives a lot for tuition Products, Creates capable experts, Stands behind its scientific results); Leadership (Has capable leadership, Is well organized, Has a clear vision for development); Governance (Governing is transparent, Follows ethical principles, Is fair toward all partners: students, employees, public); Workplace climate (Employees are fairly awarded for their work, Shows concern for employee wellbeing, Offers equal opportunities for all Citizenship, Is responsible to the community, Supports charities, Has a positive influence on society); Innovation (Has a contemporary study program, Follows trends in conveying knowledge, Quickly adapts to change); Additional items (Is international renown, Successfully fights corruption, Can be trusted, Is represented well in public, It is a matter of prestige to be a student of this school, Offers world-level knowledge) |
| *Study not used to inform this research's questionnaire due to being published after data collection. | | | |

As reputation is a measure of multiple stakeholders' perceptions, a key criticism of many university reputation scales or rankings, similarly to for-profit reputation measures, is that only a single stakeholder group is assessed. This leads to limitations within reputation research as different stakeholders may have different perceptions of an institution (Brown and Dacin, 1997, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Freeman, 1984, Treadwell and Harrison, 1994, Williams and Moffitt, 1997). In addition to this, these different groups of stakeholders may evaluate an organisation based on the strengths and weaknesses of different characteristics (Arpan et al., 2003, Helm, 2007, Ivy, 2001,

Schloderer et al., 2014), dependant on their relationship to the institution, such as staff, student or community member (Leitch and Motion, 1999, Riordan et al., 1997, Yang et al., 2008). Therefore, a measure assessing different stakeholders' perceptions of a university's reputation is needed.

Research by Vidaver-Cohen (2007) and Verčič et al. (2016) are two studies that adapt the Reputation Quotient and RepTrak System in assessing the reputation of business schools in America and Croatia respectively. Both of these studies use the approach of assessing multiple stakeholder's perceptions and are therefore considered to be more conceptually valid than other measures. However, the research conducted by Verčič et al. (2016) does only consider three stakeholder groups. Nevertheless, both of these studies only assess the perceptions of a business school rather than the university as a whole (Verčič et al., 2016, Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). Thus, a gap in the literature still exists for a reputation measure that assesses perceptions of a whole university in the UK, from multiple stakeholders.

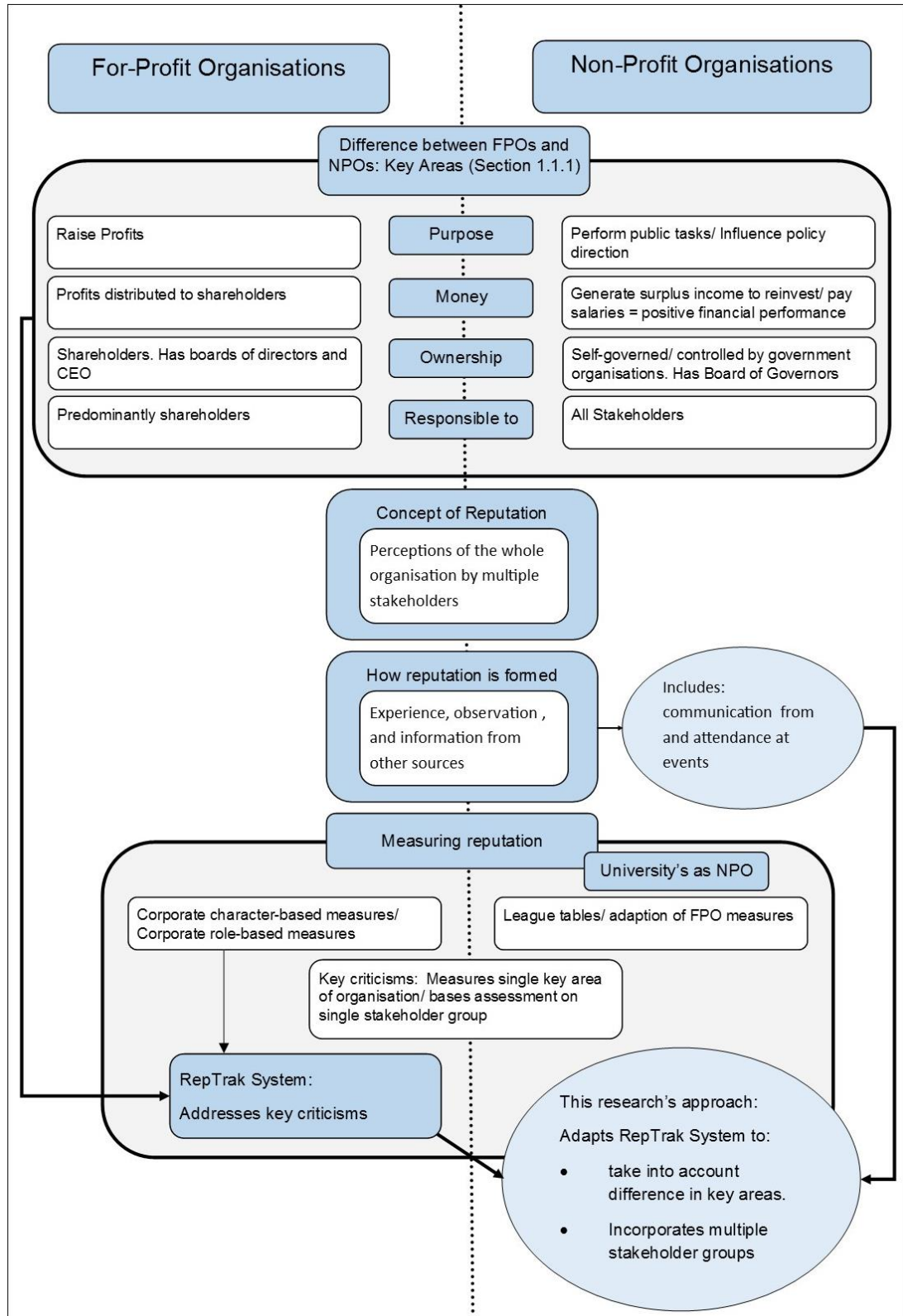
2.6.3 Conceptualisation of reputation in the context of HE for this research

The conceptualisation of reputation in the context of NPOs, and Universities, is shown in Figure 2.3. This highlights the key areas that differentiate NPOs and FPOs (discussed in Section 1.1.1). While the way these organisations operate may be different, it acknowledges that both organisation types have all four key areas, which provides a basis on which an organisation's reputation can be measured. This research recognises the concept of reputation (an overall perception of the organisation by internal and external stakeholders) (discussed in Section 2.3.3), and how it is formed (through experience, observation and information sources) (discussed in Section 2.4), to be the same for both FPOs and NPOs. Nevertheless, different methods exist when measuring reputation for these organisation types, though similar criticisms of these measures are recognised for both.

The RepTrak System was developed for to measure the reputation of FPOs and takes into account the criticisms of existing reputation measurement models. It assesses reputation across all areas of an organisation, including the key areas that differentiate FPOs and NPOs. However, the RepTrak System does not take into account how the stakeholders' perceptions are formed, as it does not assess stakeholders existing knowledge or experience of the organisation, or if a specific planned communication activity (such as an event) has a positive or negative effect on stakeholders' perceptions of reputation.

The approach taken to measure and assess reputation within this research, adapts the principles and characteristics of the RepTrak System. This takes into account the key criticisms from previous research, and assesses reputation as an overall perception of the organisation and by multiple stakeholder groups. Furthermore, the study assesses the impact that planned communication in the form of events has on the organisation's reputation (discussed in Chapter 3), and therefore takes into account how stakeholder perceptions of reputation are formed.

Figure 2.3 Conceptualisation of reputation in the context of HE for this research



2.7 Determinants and consequences of reputation

While reputation can be measured and assessed based on a number of characteristics, such as those within existing scales, research has also identified determinants that influence a person's perceptions of reputation. These include the familiarity a person has with an organisation, and the visibility of that organisation (Christou, 2003, Gefen, 2000, Lange et al., 2011). Stakeholder perceptions of reputation are thought to be formed, partly based on communication they receive about the organisation (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998, Bromley, 2000), suggesting that communication has the ability to influence perceptions (Hawabhay et al., 2009). Furthermore, service quality and satisfaction during stakeholders' experience with an organisation are also viewed to be important, as positive correlations between satisfaction and reputation have been found (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993, Bontis et al., 2007). These concepts as determinants of reputation, as well as the future intentions of stakeholders, as a consequence of a positive reputation, are discussed below.

2.7.1 Familiarity as a determinant of reputation

Familiarity has been defined as the knowledge a person has of an organisation (Carroll, 2016, Luhmann, 2000, Mariconda and Lurati, 2015, Monin, 2003, Yang, 2007). This knowledge is derived from multiple sources, such as previous visits, word-of-mouth, marketing materials or the media (Bromley, 2000, Ivy, 2001, Johnson and Russo, 1984, Moise et al., 2012). The concept of familiarity has been shown in marketing literature to be directly related to reputation (Christou, 2003, Gefen, 2000, Lange et al., 2011, Mariconda and Lurati, 2015, Mishina et al., 2012), with increased familiarity suggested to improve long-term relationships and encourage repeat/return visits (Horng et al., 2012). However, there is much debate within the reputation literature to whether the relationship between familiarity and reputation is a positive or negative one (Artigas et al., 2015, Brooks et al., 2003).

While some authors have suggested a positive and direct role between familiarity and reputation (Bromley, 1993, Dowling, 1986, Turban, 2001), Brooks et al. (2003) suggests that increased familiarity with an organisation provides the opportunity to gain more information about the organisation. They recognise that the information can be both positive and negative, but suggest that it is the information that is gained that is used to make a judgement. Thus, Brooks et al. (2003) recognises an indirect link between familiarity and reputation.

Nevertheless, a degree of familiarity is a characteristic many authors associate with positive organisation reputations (Bromley, 1993, Brooks et al., 2003, Dowling, 1986). According to Cable and Turban (2001), familiarity leads to positive feelings that influence employer reputation. Stakeholders base their perceptions of reputation on their familiarity with the organisation, recognising that they need to know an organisation prior to making a judgement (Govender and Abratt, 2016, Helm, 2005, Mahon and Wartick, 2012). However, Brookes et al. (2003), suggest that little evidence of the relationship between familiarity and reputation exists.

A study conducted by Highhouse et al. (1999) found a positive link between a person's familiarity with an organisation and their perceptions of that organisation's reputation. Similarly, from a tourism perspective, destinations that are considered to be more familiar are thought to have improved reputations (Artigas et al., 2015). However, in contrast, a study conducted by Fombrun and Shanley (1990) found that increased familiarity through stories in the media found it had a negative impact on reputation even though the media stories were categorised as 'not negative'. As such, the media is considered to play a powerful role in making/breaking an organisation's reputation (Brady and Honey, 2007), due to the opportunity for it to increase exposure, and consequently familiarity.

The concept of a 'threshold level', a point at which any additional information is not taken into account, has been debated within previous research (Fiske and Taylor,

1991, Mariconda and Lurati, 2015, Starbuck and Milliken, 1988). They suggest that once the threshold level has been reached, any further exposure to information, does not increase the effect that familiarity has on their perceptions. This was found to be true in the case of investor awareness of organisations, where once a certain level of media attention or knowledge of a company was achieved, any additional information had no influence on their perceptions of the organisation's reputation (Pollock and Rindova, 2003, Pollock et al., 2008). Therefore, further research is required to identify the extent and conditions that familiarity is a determinant of reputation.

2.7.2 Visibility as a determinant of reputation

The visibility of an organisation is identified as the awareness that something exists (Bushee and Miller, 2012), the prominence of an organisation in the minds of its customers (Van den Bosch et al., 2005), and the extent that the media covers an organisation (Carroll, 2016, Rindova and Martins, 2012). In line with these definitions, it was purported that organisations that are viewed to be visible internationally are thought to have a better reputation due to their global status (Brammer and Millington, 2005, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). This suggests that the level of visibility that an organisation has can be assessed on whether an organisation is thought to be known on a scale of local to international visibility.

Similarly to familiarity, organisational visibility is recognised to affect perceptions of the organisation through the provision of information sources (Brooks et al., 2003).

Therefore, being highly visible increases exposure of available information (Brammer and Millington, 2005, Rhee and Valdez, 2009). Fombrun et al. (2015) suggests that publications highlighting innovativeness and positive workplace attributes of companies increased their visibility, and that this is suggested to lead to improved perceptions of reputation. Brammer and Millington (2005) found that increased visibility has a direct and positive effect on an organisation's reputation. Furthermore, Peteraf and Shanley

(1997) found that increased visibility, due to positive media coverage, had a positive impact on an organisation's reputation through improving its identity.

In contrast, Fombrun and Shanley's (1990) earlier findings suggested that increased visibility had a negative impact on reputation, due to stakeholders having a greater knowledge of the organisation. This viewpoint was supported by others, who identified that increased visibility made it difficult to repair an organisation's reputation if it had been damaged due to the information available (Rhee and Valdez, 2009, Zavyalova et al., 2016). Thus, further research to determine the nature of the relationship between visibility and reputation is needed, to determine if visibility is a positive or negative determinant of reputation.

2.7.3 Communication as a determinant of reputation

The increase in communication channels, as discussed in Section 3.3, has created more ways for stakeholders to receive information about organisations (Key and Czaplowski, 2017, McQuail, 2010). As a result of this increase, organisations have a greater need to better utilise their communication to establish a unique image, thus increasing the possibility of being distinguished from other organisations (Argenti and Druckemiller, 2004, Engert et al., 2016). Communication is also considered to be a determinant of corporate reputation (Carroll, 2016, Hawabhay et al., 2009), as it enables organisations to create a favourable bias among different stakeholder groups, by highlighting positive areas of the company (Shamma, 2012). However, according to Kotler and Fox (1996, cited in Ivy, 2001) stakeholders can sometimes base their perceptions on inaccurate information received from indirect sources, thus effecting the overall assessment of reputation. This emphasises the importance for organisations to control and deliver consistent messages (Hwang et al., 2017).

An organisation's communication strategy is responsible for setting organisational objectives to control and deliver their messages (Moise et al., 2012) (discussed in Section 3.2). The consistency of messages provided by organisations has also been shown to influence perceptions of reputation (Hwang et al., 2017). Multiple forms of communication are adopted within these areas, which include direct and indirect mediums. The principles of communication are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.7.4 Service quality and satisfaction as a determinant of reputation

The reputation of public sector organisations is frequently based on service quality interactions and stakeholder satisfaction (Carroll, 2016). Satisfaction, and its relationship with reputation has been a focus of many research studies (Andreassen, 1994, Andreassen and Lindestad, 1998, Blau et al., 2016, Davies et al., 2004, Helm, 2006, Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2016, Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001a, Saeidi et al., 2015, Wong, 2016). Satisfaction is recognised as a subjective construct as it is based on personal expectation and experience (Lee and Beeler, 2009, Oliver et al., 1997, Petrick et al., 2013). Accordingly, Almeida et al. (2015) propose satisfaction to be an emotional response to the experiences with the products and services provided by an organisation, with Deng et al. (2013) suggesting that this emotional response, specifically trust, is an important determinant of satisfaction. While some researchers suggest that satisfaction is a determinant of reputation (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993, Bontis et al., 2007, Wong, 2016), others argue that a positive reputation is a cause for satisfaction (Anderson et al., 1994, Carmeli and Tishler, 2004, Davies, 2003). In addition, satisfaction has been found to have a positive influence on stakeholder's future intentions and interactions with the organisation (Deng et al., 2013, Willems et al., 2016).

Conversely, it is suggested that negative interactions are more likely to be remembered by audience members (Getz, 2012, Pine and Gilmore, 1999), creating a lasting

negative image of the organisation, and consequently its reputation. Therefore, organisations need to ensure they create a positive experience for their stakeholders (O'Dell and Billing, 2005), to ensure they are satisfied. This stakeholder interaction is thought to form an important factor in developing perceptions of corporate image.

Service quality and customer satisfaction are also recognised as having the capability to influence corporate image through employee behaviour (Nguyen, 2006). Negative behaviour or the inability to provide good service and match customer expectations was found to contribute to image loss (Dowling, 1993). This implies that positive behaviour and good service quality could contribute to building a good corporate image. Melewar and Jenkins (2002) suggest that employee behaviour allows the unique characteristics of an organisation to be communicated to external audiences, demonstrating the values and characteristics of the organisation's identity. Therefore, it is important for employees, specifically those delivering customer services, to deliver a positive experience, for it to create a positive reputation. The use of service quality characteristics to assess stakeholder satisfaction is discussed in more detail in Section 3.5.2.

2.7.5 Future intentions as a consequence of reputation

The benefits of reputation are outlined in Section 2.1.1, with these being recognised as consequences of a positive reputation. A further consequence of reputation is suggested to be positive future intentions by organisations' stakeholders (Carroll, 2016). Willems et al. (2016) highlighted the effect of positive emotional appeal, specifically trust, in stakeholders' future decision-making relating to engagement with the organisation. This is supported by researchers who suggest that reputation attracts high quality employees (Almeida et al., 2015, Fombrun, 1996, Highhouse et al., 2009), as this too is seen to be a form of engagement with the organisation. Increased customer loyalty, demonstrated through repeat purchases or repeat visits for service

industries, which are identified as forms of engagement, is also viewed to be a consequence of a positive reputation (Fombrun, 1996, Fombrun and Low, 2011, Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2016). Therefore, future intentions to engage with the organisation through repeat visits is believed to be a result of a positive reputation.

Perceptions of reputation are recognised to be formed, partly from word-of-mouth communication received from other stakeholders (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998, Bromley, 2000, Ivy, 2001, Youness and Valette-Florence, 2017). However, the stakeholders speaking about the organisation need to have some knowledge of the organisation they are referring to prior to speaking of it. Helm (2005) recognises this as she suggests that stakeholders are only able to make a judgement about an organisation by having some knowledge of it. Therefore, word-of-mouth communication is understood to be based on their knowledge and experience with the organisation (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998). Consequently, word-of-mouth communication is considered to be a future action taken by stakeholders who have already formed perceptions of the company.

It has been found that stakeholders are more likely to support and want to be associated with organisations that perform well. This is demonstrated through employee commitment, as companies that have a positive reputation are able to retain their staff more effectively (Corporate Excellence: Centre for Reputation Leadership, 2012, Highhouse et al., 2009), and through customer loyalty demonstrated through repeat visits and purchases. Therefore, it is accepted that stakeholders are more likely to want to be associated with an organisation that has a positive reputation.

2.8 Chapter summary

In summary, the benefits of a good reputation were identified. This recognised a correlation between a positive reputation and increased product sales, and employee

retention exists. Furthermore, it enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty, thus attracting more customers and partners. Consequently, a positive reputation, although an intangible asset, is recognised as having a positive impact on tangible assets such as profitability.

The confusion between the concepts of corporate image, corporate identity and corporate reputation were clarified. In doing so, the key difference of stakeholders involved in the formation of these concepts was highlighted. This recognised that corporate identity originates from an organisation's strategy and mission, and reflects the internal stakeholder's view of the organisation. Corporate image was recognised as the external stakeholder view of the organisation. While corporate reputation is concerned with both internal and external stakeholders.

The multiple perspectives and definitions of reputation have been acknowledged, with this research adopting a Relational approach to reputation. This view recognises that perceptions of reputation should be drawn from multiple stakeholders' perspectives, rather than a single group (ie. Customers/ CEOs). This raised questions about the validity of existing reputation measurement scales, as many of these scales measure reputation based on a single stakeholder group. Consequently, a gap between theoretical perspectives of reputation, and the measurement of it, became apparent.

Reputation measurement models were identified, each with varying characteristics, target stakeholders, and methods of data collection and analysis. These measurement models were grouped according to the classification of their measurement characteristics. This recognised the benefits of using a corporate role-based model over a corporate character-based model in measuring reputation. University specific performance measures, in the form of league tables, and reputation measurement models were also assessed. Similarly to for-profit reputation measures, the validity of these models have been questioned due to their focus on single stakeholder groups, or being overly focused on academic or research performance.

The RepTrak System, a corporate role-based measure, was found to be the most comprehensive measurement scale currently recognised within the literature. This model addresses many of the weaknesses and criticisms of other measurement scales. Due to the inclusion of emotional appeal characteristics, the RepTrak System bridges the gap between corporate character-based and corporate role-based models. Thus, the principles and characteristics of the RepTrak System will be used within this research.

While perceptions of reputation can be measured using characteristics such as those in the RepTrak System, research has also identified other determinants of reputation. A person's familiarity with an organisation and the visibility of that organisation, was suggested to influence perceptions. Furthermore, communication from the organisation, word-of-mouth, and satisfaction of experiences with the organisation are also viewed to be determinants of reputation. As such, these concepts will also be addressed within this research, with further detail regarding organisational communication, and service quality discussed in the following chapter.

3 Communication and Events

3.1 Introduction

It becomes evident from the previous chapter that perceptions of reputation are predominantly formed through forms of communication with and from an organisation. Communication can mean a variety of terms including ‘the act or process of information transmission; the giving or taking of meaning; the sharing of information, ideas, impressions or emotions; the process of reception, perception and response; the exertion of influence; any form of interaction’ (McQuail, 2010, p. 15). Others define communication as a ‘means to express needs and wants, develop social relationships, and exchange information with others’ (Light and McNaughton, 2014, p. 1); or a means of transmitting messages and meaning (Dimpleby and Burton, 1998). These definitions all imply that communication involves a message and a form of transmission.

McQuail (2010) also identifies that communication can be intentional or involuntary, with the number of communication channels and messages being unlimited. Antonides and Van Raaij (1998) and Bromley (2000) clustered the influence that communication has on an individual into groups; planned communication with the organisation, direct experiences, word-of-mouth, and information gained from the mass media. This highlights the multiple sources and types of communication on which a stakeholder’s perceptions are formed, and the complexity of controlling the messages received by stakeholders.

While it is difficult to control communication through word-of-mouth and stories within the mass media, it is possible to seek to control messages originating from the organisation (planned communication), and the experience had by stakeholders engaging with the organisation. A particular focus of this research, which overlaps these two areas (experience and planned communication), is the use of events as a communication tool by companies, as a means of delivering a strategic message (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014, Moise et al., 2012). Face-to-face communication,

which events are, is recognised to be the richest form of media. Consequently, it is suggested to be the most effective means of communication. Thus, events as a communication channel will be assessed to determine their impact on stakeholder perceptions of an organisation's reputation.

Communication forms the foundation for successful organisational performance (Moise et al., 2012, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007). The communication function within an organisational setting includes marketing communications, public relations, investor relations and employee communication, all of which enables organisations to acquire vital resources (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007). This includes tangible resources such as capital, materials and the ability to attract skilled employees (Gray and Balmer, 1998, p. 696, Helm, 2011, Helm and Salminen, 2010, Highhouse et al., 2009, Walker, 2010), and intangible benefits such as a positive reputation.

Within this chapter, communication will be discussed in terms of events. The importance of an organisation's communication strategy will be identified, with events forming a key tool within these strategies. Events will be defined, and a typology suggested, recognising two key event types, (1) events as final products and (2) events as communication tools; the latter of which becomes the focus for this thesis.

Communication events are discussed as a tool to improve reputation, by transmitting desired messages to its audiences.

Event success has previously been evaluated through measuring the impact of the event (Kim et al., 2015, Li et al., 2013, Preuss, 2013), and achievement of its aims (Getz and Page, 2016, Goldblatt and Supovitz, 1999, Williams and Bowdin, 2007). However, no research exists (to the knowledge of the researcher) that measures the effect of an event on an organisation's reputation. Much research has been conducted suggesting that customer satisfaction and motivation for attending events influences future decisions (Devesa et al., 2010, Getz et al., 2001, O'Neill et al., 1999, Yoon and

Uysal, 2005). Thus, these factors will be considered when evaluating the success of events in terms of improving stakeholder perceptions of the organisation's reputation.

3.2 Corporate communication

The communication function within organisations is often referred to as corporate communication, with corporate referring to a 'business setting' (Cornelissen, 2014). There is however, a broader definition of the word corporate, with it originally deriving from the Latin word 'corpus' (body, or relating to a whole) and 'corporare' (forming into a body) (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007, p. 26). This emphasises that 'corporate communication' is a unified way of 'communicating from the perspective of the organisation to internal and external stakeholders' (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 5). Thus, corporate communication is considered to be the discipline of communicating specific messages to both internal and external stakeholders.

The overall objective of corporate communication is to establish and maintain favourable relationships with stakeholders, in order to build and protect the organisation's reputation (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998, Belasen, 2008, Carroll, 2013a, Cornelissen, 2008, Romenti, 2010, Sinha and Bhatia, 2016, Van Der Merwe and Puth, 2014, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007). As a result, the corporate communication function is considered to be a management instrument, which utilises a strategy to effectively co-ordinate and communicate messages to its stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2008, Sinha and Bhatia, 2016, Zerfass and Viertmann, 2016). This suggests that corporate communication adopts a 'top-down' approach to communication.

The corporate strategy of an organisation is the overall plan of how the company aims to achieve its objectives (Engert et al., 2016, Robbins and Coulter, 2009). Whereas, the communication strategy forms a key element of the corporate strategy, and is

responsible for engaging the organisation's stakeholders by sending messages about the products/ services on offer (Hawabhay et al., 2009, Moise et al., 2012, Sinha and Bhatia, 2016). Marketing and public relations (PR) are important components of a communication strategy, and are used to highlight key messages from the organisation's mission statement (Dozier et al., 2013, Sinha and Bhatia, 2016). These communication activities are utilised to communicate the organisation's strategic objectives, with the purpose of affecting the behaviour of important stakeholders through increasing their awareness, knowledge and perceptions of reputation (Cornelissen, 2014, Johnston, 2014, Raupp, 2016, Romenti, 2010).

An organisation's communication strategy is responsible for delivering messages to stakeholders, with the purpose of sharing the organisation's vision (Argenti and Druckemiller, 2004, Engert et al., 2016). This aims to alter the perceptions of new stakeholders, as well as reinforcing these perceptions in existing stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2008). Communication is used to strengthen relationships with the organisation's stakeholders, to positively shape their perceptions of the company's reputation (Argenti and Druckemiller, 2004, Johnston, 2014). Romenti (2010) contends this to be important as it increases the longevity of the organisation's reputation. Thus, communicating a positive and specific message helps to positively alter stakeholders' perceptions of a company's reputation.

The organisation's overall strategic objectives or corporate strategy informs how the organisation presents itself to its stakeholders as a whole (Cornelissen, 2014).

Therefore, it is important for organisations to adopt a strategy to ensure consistency of message is delivered (Hwang et al., 2017). Furthermore, the channels of communication selected should be best suited to targeting the groups upon which it is dependant (van Riel, 1995, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007), as it has been noted that different stakeholder groups use different mediums to gain information. This further enables the company to align their messaging with the interests of different stakeholder

groups, to create favourable perceptions (Shamma, 2012). Consequently, the cost of its mass communication activities is reduced (Masterman and Wood, 2006). Thus, identifying who the stakeholders are, and which forms of communication they use is important, in order to achieve the strategic objectives set out in the communication strategy.

3.3 Media Richness Theory

More communication methods exist now, than ever before (Key and Czaplewski, 2017), and it is important for organisations to understand the efficacy of the different types, in order to communicate with their target audience effectively. As part of a communication strategy, organisations may use multiple communication mediums (Key and Czaplewski, 2017). It is suggested by Daft and Lengel (1986) and Jackson (2013) that these types of medium have a hierarchy for conveying messages to their audiences. This hierarchy principle is known as media richness theory (MRT), which suggests that 'richer' mediums are more effective at delivering key information, reducing ambiguity and uncertainty (Daft and Lengel, 1986). This is due to the 'richness' of the medium influencing the receiver's ability to understand the meaning of the message (Daft and Lengel, 1986, Klitmøller and Luring, 2013, Peltokorpi, 2015, Robert and Dennis, 2005) by engaging a multisensory approach. The 'richness' of a medium also involves 'the ability to provide immediate feedback between two parties,' which includes the ability to adapt messages based on responses received (Conradie et al., 2014, Cornelissen, 2008, p. 56). Studies have identified that direct communication, and more specifically face-to-face communication is the richest medium (Conradie et al., 2014, Daft and Lengel, 1986, Fill, 2009, Gimpel et al., 2016, Klitmøller and Luring, 2013, Ledford, 2012). While conversely, indirect and written communication mediums are 'leaner', and are therefore given less importance by the message receivers.

There are a number of communication channels that messages are communicated through; including both direct (Mohr and Nevin, 1990) and indirect mediums (Shoemaker and Reese, 2013). Direct mediums have been described as communication that is sent directly from the sender to the receiver without any interference (Mohr and Nevin, 1990). This includes communications such as face-to-face and telephone conversations. In contrast to this, indirect mediums have a 'gatekeeper'⁴ between sender and receiver (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 2009), which provides the opportunity for the message to be altered. These indirect mediums have traditionally included printed media such as newspapers, posters and fliers. However, advancements in technology have increased the number of possible communication channels available, and has changed the way many organisations communicate (Key and Czaplewski, 2017, McQuail, 2010, Men, 2014, Straubhaar et al., 2013). Indirect communication now includes channels such as third party websites, and blogs; and direct communication can include channels such as the organisation's social media pages and website, and emails originating from the organisation.

The proliferation of social media sites over the last two decades, has provided organisations with a form of direct communication, which gives its stakeholders an opportunity to engage with the organisation, and provide immediate feedback (Argenti and Barnes, 2009, Baka, 2016, Cardwell et al., 2017, Constantinides and Fountain, 2008, Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016, Lin et al., 2016, Men, 2014, Whiting et al., 2017). This is due to the interactivity of the media, which allows users to share information and knowledge through word-of-mouth, and engage in online discussions, using audio, images, video and text (Dijkmans et al., 2015, Mangold and Faulds, 2009, Ngai et al., 2015). Social media has become an important communication tool for organisations to build relationships with their stakeholders (Ji et al., 2017, Kim and Rhee, 2011, Lee,

⁴ A gatekeeper is a term used within communication theory, whereby information is filtered as it passes between individuals and media indirectly (McQuail, 2010).

2016b, McCorkindale and DiStaso, 2013, Whiting et al., 2017, Wright and Hinson, 2015). Subsequently, it is put forward that an organisation's social media activities can impact stakeholders' perceptions of that organisation's reputation (Dijkmans et al., 2015, Lee, 2016b). Others suggest that your online reputation, is synonymous with an organisation's actual reputation (Fertik and Thompson, 2010, Kaul et al., 2015). Thus suggesting, that social media sites are a 'richer' medium than traditional marketing and promotional channels.

Nevertheless, face-to-face communication is still viewed to be the richest form of media (Jackson, 2013, Klitmøller and Lauring, 2013). Therefore, it is important for organisations to include a form of face-to-face communication, such as events, within their communication strategy. Events are a form of 'real-time' engagement with an audience, which Wood (2009b) suggests gives all events the potential to communicate messages. This is due to their ability to be highly effective communication tools (Bowdin et al., 2006, Crowther, 2010a, Men, 2014), and will enhance the richness of the messages from the organisation. Messages delivered by face-to-face communication, are also suggested to have a higher priority of importance, and are preferred by the receiver (Klitmøller and Lauring, 2013, Men, 2014, Steffens et al., 2014). Therefore, using events as a face-to-face communication medium, may result in the messages being viewed with a greater importance by the audience, and reduce the ambiguity and uncertainty of the messages being delivered. Thus, events have significant importance within many organisation's corporate strategy (Getz and Page, 2016).

3.4 Events as a form of direct (face-to-face) communication

3.4.1 Defining Events

The events industry has grown within the last two decades, and has become a recognised discipline for both academics and practitioners (Getz, 2008, Getz and Page, 2016, Quinn, 2013, Raj et al., 2013). Many event definitions exist within the event management literature. Silvers (2008, p. 7) defines events as 'the gathering of people at a specified time and place for the purpose of celebration, commemoration, communication, education, reunion and/or leisure'. Similarly, Jackson (2013, p. 2) proposes a definition of events to be 'happenings constructed to bring people together for a defined period of time to achieve an identified purpose'. While Raj et al. (2013, p. 4) simply defines events as 'happenings with objectives'. Raj et al. (2013) further identify that a large number of event objectives/ purposes exist, causing difficulty in developing a more precise definition.

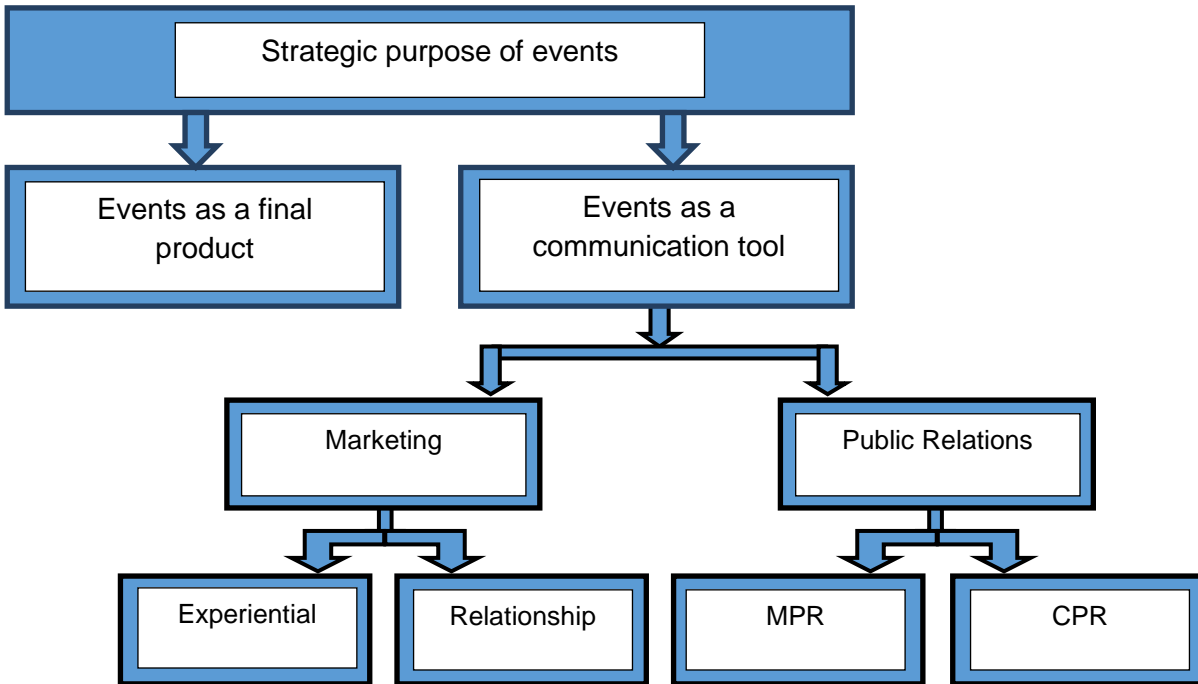
These definitions all reflect the suggestion by Getz (2005) that events have two key traits; the first is that each event is unique due to the varying objectives an event may have. Van der Wagen (2007, p. 5), who defines events from a management approach, identifies that events often involve 'numerous stakeholders', which further adds to an event's uniqueness. The second key trait of events as suggested by Getz (2005) is that they are temporary occurrences, which take place at a 'specified time' (Silvers, 2008) and for a defined period (Jackson, 2013). These broad definitions highlight the multiplicity of the events industry, and the vast array of 'happenings' that can be included. Thus, drawing from these multiple definitions, the author recognises events to be:

'Happenings designed for a specific purpose, which brings multiple stakeholders together for a specified period of time'.

Events have traditionally been classified by their size (Bowdin et al., 2006, Müller, 2015, Müller, 2016), or by their form and content (Bowdin et al., 2006, Getz, 2008, Getz and Page, 2016, Pernecky, 2016, Raj et al., 2013). However, more recently Jackson (2013) has suggested that events can be classified according to the nature of communication that they adopt. While these typologies provide a useful means of classifying events, it becomes evident to the researcher that a further classification of events exists. This categorises events according to their organisational strategic purpose, and in doing so, two clear classifications of events emerge as depicted in Figure 3.1. The first category recognises events as the final 'product' (Bowdin et al., 2006, Bowdin, 2011, Raj et al., 2013). Examples of such events include musical or sporting events, whereby the target audience purchase tickets to watch a performance (Evans, 2015, Getz and Page, 2016), which has the primary purpose to generate a profit.

The second category recognises events as a means of communicating a message to achieve a wider purpose (Jackson, 2013, Masterman and Wood, 2006, Wohlfeil and Whelan, 2005), such as product launches, press conferences, and political debates. From a wider tourism perspective, research has been conducted, investigating the impact of events in generating destination image, and the way events act as a catalyst for infrastructure development and urban renewal (Evans, 2015, Getz and Page, 2016). However, from an organisational perspective, this category includes events with a marketing and/or public relations (PR) objective, with an aim to deliver a corporate message, and achieve a strategic objective.

Figure 3.1 Strategic purpose of events



Note: MPR = marketing public relations, CPR = Corporate public relations

Many organisations now adopt an *event strategy* to aid in their marketing or public relations communication strategies (Crowther, 2010a, Crowther, 2011, Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014). Cities and tourist destinations have also commonly used events to elicit positive images and meanings among their visitors (Getz and Page, 2016). Generally, the purpose of these events is to communicate a specific message to targeted stakeholders, with the aim of improving sales, developing relationships with key stakeholders, building the reputation of a particular product, organisation or destination, and encouraging repeat visitation (Crowther, 2010a, Getz and Page, 2016, Jackson, 2013, Kotler, 2003, Kotler et al., 2009). The focus of this research concentrates on the second category of these events, and the impact that these can have on the host organisations' reputation.

3.4.2 Events as a Communication tool

While events have been used for centuries as a means of communication (Bowdin, 2011), events for the purpose of communication within an organisational perspective have generally been seen to form a part of a wider integrated communications strategy (Crowther, 2010b, Crowther, 2010a, Crowther, 2011, Fehrstrom and Rich, 2009). Events have been conducted in a more ad-hoc and informal manor (Pugh and Wood, 2004), and as such have been viewed as a poorer relation than traditional communication methods (Crowther, 2010b). As a result, there is limited empirical research on events with a communication purpose.

Nevertheless, events have become a popular form of direct communication within organisations (both for-profit and non-profit), as they actively engage the target audience with the company (Leischnig et al., 2011). As such, events are increasingly being incorporated into organisations' communication strategies as a means of informing their stakeholders about specific messages (Berridge, 2007, Crowther, 2010a, Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014, Papasolomou et al., 2014). These messages can adopt a PR approach, with the purpose of the event to raise awareness and inform stakeholders about key issues (Jackson, 2013). Equally, these messages could adopt a marketing approach, with the aim to promote brand image and drive sales (Leischnig et al., 2011, Raj et al., 2013, Schmitt, 1999b). Thus, events have the ability to achieve a diverse range of strategic objectives.

There has been much debate among academics and practitioners regarding the role and relationship of marketing and PR, which has been shaped by the historical development of both disciplines (Kotler and Mindak, 1978, Tench and Yeomans, 2009). Some of the key differences between these disciplines are that, marketing focuses on customers and selling products/services to them profitably (Grönroos, 1990), while PR focusses on reputation building activities and communication to wider publics (Grunig, 2013, Grunig and Grunig, 1998, Grunig and Hunt, 1984). Although some authors have

recognised and suggested that these disciplines should be separate (Grunig, 1992), others have acknowledged the relationship between the two, suggesting an overlap occurs (Pickton and Broderick, 2001). Nevertheless, increasing brand awareness, building relationships and driving sales, while all strategic aims in their own right (Altschwager et al., 2017, Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014), all form a part of a wider strategic aim to enhance the organisation's reputation (Fombrun, 1996, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007). Therefore, no-matter the activity, they all have an impact on an organisation's reputation.

3.4.3 Events as a Marketing tool

Traditionally, marketing has been a transaction process between an organisation and an anonymous group (Kotler et al., 2008, Schmitt, 1999a). It took place without any preceding or subsequent action, with the aim of attracting new customers and making a sale (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014, Kotler et al., 2008). However, modern day marketing approaches are more aware of the importance of building relationships with specific markets in order to develop a lasting exchange relationship (Balmer and Greyser, 2006, Gummesson, 2002, Wood, 2009b). This is due to the realisation by Reichheld and Sasser Jr (1990), and supported by other authors (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, Sheth and Parvatlyar, 1995), that it is cheaper and easier to keep existing customers, rather than solely attracting new ones. Thus, the concept and practice of relationship marketing was developed.

A shift from service-based marketing to experience-based marketing has occurred, with experiential marketing becoming a worldwide trend (Yazıcı et al., 2016). Schmitt (1999b) argued that experiential marketing was developed as a response to three key developments: the growth of IT, the growing importance of brand, and the ubiquity of communication. Due to these developments, Genasi (2001) suggests a range of social

and technological changes that enable consumers to have more opportunity to gain additional information, and as a result, now expect more from their experiences. This recognises audiences as active consumers (Leischnig et al., 2011, Wohlfeil and Whelan, 2005), who seek an experience they cannot get elsewhere.

Organisations adopting an experiential marketing approach are able to segment their audiences according to values, enjoyment and social group, in order to deliver effective experiences (Tsai, 2005). It has become increasingly important for managers to manage attendees' 'experience journey' (Yazıcı et al., 2016), in order to captivate their attention and elicit positive emotions (Akyıldız et al., 2013). Thus, experiential marketing has a greater focus on the consumer experience, rather than solely customer satisfaction, as is the case with traditional 'service-based marketing' (Masterman and Wood, 2006, Schmitt, 1999a, Schmitt, 1999b).

Experiential marketing aims to develop an emotional attachment between consumer and the organisation's brand, by focussing on the use of human senses (Akyıldız et al., 2013, Chanavat and Bodet, 2014, Grönroos, 1994, McCole, 2004, Pine and Gilmore, 1999, Wood and Moss, 2015, Yazıcı et al., 2016). This attachment/emotional response is developed with the purpose of increasing brand image and awareness, with the overall aim of increasing sales for the organisation's products/ services (Crowther, 2010a, Raj et al., 2013, Schmitt, 1999a). Events are a useful experiential marketing tool, due to their ability to create an emotional response through unique experiences, while still exposing the consumer to the organisation's brand (Chanavat and Bodet, 2014, Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014, Masterman and Wood, 2006, Vila-López and Rodríguez-Molina, 2013).

As this experience provides an opportunity for an organisation to communicate with its stakeholders over a prolonged period of time, it allows for more subtle messages to be delivered to the audience; enabling the organisation to re-inforce its brand (Crowther, 2010a, Donlan and Crowther, 2014). With many events, the product is the event-

experience that attendee's gain from attending. As a result of this, Getz (2008) suggests that events also incorporate a relationship marketing approach.

Consequently, events are also recognised to be a strategic tool in building long-term relationships with new and existing stakeholders (Crowther, 2010a, Papasolomou et al., 2014, Russel, 2007). Nevertheless, Wood and Moss (2015) recognise that there is little known about the effectiveness of experiential marketing events, in spite of organisations spending increasing amounts of money on holding them.

The purpose of relationship marketing is to improve productivity through enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of marketing procedures (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995).

This is achieved by identifying, establishing, maintaining and enhancing relationships with customers to accomplish objectives through a 'mutual exchange and fulfilment of promise' (Donlan and Crowther, 2014, Grönroos, 1997). Relationship marketing attempts to engage external stakeholders with an organisation's marketing activities.

The outcome of these relationships is considered to be of far greater value than a simple transaction based encounter (Kalwani & Narayandas, 1995 cited in Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995).

The growth of relationship marketing can be largely attributed to service industries such as events, with marketers increasingly using events as a tactical method of relationship management (Braggs, 2006). Getz (2012) suggests that relationship management is important for events and should become a key part of their marketing practice. Two key outcomes of effective relationship marketing are suggested to be brand loyalty and repeat purchase (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). As a result it has been identified that it is more profitable for an organisation to keep their existing customers, as opposed to recruiting new ones (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, Reichheld and Sasser, 1990).

Furthermore, Braggs (2006) suggests using corporate hospitality events as a means of building relationships with stakeholders, thus resulting in an increased brand awareness with key audiences over time (Jackson, 2013). As the primary purpose of

these corporate hospitality events is not immediate sales, this type of event could also be viewed as having a public relations (PR) focus. Therefore, it is evident that an overlap between marketing and PR events occurs.

3.4.4 Events as a Public Relations tool

Public Relations is the management function used to describe the communication activities of an organisation (Grunig, 2013, Kitchen, 1997, Ledingham and Bruning, 1998, Moloney, 2006). Some practitioners have viewed PR as one of many functions of communication, rather than communication as a whole (Hutton, 1999). However, Grunig and Hunt (1984, p. 6) have defined PR as the 'management of communication between an organisation and its publics'⁵. Grunig (1997) later redefined this as 'an organisation's managed communication behaviour'. While these definitions have been widely used, there is still no universally agreed definition of PR (Grunig, 1992, Tench and Yeomans, 2009) due to the range of industries and skills that utilise it. That said, most definitions recognise the key features of PR to be 'managing communication' (Grunig, 1997, Grunig and Hunt, 1984, Harlow, 1976); 'building relationships' (Cutlip et al., 1994, Ledingham and Bruning, 1998, Raupp, 2016, Rogers, 2009); and communication between the organisation and its' key publics (Gordon, 1997, Grunig, 2013, Kitchen, 1997, Ledingham and Bruning, 1998, Raupp, 2016).

These definitions suggest that PR and communication management are the same practice, and as such is responsible for communication with internal and external publics (Grunig, 2013, Ledingham and Bruning, 1998). The purpose of this communication is renowned for manipulating public opinion favourably towards the organisation (Botan and Hazleton, 2010, McKie and Munshi, 2007). Thus, PR is

⁵ Publics are defined by Grunig (2013, p.4) as 'groups that affect the ability of an organisation to meet its goals'.

recognised as an important strategic activity for organisations, as it is thought to have an influence on the organisation's reputation (Grunig, 2006, Hutton, 1999).

As PR communicates with both internal and external publics, it satisfies the needs of multiple stakeholders (Balmer and Greyser, 2003, Cardwell et al., 2017, Cornelissen, 2008, Kotler and Mindak, 1978). This is in contrast to marketing's role of primarily satisfying customers/ consumers, and proposes that marketing communication forms a part of the overall function of PR (Cornelissen, 2014, Rogers, 2009). Therefore, PR is used to communicate a wider perspective of an organisation, adding credibility to the messages being communicated (Jackson, 2013, Masterman and Wood, 2006).

According to Cornelissen (2008), this builds goodwill with the organisation's key publics.

Corporate public relations (CPR) is a function of PR that focusses on the promotion of an organisation's overall reputation (Cornelissen, 2014, Fombrun, 1996, Griffin, 2008, Hutton et al., 2001). CPR uses a range of tools to communicate its messages, as a means of trying to shape perceptions of an organisation, of both specific stakeholders as well as the wider public (Moloney, 2006). Primarily the audience for CPR activity is a specific group of key decision makers that are considered important to the organisation. However, an organisation's wider stakeholder population may also be reached with this method (Jackson, 2013, van Riel, 1995). Events are often used as part of a CPR strategy to provide stakeholders with specific information such as addressing key issues that are considered to be important (Crowther, 2010a), or celebrating an organisational achievement (Goldblatt, 2007); both of which can affect reputation. These highlight issues in a way that the organisation chooses among selected stakeholders, with the aim of positively shaping a stakeholder's perceptions.

While CPR is primarily responsible for promoting overall reputation of an organisation, Marketing Public Relations (MPR) is used to gain attention and promote a specific campaign (Jackson, 2013, Key and Czaplewski, 2017, Moloney, 2006, Papasolomou et

al., 2014). MPR activities are particularly useful at building interest, launching a product and educating new markets, by creating a platform of increased visibility (Cornelissen, 2008, Kotler, 2003, Ries and Ries, 2002). Key and Czapski (2017) suggests that MPR should not be separate from marketing practices, but should rather integrate with other parts of the promotional mix. Consequently, authors acknowledge that MPR is a result of an overlap between marketing and PR (Pickton and Broderick, 2001).

MPR has traditionally employed indirect methods of mass communication however, Jackson (2013) suggests that it now encompasses events as part of its promotional toolkit. Incorporating event-based experiences as a promotional tool, enables a longer contact time with the target audience, and thus greater opportunity to communicate a desired message (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014). This approach to public relations is suggested to aid the marketing function of an organisation by increasing the interest of the target audience, and providing opportunities to build long-term relationships (Moloney, 2006, Papasolomou et al., 2014). This suggests a link between MRP, experiential and relationship marketing exists. Therefore, by incorporating a MPR focus to events provides a bridge between an organisation's public relations and marketing communications strategy, thus achieving a broader set of organisational objectives.

Organisations are increasingly allocating large amounts of financial resources to holding events, rather than using traditional marketing methods (Wood, 2009b). Researchers are recognising the importance in assessing the usefulness of these events in achieving the organisation's strategic objectives (Leischnig et al., 2011, Mair and Whitford, 2013, Wood, 2009b). Nevertheless, there is little empirical evidence on the effectiveness of using events in achieving strategic objectives such as generating awareness or enhancing an organisation's reputation. Thus, a means to measure the success of these events is necessary.

3.5 Measuring event success to achieve strategic objectives

A successful event is suggested to be one that achieves a set of pre-determined aims and objectives (Goldblatt and Supovitz, 1999, Williams and Bowdin, 2007), which enable organisations to learn about its own operations, and identify areas for improvement (Getz, 2005). Measuring the success of events has previously been done in a number of ways. This includes determining if the event achieved audience motivations for attending (Devesa et al., 2010, Yoon and Uysal, 2005), assessing economic and social impacts (Gration et al., 2016, Kim et al., 2015, Li et al., 2013, Mair and Whitford, 2013, Preuss, 2013, Wood, 2005, Wood, 2009a, Yürük et al., 2017), and measuring attendee satisfaction (Getz et al., 2001, O'Neill et al., 1999). However, event success has not previously been measured according to its impact on attendee perceptions of the organisation.

Attendee satisfaction and motivation for attending events are recognised as important factors when measuring the success of an event. This is due to the recognition that service quality leads to satisfaction, with satisfaction recognised to be a determinant of positive future actions (Carlson and O'Cass, 2010, Chang et al., 2016, Dabholkar et al., 2000, Lee et al., 2017, Schlesinger et al., 2016, Song et al., 2017) and positive perceptions of an organisation's reputation (Deng et al., 2013). However, assessing service quality as a cause for satisfaction, and satisfaction as a determinant of an organisation's reputation, in the context of events has yet to be done. Therefore, the service quality of an event will be assessed to determine the impact of satisfaction, which results from attending the event, on an organisation's reputation.

3.5.1 Audience motivations

Motivation is defined as a psychological construct that is used to describe human behaviour (Dann, 1981, Pearce, 1982). More specifically, it is the process that causes

people to act in a certain way (Decrop, 2006). This is driven by internal factors (motives) that energise, direct and trigger behaviour in order to achieve a specific goal (Iso-Ahola, 1980 cited in Crompton and McKay, 1997, Gnoth, 1997). Much research has been done identifying factors that influence these motives, with theories being classified by their theoretical backgrounds. A psychological or sociological viewpoint, suggests that motivations are constructed on the theory of human cognition, with motives being driven by emotion and cognitive desires (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977, Dann, 1981, Graburn, 1983, McGregor, 1960). While an anthropological and socio-psychological view point suggests that motivations are driven by seeking authentic experiences (MacCannell, 1977 cited in Cassidy, 2006) and avoidance dimensions, such as escaping everyday life (Iso-Ahola, 1982). Thus, identifying motivations for attendance at events can be diverse, and specific to each attendee.

Two motivation theories within the anthropological and socio-psychological view point include Dann's (1977) and Crompton's (1979) Push and Pull theory, and Iso-Ahola's (1982) Escaping-Seeking dichotomy. Both of these theories have been widely discussed within the context of tourism, and are generally accepted as a means to analyse visitor motivations (Crompton and McKay, 1997, Duran and Hamarat, 2014, Lee et al., 2004, Li and Petrick, 2006, Love and Crompton, 1996, Uysal and Jurowski, 1994, Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Iso-Ahola's (1982) escaping-seeking dichotomy is suggested to be a refinement of the Push Pull theory, with both theories recognising that motivations are formed by intrinsic desires (person specific) and extrinsic benefits (benefits offered by the destination/event) (Baloglu and Uysal, 1996, Dann, 1977, Iso-Ahola, 1982, p. 261). Furthermore, these theories identify a 'personal' and 'inter-personal' dimension, recognising that people may have different motivations and seek different rewards based on social interactions (Crompton and McKay, 1997, Iso-Ahola, 1982). As events are inherently social interactions, both of these theories have been widely applied to an events context.

There have been several research studies conducted over the last three decades to analyse visitor motivations to events (Duran and Hamarat, 2014, Gelders and Van Zuilen, 2013, Kim et al., 2001, Li and Wood, 2016, Morgan, 2008, Snelgrove et al., 2008, Trinh and Lam, 2016) (as seen in Appendix 3). While the majority of this research has focused on attendance to cultural/ music festivals and sporting events, limited research has been completed as to why visitors will attend events within a university setting, with the most common research for university events focussing on university sport events (Ferreira and Armstrong, 2004, Perrault, 2016). From the studies (identified in Appendix 3) it is evident that a variety of motivations exist for attending events, with Nicholson and Pearce (2001) suggesting that multiple motivations may exist for a single attendee.

These motivation studies demonstrate the presence of intrinsic motives, linking to the escaping/ seeking dichotomy, and push factors – such as socialisation and excitement (Duran and Hamarat, 2014, Smith and Costello, 2009). Extrinsic motives, linking to ‘pull’ factors, are also evident through the novelty/ uniqueness of events, which are linked to particular event activities/ attractions on offer (Li and Wood, 2016, Nicholson and Pearce, 2001, Petrick et al., 2013, Thompson and Schofield, 2009). Getz (2005, p. 332) also identifies extrinsic motivations for attending events to be linked to a business/ work obligation and incentive, and separates these extrinsic motives from event specific motives.

Due to the variety of motives available to event attendees, it becomes important to determine if audience motivations are linked to the purpose of the event, they are attending. Crompton and McKay (1997) suggest that identifying audience motives is key to understanding their decision-making process. Through understanding visitor motivations, an event offer can be tailored to specific audiences (Crompton and McKay, 1997, Scott, 1995, Smith and Costello, 2009, Thompson and Schofield, 2009). Therefore, by identifying and understanding attendee motives, event organisers are

able to communicate the event objectives better, to ensure that attendee expectations are met.

3.5.2 Satisfaction and Event Satisfaction

Satisfaction has recently been described as a customer's overall assessment of their experience with an organisation (Lee et al., 2017, Leischnig et al., 2011). The importance of satisfaction has grown exponentially, with the growth of experiential marketing and the use of event as a marketing tool (Akyıldız et al., 2013, Yazıcı et al., 2016). Authors have suggested that achieving satisfaction, is critical to sustaining a competitive advantage over other organisations, and for the survival of service organisations (Tsaour et al., 2007, Vila-López and Rodríguez-Molina, 2013, Yazıcı et al., 2016). As a result, it has become imperative to manage stakeholder's satisfaction, enabling them to have a positive and unique experience (Ziakas, 2016).

There have been multiple studies in the service industry (including events) attempting to measure customer satisfaction (Getz et al., 2001, Hoffman and Bateson, 2011, McDonald et al., 1995, O'Neill et al., 1999, Song et al., 2017, Suh et al., 1997, Yürük et al., 2017). Satisfaction is recognised as a subjective construct as it is based on personal expectation and experience (Lee and Beeler, 2009, Petrick et al., 2013, Yürük et al., 2017). Consequently, the evaluation of satisfaction is suggested to be an emotional and cognitive process (Cronin Jr, 2003, Mason and Paggiaro, 2012, Yazıcı et al., 2016). Measuring satisfaction as a construct has been closely linked to service quality (Cronin Jr and Taylor, 1992, Drummond and Anderson, 2004, Ko and Pastore, 2004, Song et al., 2017). Some authors have suggested basic definitions for quality, such as something 'conforming to requirements' (Crosby, 1984), 'satisfying the customer' or a 'fitness for use' (Juran, 1988, Parasuraman et al., 1988). Thus, suggesting a prior expectation by the customer is needed, in order to make a judgement.

A service is defined by Bateson (1989, p.6 cited in O'Neill et al., 1999, p. 160) as a 'bundle of benefits to the consumer through the experience that is created for that consumer'. The characteristics of a service have been identified as being something that is 'intangible, inseparable, perishable and heterogeneous' (Drummond and Anderson, 2004, p. 82, Jackson, 2013, p. 78, Raj et al., 2013, p. 215). These characteristics allude to the fact that measuring a service is considered to be difficult (Fombrun, 1996), as it cannot be repeated. Additionally, as customers' requirements and expectations can be different; measuring the quality that a service provides to each customer becomes problematic.

Drawing from the separate definitions of both a 'service' and 'quality', the term service quality has been defined as 'a global judgement or attitude relating to the superiority of a service' (Parasuraman et al., 1985, p. 16), or 'the consumer's overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of the organisation and its services' (Bitner and Hubbert, 1994, p. 77). It is argued that these 'judgements' or 'impressions' are based on the difference between customers' expectations of 'what they want', and their perceptions of 'what they get' (Jain and Gupta, 2004). These expectations are suggested to be formed as a result of previous experience and their satisfaction levels with the service (Getz et al., 2001, Kahneman and Miller, 1986). Two service quality measurement scales, and their adaptations, are commonly cited within the literature. These include Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry's (1985, 1988) SERVQUAL, and Grönroos's (1984) Service Quality Model.

The SERVQUAL scale is a generally accepted means of measuring service quality and has been used to calculate customer satisfaction within the events industry (Getz et al., 2001, Ko et al., 2011, Lee et al., 2012, McDonald et al., 1995, O'Neill et al., 1999). The scale assesses five dimensions (split into 22 items) considered to be important to customers when evaluating the quality of service they have received (Getz et al., 2001, Ko et al., 2011). This is achieved by identifying if the customer's expectations have

been met or exceeded, and measures their perceptions of satisfaction. The five dimensions measured within SERVQUAL include *tangibles* (physical facilities/equipment), *reliability* (the ability to perform the promised task), *responsiveness* (willingness to help customers and provide a prompt service), *assurance* (knowledge and courtesy of employees), and *empathy* (providing individualised attention to customers) (Parasuraman et al., 1988). This has traditionally been used to assess services such as those in the hospitality industry. However, SERVQUAL has also been adapted to assess the service quality at events (Getz et al., 2001, Ko et al., 2011, Lee et al., 2012, McDonald et al., 1995, O'Neill et al., 1999).

The Service Quality Model proposed by Grönroos (1984), is a much simpler measure of service quality than SERVQUAL, as it measures service quality according to two dimensions, functional quality and technical quality. Technical quality relates to the specific service offered or the outcome achieved by the service, such as a meal in a restaurant, or transport provided by a taxi (Grönroos, 1984). Whereas the functional quality, relates to how the service was delivered and includes interactions with staff, and availability of concessionary services (Grönroos, 1984). This model supports authors recommendations that a service quality model should be tailored to the specific service provided (Crompton et al., 1991, Cronin Jr and Taylor, 1992, Johnson et al., 1995), as it acknowledges that different types of services exist. However, no single measure of service quality is unanimously agreed upon within the service literature.

Similarly, no agreed upon measure for measuring service quality and satisfaction at events exists, even though multiple studies have been conducted (as can be seen in Table 3.1). Researchers have however, adopted Grönroos's outlook to adapt the measurement to specific events, by including event specific characteristics within their measurement scales, such as satisfaction with stadiums for sports events (Clemes et al., 2011, Kelley and Turley, 2001, Theodorakis et al., 2015), and music volume for festivals (Tkaczynski and Stokes, 2010). While other researchers have adapted

SERVQUAL to suit their event needs (Getz et al., 2001, McDonald et al., 1995, O'Neill et al., 1999). Therefore, it appears widely accepted to adapt existing service quality measurements to suit an event specific context.

Table 3.1 Service quality measurement dimensions

| Author | Research context | Measured characteristics |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Grönroos (1984) | Service setting | Functional and technical/outcome quality |
| Gronroos (1988) | Service setting | Functional quality refers to the quality of service delivery based on the interactions between customers, frontline employees, and the service environment. Technical quality represents the quality of a service outcome in relation to tangible physical goods |
| Parasuraman et al. (1988) | Service setting | Reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangible |
| Jackson and Schmader (1990) | Service setting | Emphasis on quantity rather than quality, a product rather than a market orientation, poor physical conditions and lack of information, and poorly selected or inadequately trained personnel. |
| Rust and Oliver (1994) | Service setting | Service product, service delivery, service environment |
| Crompton and Love (1995) | Dickens-on-the-Strand | Ambience, sources of information at the site, comfort amenities, parking, and interaction with vendors |
| Kim and Kim (1995) | Sport centres service | Ambiance, employee attitude, reliability, information giving, programming, personal consideration, price, exclusivity, ease of mind, convenience and stimulation |
| Dabholkar et al. (1995) | Service setting | Physical aspects, reliability, and personal interactions |
| Love and Crompton (1996) | Dickens-on-the-Strand | Dissatisfiers - physical factors at events, such as parking, rest rooms, and information; Satisfiers - ambience, fantasy, excitement, relaxation, escape and social involvement |
| Getz (1997) | Not specified | Shaped by complex interactions of consumers and the program, setting, management systems, staff/volunteers, and other visitors |
| Pine and Gilmore (1998) | Not specified | (1) Well-defined themes, (2) impression management with positive cues, (3) elimination of negative cues, (4) sensory stimulants appealing to five senses, and (5) memorabilia to remember the experience. |

| Author | Research context | Measured characteristics |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| O'Neill et al. (1999) | Sports event – surfing | Site elements (Access to site, cleanliness, comfort, food and beverage, parking, safety at site, seating, signs and directions, toilets, viewing of the event, overall satisfaction with the site); Staff features (Helpful, knowledgeable, neat, available, Approachable/ friendly/ pleasant); Other (behaviour of others, souvenirs, event timing, the surfing competition, hours of the competition) |
| Baker and Crompton (2000) | Festival quality | Generic features, specific features, information sources, comfort amenities |
| Kelley and Turley (2001) | Sports events | Quality of the athletic competition; arena or stadium, the personnel working the event, parking, public address announcers, cheerleaders, concessions |
| Brady and Cronin Jr (2001) | Service setting | Interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality |
| Murray and Howat (2002) | Sports and leisure centre | Parking safety and security, Facility cleanliness, Up-to-date information available, Programs start and finish on time, Broad range of activities available, How well the centre is organised and run, The centre's physical comfort, Value-for-money services, Equipment quality and maintenance, Food and drink services, Child minding, Staff friendliness, Staff responsiveness, Staff presentation, Staff experience, Instructors, Officials (umpires), Centre maintenance |
| Van Leeuwen et al. (2002) | Sport event | Core expectations, core disconfirmation, core perceived performance by sports team, club identification, team win/lose, peripheral perceived performance, peripheral expectations, peripheral disconfirmation |
| Cronin Jr (2003) | Service quality in service industry - not event specific | Assesses perceived service quality and overall satisfaction |
| Brady et al. (2006) | Entertainment industry - not event specific | Service environment quality (i.e. physical environment), functional quality (i.e. how service is delivered), valence (i.e. tangibles and waiting time), involvement, overall satisfaction |
| Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007) | Sport event | Overall satisfaction (condition of the trail, overall event experience, condition of other trails as part of the event) |

| Author | Research context | Measured characteristics |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Tsuji et al. (2007) | Sport event | Core service quality (sport specific questions), Peripheral service quality (Staff friendliness, staff courtesy, helpfulness of information, ease of entrance, interactive-ness, spectator viewing locations, video screens and replays, merchandise selection, seating availability, site cleanliness, music and concerts, security), satisfaction (overall experience) |
| Lee et al. (2009) | Festivals - 'festivalscape' | Program content, staff service, facilities, food, souvenirs, convenience, and information availability |
| Shonk and Chelladurai (2008) | Sport tourism | Access quality, accommodation quality, venue quality, contest quality |
| Cole and Chancellor (2009) | Festival | Programs, amenities, entertainment quality |
| Lee and Beeler (2009) | Local festivals | Generic features (feeling of safety, visual appearance of site, cleanliness), specific features (Jingle Bell run, parade, live entertainment stages, arts and crafts, food and beverage), information sources and comfort amenities (seating and rest places, accessibility, parking, cleanliness of toilets and availability of toilets) |
| Tkaczynski and Stokes (2010) | Jazz festival | Professionalism, environment, music volume, sound quality |
| Li and Petrick (2010) | Service industry - cruising, not event specific | Service quality (quality, dependable, consistent, reliable) and perceived value (value for money - good deal, reasonable, worthwhile, value) |
| Yoon et al. (2010) | Punggi Ginseng festival. | Informational service, program, souvenir, food, facility, festival value, festival satisfaction |
| Yoshida and James (2011) | Sports events | (1) Frontline employees, (2) facility access, (3) Seat space, (4) opponent characteristics, (5) player performance (6) entertainment, (7) game atmosphere, (8) crowd experience, (9) Organisational identification, and (10) Convenience |
| Ko et al. (2011) | Spectator sport events | Physical environment, interaction, augmented service (i.e., entertainment) along with outcome and game quality |
| Clemes et al. (2011) | Sport event | Interaction quality (Security employee performance, food and beverage service, player interactions with spectators, social environment), physical environment quality (social environment, visuals and sound, stadium access, seating, stadium cleanliness and design), outcome quality (atmosphere, game quality) |
| Mason and Paggiaro (2012) | Food and wine events | Food, Fun, Comfort, Product, Event, Emotional satisfaction, evaluative satisfaction, behavioural intention |

| Author | Research context | Measured characteristics |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Lee et al. (2013) | Shanghai Expo | Information, program content/ entertainment, overall satisfaction, intention to revisit and recommendation |
| Mason and Nassivera (2013) | Wine festival | Perceived service quality, product quality, organisation, festival satisfaction, product satisfaction |
| Theodorakis et al. (2013) | Professional football match | Functional quality (tangibles, responsiveness, access, reliability, security), outcome quality (game quality, team performance), overall satisfaction |
| Theodorakis et al. (2015) | Sport events | Physical environment quality (design, ambience, and social factors), interaction quality (behaviour, attitude, and expertise of event's personnel), and outcome quality (consequences of participation) |
| Lee and Kang (2015) | Sport event | Core event satisfaction (satisfied with game, players performance and player behaviour); Peripheral event satisfaction (satisfied with public relationship activities for team, promotion events for fans, gifts provided during the game) |
| Song et al. (2015) | Expo 2012, Yeosu Korea | Entertainment experience, Educational experience, Escape experience, Aesthetic experience, Expo Quality |
| Brown et al. (2016) | Sports event - London Olympics | Overall satisfaction (I am glad I decided to attend, it was a good decision to attend, I was satisfied with my experience) |

Measured characteristics that are common to all events is that they all provide both a tangible element of service (such as the venue/ engagement with staff) (Bitner, 1992) and an intangible event product to customers (Getz, 1997). It is suggested that both intangible and tangible elements work together to achieve overall satisfaction (Jurowski et al., 1995, Yoon and Uysal, 2005). This causes service at events to be a complex operation due to the number of choices or the complexity of experience available to a customer (Getz et al., 2001). Bitner (1993) suggests that the physical setting of an event, which he termed a 'servicescape', can assist in differentiating it from other services, and can be a significant part of a consumers' experience. He suggests that these settings act in the way a package would for a tangible product (Bitner, 1993), and are able to convey the values and images of the host organisation. Therefore, Getz et

al. (2001) recognises that consumers' experience of the event service (both tangible and intangible), and their perceived quality of their experience is likely to be different.

The 'servicescape' concept was adapted by O'Dell and Billing (2005) who suggest that events act as an 'experiencescape' whereby the event provides a platform for experiences to be staged. They recognise that these experiences can be strategically planned, providing attendees with an intended experience of the organisation (Ritchie and Hudson, 2009). This enables organisations to plan and stage experiences for their attendees, conveying a desired message to the event attendees, thus achieving a strategic purpose of the event. Together, this experience and messages from the organisation could result in attendees' perceptions of the organisation to be positively altered, as it is suggested that stakeholder experiences influence how perceptions of reputation are formed (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998, Bromley, 2000) (as discussed in Section 2.4). Consequently, an outcome of promoting overall reputation can be achieved.

Due to customer interactions and experiences, no event service can be the same, resulting in each event product being unique (Getz, 2008). This is a key characteristic of what differentiates the event product from other services (Getz et al., 2001, Van der Wagen, 2007). This complexity and uniqueness of events makes it difficult to measure consumer satisfaction through service quality as each product offering is different, and thus consists of different criteria. As a result of this, authors have adapted the SERVQUAL framework and Gronroos's Service Quality Model to include event specific characteristics, in order to determine event attendee satisfaction and their perceptions of the service quality (Getz et al., 2001, McDonald et al., 1995, O'Neill et al., 1999).

Event satisfaction measurement characteristics are also suggested to be linked to the Herzberg's 'maintenance factors'⁶, with some elements being 'dissatisfiers' and others being 'satisfiers' (Alegre and Garau, 2010, Jackson and Schmader, 1990 cited in Getz, 1997, Gregory and Parsa, 2013, Love and Crompton, 1996). Dissatisfiers are elements such as physical facilities (parking and toilets), a lack of information, and inadequately trained staff (O'Neill et al., 1999). While these factors must be provided to achieve an expected level of satisfaction, they themselves do not fully satisfy visitors, with Crompton and Love (1995, p. 19) suggesting that they 'are not criteria that visitors use to measure performance and service quality'. However, they also note that if these criteria are not included, overall visitor satisfaction may not be fully achieved. On the contrary, should a satisfier such as 'ambiance, excitement and social interaction' be excluded from an event, dissatisfaction will occur (Crompton and Love, 1995). Thus, Getz (1997) suggests that tangible and intangible elements should be included when assessing overall satisfaction. Furthermore, these elements should include both satisfiers and dissatisfiers to assess visitor experiences accurately.

Achieving customer satisfaction is important for events, as it is suggested to influence future actions and decisions by attendees. It has been repeatedly found that satisfaction has a direct influence on the likelihood of repeat visits/ repeat purchases (Cole and Illum, 2006, Jones and Suh, 2000, Lee and Beeler, 2009, Mason and Nassivera, 2013, Pettersson and Getz, 2009, Yoon and Uysal, 2005). This in turn, leads to increased customer loyalty (Chang et al., 2016, Lee et al., 2017, Li and Petrick, 2010), and assists in preventing customer attrition (Kotler, 1994).

Consequently, organisations may reduce their marketing expenditure, as Morgan and

⁶ The Herzberg, F. (1968) 'One more time: How do you motivate employees', *Harvard Business Review*, January-February, pp. 53-62. Two Factor Theory suggests that certain factors within a workplace can result in job satisfaction, however if they were absent, they themselves would not lead to dissatisfaction, but rather that overall satisfaction may not be achieved. The two factors were identified as 'motivators' (satisfiers) such as work recognition and responsibility, and 'Hygiene factors' (dissatisfiers) such as job security and salary.

Hunt (1994) and Sheth and Parvatlyar (1995) recognise the benefits of retaining existing customers.

A further benefit of customer satisfaction is widely recognised to be positive word-of-mouth communication (Cole and Illum, 2006, Kotler, 1994, Mason and Paggiaro, 2012, Murray and Howat, 2002, Yoon and Uysal, 2005). According to the models proposed by Antonides and Van Raaij (1998) and Bromley (2000), of how perceptions are formed about an organisation (discussed in Section 2.4), word-of-mouth is a key information source on which judgements are made. Thus, it becomes evident how satisfying stakeholders at events, leads to positive perceptions of the organisation's reputation by other stakeholders.

3.6 Chapter Summary

Typologies of events have been discussed, with a new typology of the strategic purpose of events suggested. This recognises that events can be a final product, or used as a strategic communication tool for both marketing and public relations, the latter of which is the focus for this thesis. Organisations use these events as a way of staging experiences and delivering messages to their stakeholders in order to positively influence their perceptions.

The principles of events as a means of relationship building, or an experiential marketing tool were argued. This discussion highlighted that these types of marketing events were largely focused on targeting a single stakeholder group (customers), with the aim of generating sales and increasing profitability. As profitability is a tangible asset, and is thus measurable, it is possible to assess the success of these event types through a comparison of sales pre and post event.

Public relations events were also discussed, with a particular focus on CPR and MPR events. CPR events are used as a tool to communicate the organisation's strategy, and

specific messages linked to this. These messages are suggested to often relate to key issues considered to be important to the organisation, or celebrating organisational success. Both of which are suggested to impact on reputation. While CPR events are primarily responsible for promoting the organisation's overall reputation, MPR events are used to build awareness of a specific campaign. MPR events are suggested to provide a link between an organisation's marketing and PR disciplines. This overlap provides a means for MPR events to adopt principles of relationship and experiential marketing. Nevertheless, these events still have the aim of increasing awareness and building reputation among a wider range of stakeholders, thus achieving a broader set of organisational objectives.

As the primary purpose of CPR and MPR events is to increase awareness and build reputation, it is difficult to measure their success, with little evidence evaluating if these types of events achieve these objectives. As reputation is an assessment of multiple stakeholders, it becomes obvious to use events where multiple stakeholders are in attendance, rather than solely a customer focused event, such as marketing events. CPR and MPR events involve a wider range of stakeholders in comparison to marketing events, and thus could impact the perceptions of a greater range of stakeholders. However, in order to assess this impact, and the success of PR events, an effective evaluation of these events needs to be developed.

Through staging planned events, such as CPR and MPR events, organisations are able to convey desired messages about their vision and values to their desired stakeholders. This creates the opportunity for an 'experience-scape' whereby the organisation can tailor the event experience to their audiences' needs, while providing an intended experience from the organisation. As a result of this staged experience, organisations are able to increase the possibility of visitor/ attendee satisfaction at their events.

Evaluating the success of events has previously been done through assessing economic and social impacts. However, there has yet to be a means of evaluating an event's impact on the host organisation's reputation. Service quality of events is suggested to have an influence on attendee satisfaction, which in turn leads to positive future actions. Furthermore, attendee motivation has also been linked to satisfaction. Thus, by identifying and understanding attendee motives, event organisers are able to better communicate the event objectives, to ensure that attendee expectations are met.

When evaluating the success of an event a number of factors should be considered. The attendees' satisfaction with the service quality ought to be assessed. This should be done by assessing if expectations of both intangible and tangible elements of the event were met. These factors are thought to achieve satisfaction if they meet or exceed prior expectations formed from previous experience. This is important as satisfaction has been found to lead to positive future decisions, which as a result could lead to positive perceptions of the host organisation's reputation.

4 Research objectives and Conceptual Framework

4.1 Introduction

Reputation is a debated term within the literature, and since the increased marketization of HE's, reputation has become increasingly important to Universities (discussed in Sections 1.1.3 and 2.3-2.6). Perceptions of reputation are formed on past experience, word-of-mouth communication, and from communication originating from the organisation (Section 2.4). Events have become an important communication tool to many organisations as they provide a platform for 'rich' communication to take place, and for organisations to positively shape their key messages (discussed in Section 3.3 - 3.4). Nevertheless, the impact of events (as a form of communication), on an organisation's reputation, has yet to be assessed.

Thus, the overall aim of this research, is:

To establish the extent that events impact on a university's reputation, as perceived by event attendees

This will be achieved by answering objectives, as identified from gaps within the literature (presented in Section 4.2). The first objective will be achieved by interviewing five senior managers at the case study organisation (discussed in Section 5.4.3), while objectives 2-6, will be achieved through a structural equation model (discussed in Section 5.4.5 and Chapters 8 and 9), completed following distribution of a quantitative questionnaire. As such, the conceptual framework for this research, in the form of a measurement and structural model, is presented in Section 4.3.

4.2 Research objectives

4.2.1 Objective 1 – The strategic purpose of events

A critique of the literature found that events have multiple purposes (discussed in Section 3.4). Events have increasingly become an effective communication tool, due to their 'richness', to deliver key messages, and consequently are now commonly used within organisation's communication strategies. The case study university (discussed in Section 5.2.2) is no different, as they include events within their communication strategy, along with other direct and indirect mediums (Lee, 2012, Plymouth University, 2012a). However, using events involves considerable commitment in terms of staffing hours and financial costs, in comparison to other communication channels (Allen et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the University does not identify the strategic reasons for holding events rather than simply using other forms of communication. Thus, the first objective of this research is:

Objective 1: To determine the role of university events as a strategic communication tool

4.2.2 Objective 2 - Reputation

Reputation measures exist in the for-profit and non-profit sectors (Alessandri et al., 2006, Fombrun et al., 2000, Ponzi et al., 2011, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007, Yang et al., 2008), including measures attempting to measure university reputation (discussed in Section 2.5 - 2.6) (Times Higher Education, 2012, Verčič et al., 2016). However, these measures display a number of weaknesses, causing their validity to be questioned (Dowling and Gardberg, 2012, Fombrun et al., 2000, Times Higher Education, 2014). The RepTrak System, has been recognised as addressing many of the weaknesses identified in other measurement models (Van Riel and Fombrun,

2007); it utilises characteristics included in other well-known measurement models, and it considers the perceptions of multiple stakeholder groups (discussed in Section 2.5.2) (Fombrun et al., 2015, Ponzi et al., 2011, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007). Nevertheless, it has yet to be applied to the non-profit sector in the UK, to test if the characteristics used are suitable to measure a non-profit organisation's reputation. Thus, this will be tested to identify if different organisation types can be assessed using the same characteristics.

Existing university reputation measurement models have also undergone scrutiny and have been criticised for their lack of validity relating to stakeholders and characteristics (Bowman and Bastedo, 2011, Marginson, 2014). Nevertheless, it is recognised that these measurement models include characteristics based on universities key business (teaching and research) and a primary stakeholder group (students) (discussed in Section 2.6). These characteristics will therefore be discussed during the interview phase of research, to determine if and how these characteristics should be included within the measurement scale (discussed in Section 6.6 - 6.7). Thus, it is an objective of this study to:

Objective 2: Determine the validity of existing reputation measurement characteristics to measure a university's reputation

4.2.3 Objective 3 - Knowledge of organisation

Stakeholder's familiarity with an organisation is recognised as a determinant of reputation (discussed in Section 2.7.1) (Greyser, 1999, Helm, 2005), with researchers suggesting that familiarity is formed from direct and indirect communication they receive (Helm, 2005, Ivy, 2001, Moise et al., 2012). Brooks et al. (2003) suggests that increased familiarity with an organisation provides the opportunity to gain more information about the organisation. Thus, engaging with an organisation's direct and

indirect communication channels enhances stakeholder's familiarity with an organisation through gaining additional information.

Similarly, an organisation's visibility is suggested to impact on perceptions of reputation (discussed in Section 2.7.2) (Fombrun et al., 2000), proposing that organisations that are more visible have better reputations (Brammer and Millington, 2005, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). Furthermore, organisations that are considered to be known internationally are thought to have enhanced reputations due to their global presence (Brammer and Millington, 2005). Thus, it is suggested that stakeholders with increased familiarity with an organisation, and who perceive an organisation to be highly visible, will have a better perception of its reputation.

Familiarity and visibility rely on stakeholder's gaining information about the organisation prior to making a judgement. Furthermore, engaging with communication channels from, and about, the university is recognised to increase stakeholder's knowledge of the organisation (discussed in Section 2.7.3 and 3.3) (Mishina et al., 2012).

Collectively, familiarity, visibility and communication channels are therefore considered as the *knowledge and familiarity* that a stakeholder has of the organisation. These concepts are all considered to be determinants of reputation, and thus, an objective of this research is to:

Objective 3: Analyse to what extent stakeholders' knowledge and familiarity of the organisation, influences their perceptions of the organisation's reputation

4.2.4 Objective 4 - Event influence

Stakeholder's perceptions of reputation are formed based on past experience, communication they received from the organisation, and from information gained from other stakeholder's experiences (discussed in Section 2.4) (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998). While stakeholder's past experiences, and information gained from third party

sources are difficult for an organisation to control, it is possible for an organisation to control their planned communication. Many authors recognise that direct face-to-face communication, such as at events, is the richest form of communication, and are therefore given a higher priority by receivers of information (Daft and Lengel, 1986, Fill, 2009, Gimpel et al., 2016, Ledford, 2012). Therefore, face-to-face communication is considered an important tool for shaping stakeholder's perceptions of an organisation's reputation.

Planned communication by an organisation is used to influence stakeholder's perceptions favourably towards the organisation (discussed in Section 3.4). Events provide a useful platform for positively shaping perceptions, as they allow for communication and experiences to be staged (O'Dell and Billing, 2005). Consequently, events are increasingly being incorporated into organisation's communication strategies in the form of marketing and public relations events. This enables the organisation to positively influence stakeholder's perceptions to generate sales, or to improve perceptions of reputation. Nevertheless, measuring the success of these events in improving perceptions of reputation has, to the author's knowledge, not previously been done.

Attendee satisfaction has previously been used as a measure of events success (Drummond and Anderson, 2004, Jain and Gupta, 2004, Parasuraman et al., 1988), and is also considered a determinant of reputation (discussed in Section 2.7.4 and 3.5.2). Therefore, measuring customer satisfaction while at events becomes an important aspect when assessing reputation, as this could influence attendees' perceptions of the organisation as a whole. This is considered to be the influence of the event on reputation, and thus, the following objective is proposed:

Objective 4: To ascertain the impact that event attendees' satisfaction of a university event, has on their perception of the organisation's reputation

4.2.5 Objectives 5 & 6 - Future intentions

Event satisfaction and positive reputations are linked to future intentions and actions by stakeholders (discussed in Section 2.7.5 and 3.5.2) (Getz et al., 2001, Kahneman and Miller, 1986, Kim et al., 2014). These include repeat visits or future engagement with the organisation, positive word-of-mouth, and positive associations (Cole and Illum, 2006, Jones and Suh, 2000, Lee and Beeler, 2009, Mason and Nassivera, 2013, Pettersson and Getz, 2009, Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Additionally, as events are a form of communication, they are recognised to contribute to stakeholder's knowledge of the organisation. Consequently, stakeholders will know more about the organisation, and will have formed positive perceptions of the company. Therefore, satisfaction and perceptions of reputation are suggested to influence stakeholder's future intentions. Thus, objectives 5 and 6 are proposed as follows:

Objective 5: To analyse the impact event satisfaction has on stakeholder's future intentions

Objective 6: To analyse the impact of an organisation's reputation on stakeholders' future intentions

4.3 Conceptual framework

4.3.1 Model identification and model assumptions

From the literature review in Chapters 2 and 3, and identified from the objectives in Section 4.2, it is evident that the factors underpinning this research are all latent variables, as they use a combination of other variables to be measured (Blunch, 2013, Hair et al., 2006). Within this section, a proposed structural model is developed suggesting possible relationships between these latent variables (Figure 4.1). It is understood by the researcher that these relationships have yet to be tested in the

context of university events, as there is currently no published literature available.

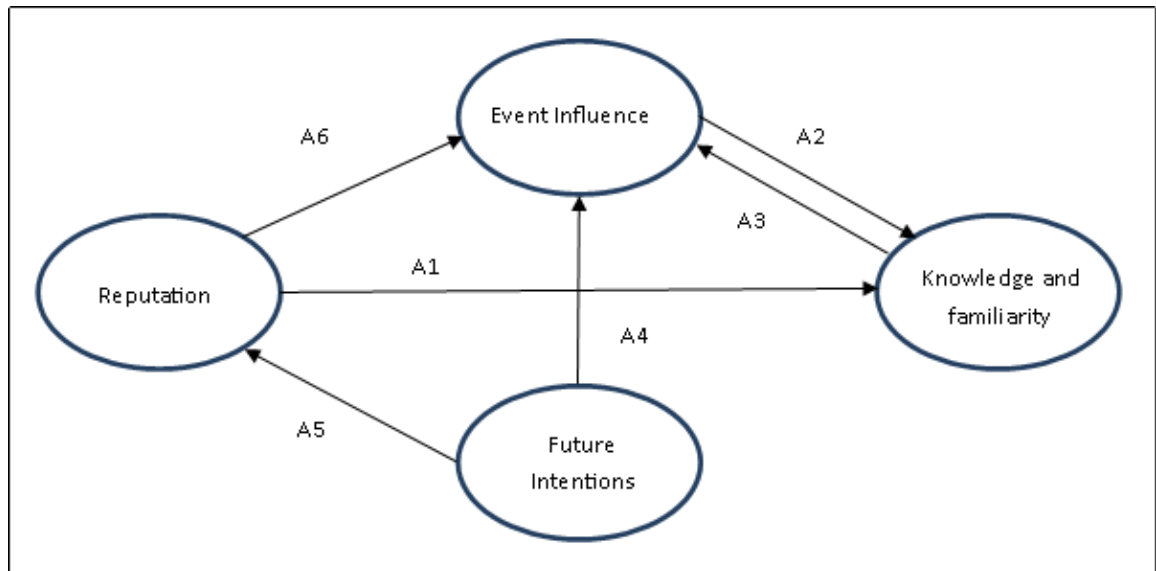
Thus, by determining the relationships between these variables, the researcher aims to contribute to the event management and reputation literature. The measurement model for each variable will also be identified, to demonstrate the factors contributing towards these latent variables.

4.3.1.1 The proposed structural model and model assumptions

The proposed structural model identified in Figure 4.1 represents the four latent variables reputation, knowledge and familiarity, event influence, and future intentions.

The theorised relationships between these variables are represented and supported by the literature in the following ways.

Figure 4.1 Proposed structural model



Stakeholders are suggested to base their perceptions of an organisation on their familiarity with that organisation, which can influence their perceptions of the organisation’s reputation (Helm, 2005). Stakeholders who attend events are thought to

have an increased familiarity with the organisation due to the richness of information they receive while attending (Crowther, 2010a). As this information forms part of a planned experience, the messages that they receive are thought to be positive and thus give the stakeholder a positive perception of the organisation (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014, O'Dell and Billing, 2005). Furthermore, organisations that are viewed to be visible internationally are thought to have a better reputation due to their global status (Brammer and Millington, 2005, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990).

Familiarity, visibility and communication (which have collectively been termed the Knowledge and Familiarity of an organisation) are all considered determinants of reputation. Nevertheless, the nature of this relationship is debated within the literature, as some authors argue that increased knowledge of an organisation leads to negative perceptions while others suggest that positive perceptions occur (discussed in Section 2.7.1). Furthermore, while some authors suggest a positive and direct role between familiarity and reputation (Bromley, 1993, Dowling, 1986, Turban, 2001), Brooks et al. (2003) proposes an indirect link. Therefore, confirmation of this relationship, and whether it is positive or negative will be tested with the following assumptions⁷:

A1: Knowledge and Familiarity have a direct and positive relationship with Reputation

And

A2 + A6: Knowledge and Familiarity have an indirect and positive relationship with Reputation

⁷ Justification for use of the terminology 'assumptions' rather than 'hypotheses' is discussed in Section 5.4.6.2.

Event attendee satisfaction, measured through service quality characteristics, is assessed based on attendee expectations, with satisfaction occurring if their expectations have been met or exceeded (Carlsen et al., 2000, O'Neill et al., 1999). These expectations are formed from previous experience, knowledge of the organisation, and communication received from the organisation (discussed in Section 3.5) (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1985, Petrick et al., 2013). Consequently, event attendee satisfaction is recognised to be influenced by their knowledge and familiarity of the organisation.

As satisfaction is based on prior experience, it is also suggested that the experience at an event can influence future expectations and thus has the ability to change the perceptions of the person attending the event (Lee and Beeler, 2009, Petrick et al., 2013). In addition, attendees gain information during the event, as events are a communication tool, and therefore attending the event can contribute to attendees' knowledge and familiarity of the organisation. Nevertheless, these relationships have yet to be tested and thus, the following assumptions are made:

A2: Knowledge and Familiarity is positively and directly related to Event Influence

And

A3: Event Influence is positively and directly related to Knowledge and Familiarity

Positive future intentions are recognised as a consequence of both attendee satisfaction and a positive reputation (discussed in Section 2.7.5 and 3.5.2). This includes behaviours such as repeat visits for events, and positive word-of-mouth communication (Kim et al., 2014, Lee and Beeler, 2009). Consequently, attendee satisfaction from an event, and positive perceptions of the organisation's reputation are

suggested to have a positive relationship with stakeholder's future intentions. Thus, the following assumptions are made:

A4: Event Influence is positively and directly related to Future Intentions

And

A5: Reputation is positively and directly related to Future Intentions

Events are a communication tool used to shape perceptions of the organisation's stakeholders favourably (discussed in Section 3.4). This is achieved through planned messages and staged experiences to ensure satisfaction occurs (Crowther, 2010b, Kim et al., 2014, O'Dell and Billing, 2005), which is recognised as a determinant of reputation (Section 2.7.4). Consequently, satisfaction from attending an event is suggested to influence stakeholder's perceptions of reputation through satisfaction. Thus the following assumption is made:

A6: Event Influence is directly and positively related to Reputation

4.3.2 Model variables: the measurement model

As previously mentioned, each of the variables in the structural model is latent as they cannot be measured directly. As such, each latent variable is measured using observed variables, which will be used to determine the effect and relationships between each of these variables. These observed variables form the measurement model within the structural model and are identified below.

4.3.2.1 University reputation

The RepTrak System will form the foundation to develop a university reputation measurement model. The 23 characteristics measured in this model make up seven core groups to measure reputation (discussed in Section 2.5.2 and presented in Table 4.1) (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007). The RepTrak System also assesses reputation based on four emotional appeal characteristics (Table 4.2). These characteristics elicit participant’s perceptions of corporate reputation (Highhouse et al., 2009), with positive emotions towards an organisation, linked to improved reputation (Deng et al., 2013, Willems et al., 2016).

Table 4.1 RepTrak System Characteristics

| Core group (latent variable) | Measured Characteristic |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Innovation | Innovative |
| | First to market |
| | Adapts quickly to change |
| Citizenship | Is a positive influence on the community |
| | Environmentally responsible |
| | Supports good causes |
| Workplace | Offers equal opportunities |
| | Employee wellbeing |
| | Rewards employees fairly |
| Governance | Open and Transparent |
| | Behaves Ethically |
| | Fair in the way it does business |
| Leadership | Clear Vision for the future |
| | Excellent management |
| | Well organised |
| | Appealing leader |
| Products and Services | High Quality |
| | Value for money |
| | Meets customer needs |
| | Stands behind |
| Performance | High performing |
| | Strong growth prospects |
| | Profitability |

Table 4.2 Emotional Appeal Characteristics

| Core group (latent variable) | Measured Characteristic |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Emotional Appeal | Esteem |
| | Admire |
| | Trust |
| | Feeling |

Ponzi et al. (2011) suggests including a measure of overall reputation (discussed in section 2.6.1) however, Bowman and Bastedo (2011) and Rauhvargers (2013) recognise this to be invalid within performance rankings. As a difference between these authors research relates to for-profit and non-profit reputation measure research, this variable will be included to test its validity alongside the RepTrak System characteristics. Research has suggested that perceptions of prior reputation influences future decisions (Hwang et al., 2017, Kim, 2011). As this research aims to assess reputation following attendance at an event, and the impact that the event had on the organisation’s reputation, an overall view of prior perceptions of reputation will be sought to assist in assessing this change. These two characteristics are grouped to form perceptions of Overall Reputation (Table 4.3).

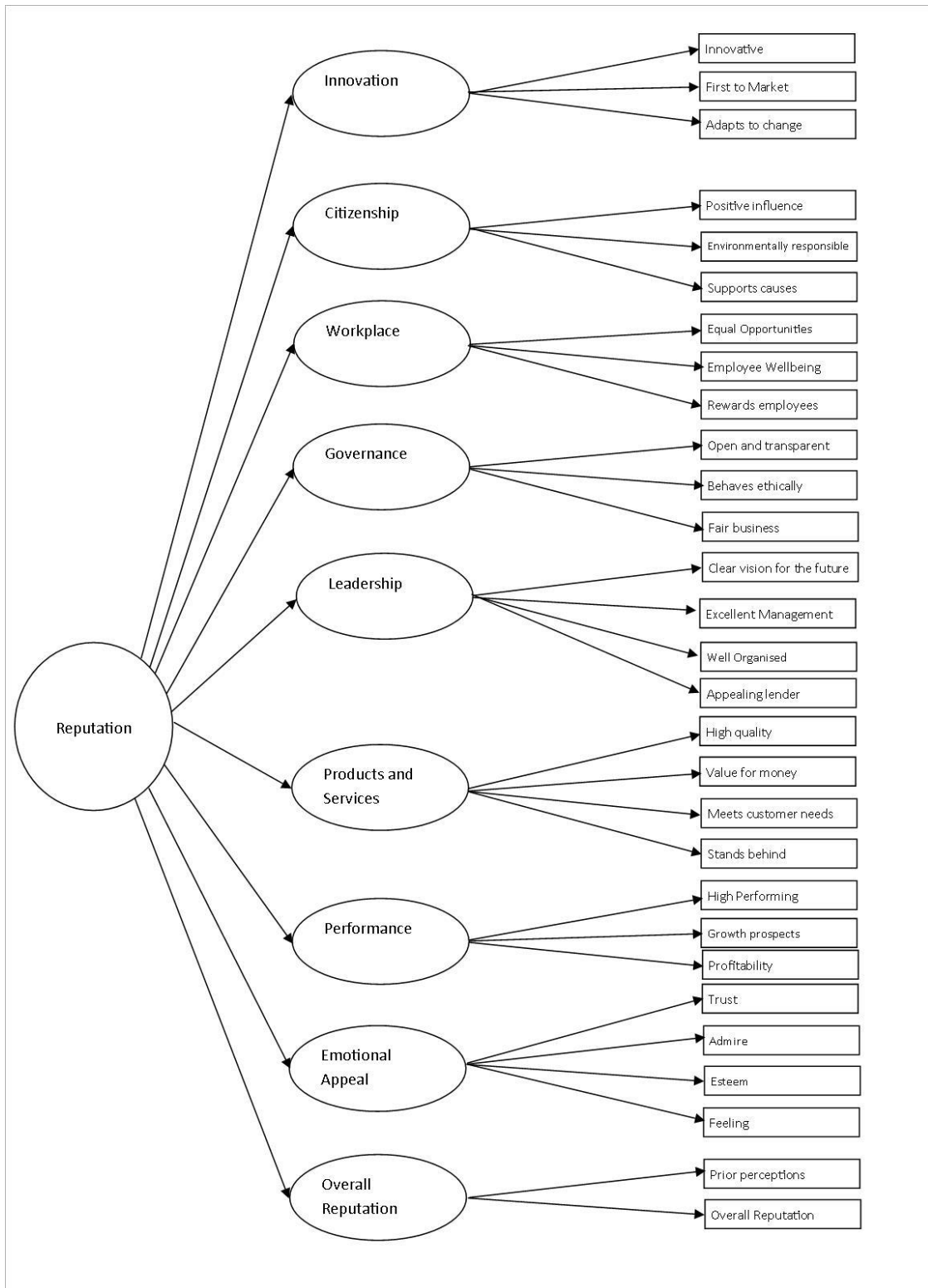
Table 4.3 Overall Reputation Characteristics

| Core group (latent variable) | Measured Characteristic |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Overall Reputation | Prior perceptions of reputation |
| | Overall perceptions of reputation |

These 29 characteristics form nine core factors, which together measure reputation. The measurement model of these variables is demonstrated in Figure 4.2. These characteristics will be evaluated during the interview phase, to determine if they need to be altered, or additional characteristics included (Section 6.6). The final characteristics will then be assessed to determine their validity in measuring reputation,

and to identify if they form the same core groups as suggested by this measurement model (discussed in Chapter 8 and 9).

Figure 4.2 Reputation measurement model



4.3.2.2 Knowledge and familiarity of the organisation

The latent variable Knowledge and Familiarity (KF) is made up of visibility characteristics, familiarity characteristics and the frequency stakeholders use different communication methods to gain information about the university. The measurement model of these characteristics is shown in Figure 4.3, and is made up of the following variables.

Visibility is measured using four characteristics shown in Table 4.4. These indicate the respondents' perceptions of the organisation's visibility from 'not being well-known', which is assessed as a reverse indicator, to 'well-known worldwide'.

Table 4.4 Visibility Characteristics

| Core group (latent variable) | Measured Characteristic |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Visibility | Is not well-known |
| | Is well-known locally |
| | Is well-known in the UK |
| | Is well-known worldwide |

A person's familiarity with the organisation is based on two characteristics identified in Table 4.5. Personal familiarity asked respondents to assess how well they perceived themselves to know The University. Additionally, a stakeholder's engagement with events at the university was also assessed, as the more events a stakeholder attends, the more familiar they are considered to be with the organisation (Crowther, 2010a).

Table 4.5 Familiarity Characteristics

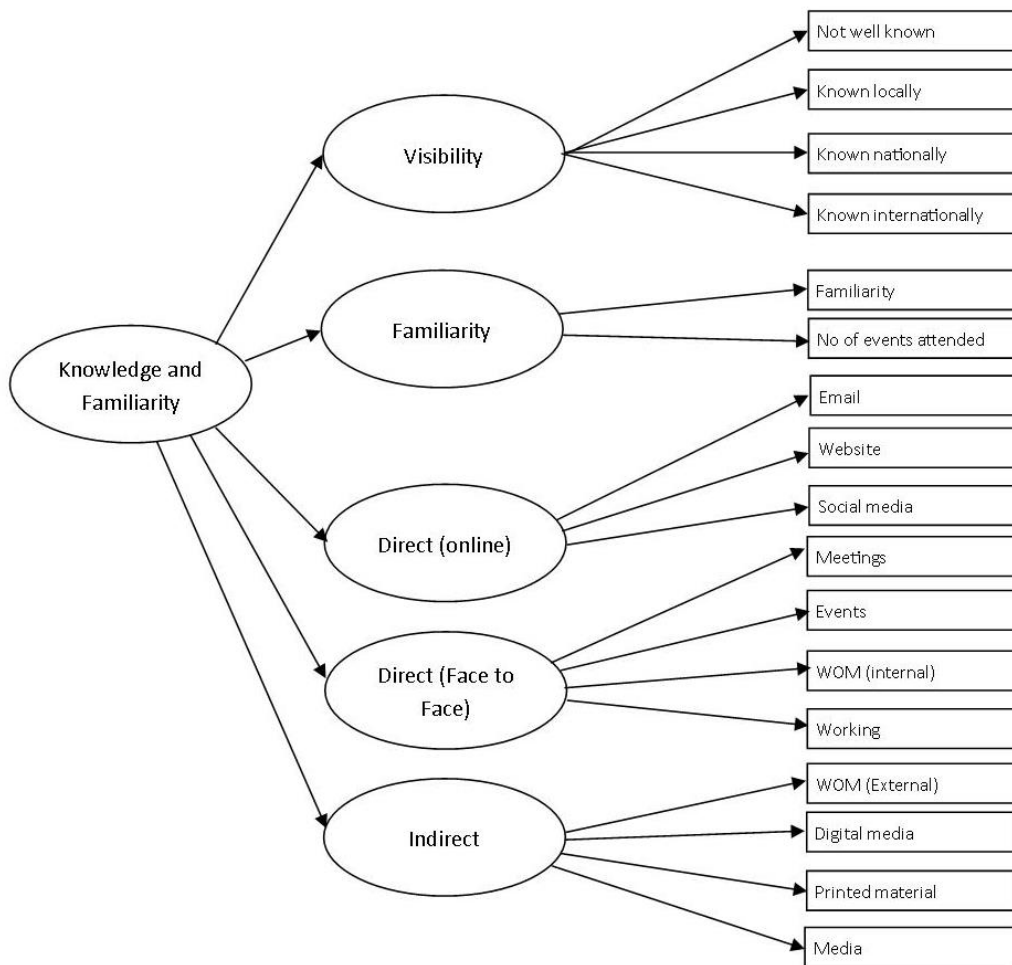
| Core group (latent variable) | Measured Characteristic |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Familiarity | Number of events attended |
| | Personal familiarity |

The means that stakeholders gain their information is also viewed to be important to their knowledge of the organisation (Cornelissen, 2014, Fill, 2009). Thus, respondents were asked to assess the frequency that they use different communication channels to gain information about the university. These channels are identified in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Communication Methods Used

| Core group (latent variable) | | Measured Characteristic |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Communication methods used | Direct (Online Communication) | Email |
| | | Website |
| | | Social media |
| | Direct (Face-to-face Communication) | Attending meetings* |
| | | Attending events |
| | | Word-of-Mouth (from staff/students) |
| | | Working at the university |
| | Indirect Communication | Word-of-Mouth (external) |
| | | Digital media |
| | | Printed material |
| | | Media |
| | | Other |
| *meetings were listed as separate from other events as the pilot group suggested that they would not associate it as an event | | |

Figure 4.3 Knowledge of university measurement model



4.3.2.3 Event influence (Service Quality and Event impact)

The Event Influence variable is comprised of service quality characteristics used to measure satisfaction, and attendee observations of the event impact on their perceptions of university reputation. Satisfaction is measured using service quality characteristics (Drummond and Anderson, 2004, Jain and Gupta, 2004, Parasuraman et al., 1988). These characteristics, shown in Table 4.7, were identified and adapted from existing service quality measures for events. These 14 characteristics were identified as being common, and therefore relevant, to all possible university events. As recommended by Getz (1997), both tangible (physical) and intangible (non-physical)

characteristics are included. Several researchers also suggest including a measure of overall satisfaction (Ganesh et al., 2000, McCollough et al., 2000, Petrick et al., 1999), assessed through overall expectations, and this was therefore also included.

Table 4.7 Service Quality Characteristics

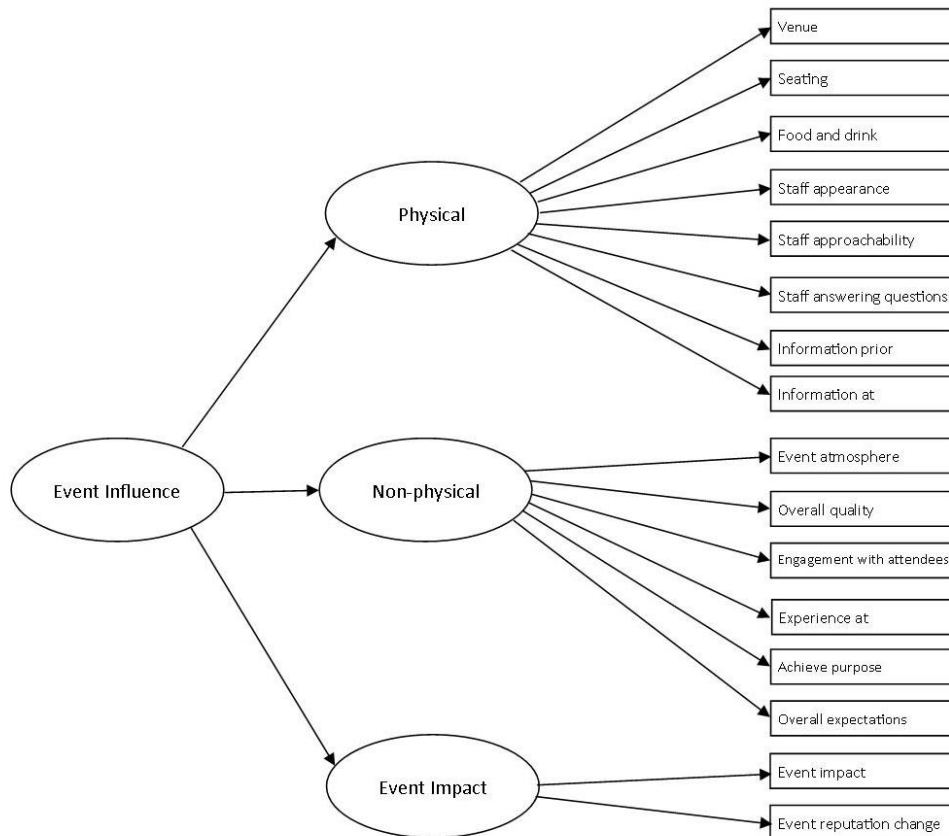
| Core group (latent variable) | | Measured Characteristic |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Service Quality | Physical attributes | Venue |
| | | Seating |
| | | Food and drink |
| | | Staff Appearance |
| | | Staff were approachable |
| | | Staff were able to answer questions |
| | | Information received prior to the event |
| | | Information at the event |
| | Non-physical Attributes | Experience while at the event |
| | | Event atmosphere |
| | | Overall quality of the event |
| | | Engagement with other attendees |
| | | Event achieved its promised purpose |
| | | Overall expectations of the event met |

Similarly to measuring overall reputation, a measure of the overall event impact is included (Table 4.8), as a means of gaining a general understanding of the impact that events have on perceptions of the organisation. As an objective of the research is to determine the impact of events on a university’s reputation, the impact the events have on event attendees will be asked, in addition to attendees’ perceptions of how this influenced their overall perceptions of the university’s reputation. Service quality and Event impact together make up the Event Influence variable, for which the measurement model is shown in Figure 4.4.

Table 4.8 Event Impact Characteristics

| Core group (latent variable) | Measured Characteristic |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Event Impact | Event impact on reputation, |
| | Reputation change following the event |

Figure 4.4 Event Influence measurement model



4.3.2.4 Future Intentions

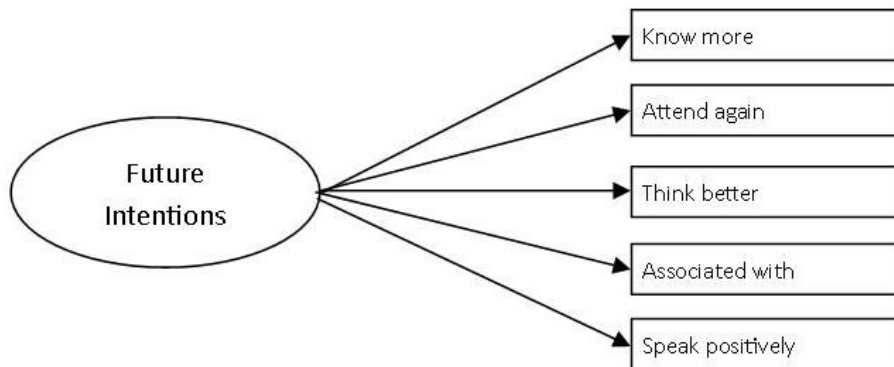
Both satisfaction and a positive reputation have previously been linked to stakeholders’ future intentions (discussed in Section 2.7.5 and 3.5.2) (Kim et al., 2014, Lee and Beeler, 2009, O’Neill et al., 1999). These include actions such as repeat visits and positive word of mouth, and as such these measured characteristics are used to assess stakeholders’ overall future intentions. These measured characteristics are

identified in Table 4.9, with the corresponding measurement model shown in Figure 4.5.

Table 4.9 Future Intentions Characteristics

| Core group (latent variable) | Measured Characteristic |
|------------------------------|---|
| Future Intentions | I feel I know more about the university after attending the event |
| | I would attend another event in the future |
| | I am pleased to be associated with the university |
| | I would speak positively about my experience at the event |
| | The more I know about the university, the better I think of it |

Figure 4.5 Future Intentions measurement model



4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the objectives and conceptual framework proposed to address the main aim of this research, *to establish the extent that events impact on a university's reputation*. Four latent variables are identified within this research (Reputation, Knowledge and Familiarity, Event Influence, and Future Intentions), which makes up the structural model (Figure 4.1). The relationships between these latent variables are postulated, with six assumptions made, which this research will address. Each latent variable is measured using a set of observed variables, which are discussed, and their measurement models identified (Figures 4.2-4.5), to demonstrate how each variable contributes to the overall construct. These relationships are tested and discussed in Chapter 8 and 9, however prior to this, objective 1 is achieved in Chapter 6, and all descriptive data is discussed in Chapter 7.

5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses how the aim and objectives of this thesis will be achieved. The rationale for a pragmatic research philosophy is presented in addition to the use of a case study methodology approach. Existing reputation measurement approaches are addressed, and while many methods are identified as suitable, the use of interviews followed by a quantitative questionnaire are found to be the most common data collection techniques. In addition to their popularity of use, evidence suggests they also yield results to satisfy the research objectives, and are thus selected to be used within this study. Consequently, the adoption of a mixed methods sequential research design is justified

The two phases of data collection and analysis are presented. Qualitative interviews, phase 1, are conducted with five senior managers at the university. These participants are selected using purposive sampling following analysis of The University's strategy. Thematic analysis is used to analyse the responses from the interviews, to address objective 1, as well as inform phase 2 of the research by identifying the sample and contributing to the research questionnaire.

The second research phase, the quantitative questionnaire with event attendees, aims to address objectives 2-6. The development and pilot study of the questionnaire is discussed, and the most appropriate distribution technique of face-to-face, email and online completion is identified. Structural equation modelling is selected as the analysis method for the questionnaire responses, as it is the most suitable for testing relationships between variables (the aim of this research). This will identify if characteristics used within the RepTrak System are valid for use within a non-profit sector of Higher Education within the United Kingdom, and determine the impact of events on attendees' perceptions of The University's reputation. Finally, the process of

assessing the measurement and structural model developed within Chapter 4 is discussed identifying means to assess the goodness-of-fit, validity and reliability of the proposed models.

5.1.1 Research objectives

The research objectives, proposed in Chapter 4, will be reached with the intention to fulfil the overall aim of this thesis; 'to establish the extent that events impact on a university's reputation, as perceived by event attendees'. Table 5.1 identifies how, and in which chapter each objective will be achieved.

Table 5.1 Research Objectives

| Research objective | How achieved: research phase | Discussion chapter: objective achieved |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. To determine the role of university events as a strategic communication tool | Phase 1: Semi-structured Interviews | Chapter 6 |
| 2. Determine the validity of existing for-profit reputation measurement characteristics, by measuring a university's reputation | Phase 2: Quantitative Questionnaire | Chapter 8 & 9 |
| 3. Analyse to what extent stakeholders' knowledge and familiarity, of the organisation, has on their perceptions of the organisation's reputation | Phase 2: Quantitative Questionnaire | Chapter 7, 8 & 9 |
| 4. To ascertain the level of impact that event attendees' satisfaction has on their perception of the organisation's reputation | Phase 2: Quantitative Questionnaire | Chapter 7, 8 & 9 |
| 5. To analyse the impact event satisfaction has on future intentions | Phase 2: Quantitative Questionnaire | Chapter 7, 8 & 9 |
| 6. To analyse the impact of an organisation's reputation on stakeholders' future intentions | Phase 2: Quantitative Questionnaire | Chapter 8 & 9 |

5.2 Methodological approach and research design

5.2.1 Rationale for research Philosophy

Philosophy provides foundations for research to be done in particular scientific specialisms (Benton and Craib, 2011, Bostock et al., 2015). It enables the researcher to demonstrate a sound underpinning for the methodology and methods of data collection used during the research process, by highlighting key theoretical frameworks which have been developed throughout history (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). These underpinnings are identified through ontology, the philosophical study of the nature of being, or reality; and epistemology, the philosophical theory of knowledge and how it is created; each of which is unique to the different paradigms of inquiry (Howell, 2013). The paradigm aims to inform research design in connection to the combination of techniques and methodology used to gather and analyse data to answer the research question. Kuhn (1970) recognised the importance of these paradigms (also referred to as worldviews) in guiding research, and was the first to suggest that different/ competing paradigms could exist along-side each other.

Historically, the two predominant philosophical positions within the Social Sciences have been phenomenology and positivism (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). However, over the last five decades, the concept of a pragmatist philosophy has also been widely accepted (Johnson and Rohrer, 2007, Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). This is akin to Kuhn's (2012) concept of paradigm shift, suggesting that a wider array of stances could be adopted in order to answer a single question. The key ideas of these philosophical perspectives are identified below, in order to justify a pragmatist philosophy being selected for this research.

Phenomenology has been described as a way to broaden the way we look at the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, Howell, 2013). It is a philosophical approach to the study of phenomena and human experience (Holloway, 1997), with the types of experience

ranging from 'thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and volition to bodily awareness, and social activity' (Howell, 2013). The phenomenological perspective is largely subjective and follows that reality is constructed in the mind of the researcher and can 'exist only in the context of a mental framework' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, Guba, 1990, p. 25).

In contrast to this is the positivist perspective, which identifies that only an objective account of the real world can be true (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), and that there is a reality to be studied and understood (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). A positivist perspective largely adopts a quantitative approach, while phenomenology is typically characterised by its use of qualitative research methodologies and methods of data collection (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The superiority of each of these perspectives has been debated extensively within philosophical and research literature (Datta, 1994, Guba and Lincoln, 1994, Rossi, 1994). As a result of these debates, a mixed method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods emerged, which adopted many of the ideas of classical pragmatists (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

Pragmatism is suggested to counter paradigm arguments, which have been based on the link between epistemology and method (Howe, 1988, Shusterman, 2016). It can be traced back to the 19th century American scholars Pierce, James and Dewey; however, more contemporary theorists have included Quine, Rorty and Davidson (Ansell, 2016, Shusterman, 2016, Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Pragmatism ignores metaphysical concepts such as 'truth', and substitutes these premises for 'what works' (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006, Mertens, 2014, Rorty, 1982, Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

Furthermore, pragmatism identifies the 'research problem/ question' as central to the research process (Ansell, 2016, Creswell, 2003). As a result, data collection and methods of analysis are chosen by what is thought to provide the most insight into a research phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Consequently, pragmatism has been widely

adopted as a philosophical perspective to justify mixed method research (Mertens, 2014, Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

A pragmatic approach, adopting a mixed methods design, may include both inductive and deductive methods (Creswell and Clark, 2011). This encourages the confirmation of existing theories and the exploration of new theories, such as the development of a new measurement scale, based on existing research (an aim and objective of this research, Section 5.1.1). Thus, a pragmatic approach is selected, as it is considered to yield a greater understanding of the research phenomenon of 'reputation'.

5.2.2 Case Study Methodology

The methodology of a research project, has an impact on the methods selected to conduct an investigation, and is influenced by the ontology and epistemology of the paradigm of inquiry (Howell, 2013, Pernecky and Jamal, 2010). As such, the methodology can influence the outcomes of the selected study by determining appropriate methods of data collection to gain an in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon (Stake, 1995). Types of methodology include ethnography, grounded theory, hermeneutics, action research and a case-study approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) to name a few.

Hermeneutics, is the study and interpretation of historical texts or records to understand the meaning within a cultural context at the time it was created (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, Patton, 2002, Schwandt, 2000), while action research is a participatory process, which assesses human interaction and behaviour (Whyte, 1991). Neither of these methodologies is suitable, as the research question does not relate to/ or involve any historical records, or lend itself to participation by the researcher, as this may result in biased responses from event attendees. Ethnography, which is a description of people and has an emphasis on culture to interpret social interactions (Collis and

Hussey, 2009, p. 79, Holloway, 1997), is also not appropriate to the research question, as social interaction are not being assessed. Similarly, an objective of this research is not to generate theory, a principle aim when adopting a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2000, Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Strauss and Corbin, 1997).

A case study methodology, however, is an intensive investigation of a particular unit/organisation over a period of time (Henderson, 1991 :88), and can include a single and/or multiple cases (Tellis, 1997, Yin, 2013). A single case approach is appropriate for a variety of circumstances, including theory testing, knowledge building, and as an exploratory device (Yin, 2013), all of which this research aims to do, by testing an existing theory (RepTrak System) within a new context.

Two limitations of case study research are that the results are not generalised in the traditional sense, as it is difficult to assess the representativeness of a larger population (Algozzine and Hancock, 2016, Eisenhardt, 1989, Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001). Furthermore, they are viewed to be less vigorous than other research methods due to the smaller populations under investigation (Darke et al., 1998). Nevertheless, case study research does provides in depth answers, within a real-life context (Yin, 2013), which is viewed as a strength of case study research, as it allows a question to be answered with a relatively full understanding of the context (Meredith, 1998). Thus, a case study research methodology will be able to provide an in depth response to the aim of this research, and subsequently contribute to existing knowledge and literature within the field.

5.2.2.1 *The case study institution*

The case study organisation is a modern South-West University, which was granted university status following the introduction of the Higher and Further Education Act 1992. It is viewed to be a part of the 'University Alliance' (Universities UK, 2015)

mission group, with a balanced focus on research, teaching, enterprise and innovation. This is reflected in The University's mission and vision of 'Advancing knowledge and transforming lives through education and research; to be the enterprise university, promoting a bold, adventurous spirit and creativity in all that we do.' The University is in the top 60 global modern universities⁸, and is ranked in the top 400 in the Times Higher Education world university rankings (Times Higher Education, 2015a). The University is in the top 10 largest universities in the UK, with a student population of nearly 26,000 (Plymouth University, 2015e), and staff population of over 3000 (Plymouth University, 2016) in 2016.

5.2.2.2 University Communication strategy

The University acknowledges it has a vast array of stakeholders within the city, region, nationally and internationally, which include students, staff, alumni, businesses, the local community, funding bodies, and government. It aims to engage these stakeholders through 'effective communication', 'social media, events and other channels' (Plymouth University, 2012a, p. 19). The University has an active digital and social media presence with the main University twitter account having over 33,000 followers (Plymouth University, 2015b) and the main Facebook account having over 35,000 people who have 'liked' their page (Plymouth University, 2015c). The University's homepage of the website had over 5 million unique visitors in 2015 (Lee, 2016a). Staff and alumni of the university receive separate monthly e-newsletters providing updates and news of what is taking place at the university. Additionally, the university has a number of digital screens around the campus providing information of upcoming events, and displays awards that the university has achieved.

⁸ Modern universities are recognised as those under 50 years of age.

The University also adopts more traditional printed communication methods, producing posters, flyers, a quarterly magazine, and new prospectuses of university courses annually. It has a strong media presence and generated over £1m Advertising Value Equivalents in media stories throughout 2015 (Sampson, 2016). 11.9% of these stories gained international coverage, 41.7% national coverage, and 46.4% regional and local coverage (Sampson, 2016), suggesting that The University is a visible institution.

The University's communication strategy and ambitions also includes the use of events to engage with its stakeholders (Plymouth University, 2012a). In 2015, The University was involved with over 500 events (Wilson, 2015). The involvement was through either: hosting on behalf of an external organisation, representing The University through attendance and/or sponsorship, or holding an event in order to satisfy an objective, which it identifies as linking to The University's strategy. The first category is recognised as achieving a marketing purpose for The University by increasing revenue. The other categories are thought to achieve a public relations purpose, by increasing awareness of The University and its objectives, and in turn its reputation (a primary function of PR activities). Nevertheless, The University does not actively measure the impact of holding these events on their reputation (discussed in Section 6.5.4), thus supporting the aim and objectives of this research.

5.3 Ethical considerations

In accordance with Plymouth University research procedures, ethical approval for this research was sought from the Faculty Research Ethical Committee (FREC) (Plymouth University, 2015a). The application and ethical guidelines identify six areas for consideration, including: *Informed consent, openness and honesty, right to withdraw, protection from harm, debriefing and confidentiality* (Plymouth University, 2015a). As such, procedures were put in place throughout the research process to ensure participants were treated with appropriate ethical considerations. The approved

research ethics form, information sheets and consent forms are shown in Appendix 4 - 7.

5.4 Methods and analysis

5.4.1 Existing reputation measurement challenges

Historic and current measures of reputation have relied heavily on the use of surveys or attitude scales in order to gain the perceptions of stakeholders (Stacks et al., 2013, van Riel et al., 1998). However, there are other methods suggested to benefit research in this field (van Riel et al., 1998), such as those identified in Table 5.2. Van Riel et al. (1998) propose that open-ended methods are more suitable in providing considerably more qualitative descriptions to help to identify reputation characteristics, which can be used to inform closed methods. Nevertheless, closed methods are the preferred method to monitor reputation (image), make comparisons over time, and benchmark against communication objectives.

Table 5.2 Alternative question types suggested for reputation research (Based on van Riel et al., (1998))

| Question type | | Description |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Closed ended question types | Attitude Scales | Attitudes held towards an organisation – typically uses Likert scale |
| | Q-sorts | Comparison method – identify the applicability of statements to specific organisation |
| Open ended question types | Kelly Repertory Grid (KPG) | Identifies characteristics by asking participants to view three alternatives organisations; decides which characteristics are most similar to help create dimensions for measurement |
| | Natural Grouping | Sort large number of corporate names into two subsets, and then ask why each group was put together – criteria which participants suggest as |

| Question type | | Description |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| | | reasons for separating groups can be used to measure reputation. |
| | Laddering | In-depth interview – participants are asked to articulate thoughts about organisation, the earlier the characteristic is mentioned, the more important it is. |
| | Photo-sorts | Presentation of photos to participants |

Although van Riel et al. (1998) suggest the use of open methods to provide a description of reputation, closed methods are considered to yield better results for quantitative analysis of an organisation's reputation characteristics. As the aim of this research is to assess the impact of attending an event on stakeholders' perceptions of an organisation's reputation, a quantitative and thus closed-ended question type is viewed as more appropriate.

Reputation measurement scales, suitable to different contexts, have previously been created (Dowling, 2004, Fombrun et al., 2000, Greyser, 1999, Yoon et al., 1993). Table 5.3 identifies these measurement scales and their developmental stages, methods of data collection and type of analysis. Similarities between the measurement scales is evident; these include, how measurement characteristics are identified, the use of questionnaires with Likert scale question types (Caruana and Chircop, 2000, Davies, 2003, Newell and Goldsmith, 2001, Yoo and Donthu, 2001), and structural equation modelling as a primary means of data analysis (Brown, 1995, Fombrun et al., 2015, Gardberg and Fombrun, 2002, Helm, 2005, Ponzi et al., 2011). Although existing reputation scales have been criticised, this has related to measurement characteristics and the stakeholders measured (discussed in Section 2.5), and not the methods adopted. Thus, these common approaches are considered to be used within this research.

Table 5.3 Existing reputation measurement scales: method and analysis type

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model Name | Development stages Method | Pilot study method | Method used | No of respondents | Analysis type |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|-------------------|---------------|
| 1990 | Brand Power/ Corporate branding index | Not available | Not available | 1000 of world's best brands - familiarity rated on 5 point scale - if familiar, respondents then asked to rate on favourability dimensions (4 point scale): overall reputation, perception of management, investment potential | 10000 | Not available |
| Van Riel and Balmer (1997) | NA | Not available | Not available | Spider web method (Bernstein, 1986) - interview/ discussions with top managers to identify dimensions | Not available | Not available |
| Lewis (1999) | NA | Done in 3 stages: 1) public opinion research, 2) tailored research - measures set of attributes, 3) strengths and weaknesses of brands | Not available | Public opinion research to track background of public concerns - i.e. social responsibility; tailored research to measure how a company rate on a specific set of attributes; diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses and actions for future | Not available | Not available |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model Name | Development stages Method | Pilot study method | Method used | No of respondents | Analysis type |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Yoo and Donthu (1999) | Multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale (MBE) | Items with low correlation to composite variable left out. Keeping high Cronbach Alpha coefficient. | 460 undergraduate students surveyed - 414 useable responses. Questionnaire in English and Korean, 4 versions for different brands - 5 point Likert | Self-administered questionnaire - 5 point scale | 650 Korean, 350 American Korean, 650 American questionnaires - 1530 eligible responses | Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Nunnally and Berstein, 1994). 1) Individual analysis - identify common dimensions - exploratory factor analysis. 2) multi-group analysis - factorial invariance. 3) Pooled analysis. O-factor analysis. LISREL - confirmatory factor analysis |
| Caruana and Chircop (2000,43) | Brand Equity Scale | Instrument developed using recognised process recommended by scholars (Churchill, 1979; Saxe and Weitz, 1982 and Fombrun, 1996). Exploratory qualitative research - focus groups to general items (x4 or 9 participants). 34 item questionnaire - expert panel of 12 managers | 32 item survey - 120 consumers (5point Likert) - negatively worded items reverse scored. Items correlated at less than 0.5 were eliminated (McKelvey, 1976) - leaves 12 items | 19 items - 12 from pilot stage, 6 items semantic scale (7point Likert)(Levitt, 1965; Brown, 1995) and single item asking 'overall impression' (5point Likert) | 164 undergraduate students | Prelim analysis - exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring followed by Varimax rotation - results indicate unidimensional factor structure. Second data collection can test validity (Churchill, 1979). Exploratory factor analysis, principal axis factoring and Varimax rotation. |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model Name | Development stages Method | Pilot study method | Method used | No of respondents | Analysis type |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Newell and Goldsmith (2001) | Corporate Credibility Scale | Exploratory factor analysis and internal consistency to select final dimensions. 2nd data set - confirmatory factor analysis - verify and validate structure of items. 3rd and 4th - evaluated to measure constructs validity. 5th compared measure across 4 different corporations | marketing experts (x7) used to determine content validity - given definition of construct and asked to group items | 8 item Likert scale on 2 dimensions | Not available | T-test. SPSS general linear Model |
| | Equitrend | Familiarity measured on 5 point Likert scale, others measured on 11 point Likert scale. Dimensions drawn from major aspects of Keller's (1993) consumer based brand equity dimensions | validated by comparing to product market orientation (Rego et al, 2009) | annual data collection of 40000 consumers of 1500 large brands across 170 categories | 40000 | Not available |
| LeBlank and Nguyen (1995) | Corporate image | 5 dimensions (includes identity and reputation) reputation suggested to include: management style and leadership, credibility of actions, guarantees of reliable service, organisation culture focused on customer needs | Not available | 36 item, 7point likert scale | 352 customers | Not available |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model Name | Development stages Method | Pilot study method | Method used | No of respondents | Analysis type |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---------------------|--|
| Andreassen and Lanseng (1997) | Corporate image - views image as overall attitude toward company, therefore reputation | Not available | Not available | 6 point bipolar scale, 15 minute telephone interview | 1400 | Structural equation modelling |
| Davies et al. (2001/2003) | Corporate Character Scale // Corporate personality scale | Focus groups, content analysis, factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Trait approach - classifies objects using everyday language. Multi-dimensional. Item generation - inductive (interviews and content analysis) & deductive (theoretical approach) | 5 point Likert scale (Strongly agree to strongly disagree). Pilot questionnaire - 980 distributed to staff and grad students. Internal mail/ face-to-face interview | surveys, interview customers, questionnaire staff | 4626 obtained | Factor analysis for data reduction. Varimax rotation. Scree plot indicated 7 factor solutions. Top5 factors - facet analysis. Non-orthogonal factor rotation. Confirmatory factor analysis. Means and standard deviation |
| Yoon, Gyffey and Kijewski (1993) | NA | Items identified from literature and confirmed by industry experts. ; businesses called to confirm person responsible for evaluation; reputation attributes derived from marketing literature and confirmed by industry experts | Telephone survey (at least 2 follow up calls made) | 10 point scales used, weighted according to importance - (1 = not at all important, 10 = extremely important) | 577 valid responses | Descriptive stats - level of companies reputation calculated by averaging respondent's importance weighted evaluation on 10 attributes; exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model Name | Development stages Method | Pilot study method | Method used | No of respondents | Analysis type |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Brown (1995) | reputation measure | Managers mailed pre-test questionnaire (open questions), interviews with open responses | Questionnaire | Questionnaire - 7 point bipolar scale | 1000 customers mailed - 412 returned | Structural equation modelling |
| Fortune (2000) | America's Most admired companies (AMAC) | uses grand aggregation | Not available | Answer eight questions on scale of 1-10 | Not available | Not available |
| Fombrun (2000) | Reputation Quotient (RQ) | Not available | Not available | Not available | Not available | Each item regressed against separate single-scale measure of corporate rep to explain variance |
| Cravens, Oliver, Ramamoorti, (2003) | Reputation index | Questionnaire CEOs, customers, suppliers and employees | Not available | 1-9 point Likert scale | Not available | Responses for each attribute averaged. Weights allocated for each component |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model Name | Development stages Method | Pilot study method | Method used | No of respondents | Analysis type |
|--|------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------|---|
| Dowling (2004) | NA | Not available | Not available | 11-point scale (-5 -- +5, 0 is midpoint). In-depth interviews: rate a) 37 items (in 4 groups) | 25 Business journalists | 1) reviews attributes and eliminates missing data, 2) principal component analysis - used for refinement (type of exploratory factor analysis), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient, 3) indices regressed against corporate reputation index |
| Reputation Institute (2005), Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) | RepTrak System | Multivariate regression used to identify contributions of attributes to dimensions, and dimensions to overall measure dimensions are statistically independent. Qualitative - guided discussion with participant's online - online bulletin board. Content analysis. 7-point scale of 4 attributes. Stage 2 - online interviews with 907 people representing the general public | Online polling system. Research used qualitative followed by quantitative testing | Not available | Not available | Structural equation modelling. Cronbach alpha. Dimension scores are regressed against a four part measure of reputation - trust, admiration, good feeling, and high esteem |

| Author/ creator + year | Measurement model Name | Development stages Method | Pilot study method | Method used | No of respondents | Analysis type |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|
| Helm (2005) | NA | Content analyse existing scales and literature. 2 focus group interviews and 40 individual interviews (convenience sample using snowball effect). Item elimination by students and colleagues. Content specification, indicator specification | Item sorting (Anderson and Gerbing, 1991). Questionnaires given to 20 people in a think aloud answer mode | Personal interviews. Bipolar verbalised 7 point scale | 1681 consumers - 952 responses, only 762 useable. | Covariance based method - LISREL. *structural equation modelling - good explanation. Multi-collinearity. |
| Ponzi, Fombrun and Gardberg (2011) | RepTrak Pulse | Not available | Not available | Discussion guide using an online bulletin board (25 participants) Measure constructed of 7 point Likert scale questions | 500-2041 (Research included 4 samples) | Structural Equation Modelling |
| Fombrun et al. (2015) | RepTrak System (reviewed) | Reviewed existing data | Not available | 7 point Likert scale questions | 300-1813 (research included 5 samples) | Structural Equation Modelling |

Dowling and Gardberg (2012) identify ten challenges and recommendations that should be addressed when developing a new reputation measurement scale. These include understanding and clearly defining the concept of corporate reputation (Barnett et al., 2006); the timing of the measurement model; and the breadth of measurement and characteristics being used (Barnett et al., 2006). Dowling and Gardberg (2012) recognise that too few measurement scales for reputation include all the key measurement challenges, which have resulted in many measures being poorly constructed. These challenges and recommendations are identified in Table 5.4, which also identifies how this research aims to address them.

In addition to Dowling and Gardberg (2012) recommendations, Fombrun (1998) identifies a further two suggestions. Firstly, that there are 'multiple stakeholders whose assessments aggregate into collective judgements', and secondly that stakeholders judge a company on different, but overlapping criteria (1998: 338). Thus, suggesting that a true measure of reputation is only valid if a representative set of stakeholders are included, and judge an organisation based on a conceptually relevant set of characteristics (Walker, 2010). As a result, these recommendations are also taken into account in this research.

Table 5.4 Challenges and recommendations for creating a new reputation measurement model (Based on Dowling and Gardberg (2012))

| Area of research | Challenges | Recommendations | How this research addresses the challenges and recommendations |
|------------------------|---|--|---|
| Construct confusion | <p>Definitions of corporate reputation – there are a number of definitions available for corporate reputation with many researchers suggesting new definitions adapted to their work.</p> <p>There is still much confusion within the reputation field between constructs such as corporate image and corporate identity, as these terms continue to be used interchangeably.</p> | Derive a measure of corporate reputation from a well-constructed definition | The differences between these constructs was discussed in chapter 2, with the authors perspective clearly identified. |
| Measurement time frame | The time of the measure is often confusing, and it is suggested that it should be measured as a forward or backward looking construct. | Identify the reasoning behind choosing to measure reputation as a reflective/ formative construct and use appropriate procedures to create and validate the measures | Reputation viewed as a reflective construct as depicted by question types and the regression arrows within the measurement model. |

| Area of research | Challenges | Recommendations | How this research addresses the challenges and recommendations |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Measurement sampling frame | Sample frame and selection, which relates to both the respondents and the organisations taking part in the measurement. | Ensure it is clear how organisations and their sampling frame and selection procedure support theory testing or effect application research | Events selected by University senior management based on specific criteria to be a PR event. Events were also selected in order to access a wide range of the university's stakeholders as identified to be needed from the definition. A case study approach adopted as a means of theory testing. |
| Research context | Research relating to context in which it is done – respondents can be affected by their surroundings when taking part in the research and can be related to the theory of planned behaviour. This suggests that the behaviour of certain respondents may not be able to be predicted, which could result in a low validity score. | For survey based measures, describe how context effects have been addressed | The survey was anonymous as a means of encouraging participants to be honest in their responses. Respondents were given time at the events to complete the questionnaire without any input from the researcher. |

| Area of research | Challenges | Recommendations | How this research addresses the challenges and recommendations |
|------------------------|---|--|--|
| Measurement dimensions | Breadth of the measure- reputation can be measured based on a number of attributes or as an overall judgement of an organisation (Barnett, Jermier & Lafferty, 2006). | If corporate reputation is a multi-dimensional construct, the relationship between the dimensions and the overall reputation construct should be explained | Measurement dimensions were identified from a literature search. The relationship between these dimensions is suggested in the literature, and will be tested and explained using the measurement and structural model of this research. |
| | The structural model of reputation refers to the selection of attributes. Attribute selection can take the form of literature search or in contrast could be selected as part of a definition based approach. | | |
| | The measurement model needs to specify the relationship between corporate reputation and its measures | | |

| Area of research | Challenges | Recommendations | How this research addresses the challenges and recommendations |
|---------------------|---|---|---|
| Unit of measurement | The unit of measurement and unit of analysis is often not clear. Reputation as a construct can be based on individual perceptions or the perceptions of a wider group. | | Reputation is being measured as an overall perception of the university's stakeholders. Respondents asked to identify their relationship to the university by stakeholder type, this is used to determine the differences between internal and external perceptions. Individual responses are not discussed separately. |
| Measuring change | Measuring changes in reputation is almost completely ignored within the current measurement scales. Companies wanting to measure the changes within their reputation when conducting major campaigns have a limited ability to do so within current measurement scales. | Specify if the measure is being used to assess change and identify the type of change expected and how this will be measured. | The measure is not being used to assess change of the University's reputation, but rather how attending an event may alter stakeholder perceptions of the University's reputation. |

5.4.2 Research Design

The research design, which adopts a pragmatic philosophical perspective (as discussed in Section 5.2.1), was selected as it was thought to provide the best insight into the research question, and address the research objectives (Creswell, Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). According to Johnson et al. (2007, p. 123) 'mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration'. Creswell and Plano Clark (2008) highlight the importance of providing a reason for selecting a mixed methods approach, while Bryman (2006) identifies a typology of 16 possible reasons for this type of research. The reasons within this typology, which are relevant to the research project, are identified as:

- triangulation (quantitative and qualitative combined to triangulate findings),
- different research questions (quantitative and qualitative research can answer different questions or research objectives),
- credibility (using both approaches to enhance the integrity of findings) and,
- to confirm and discover (using qualitative data to generate hypotheses, and quantitative data to test them) (Bryman, 2006).

When using multiple methods the researcher should first decide upon either qualitative or quantitative research as the principal method and then select a complementary method, adding to the research's ability to achieve its objectives (Morgan, 1998 cited in Briedenhann, 2004). The benefit of combining two methodological approaches in research is that it can often increase the scope, depth and power of research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2008, Punch, 1998), which will allow for a 'richer and more varied' data set to be acquired (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000, p. 47). For the given research project, a triangulation of data (data collected at different times/ source) and a methodological triangulation (more than one method used) will be used. The two

approaches that have been selected to be used for this research project are interviews and a quantitative questionnaire, as it is believed that these methods will enable the objectives to be met.

An exploratory research design follows a sequential design (shown in Figure 5.1), whereby a quantitative phase follows a qualitative phase, a purpose of which is instrument development (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Authors have suggested similar sequential designs in scale development research (e.g. DeVellis, 2003; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004; Blunch 2008; Anderson & Gerbing 1988), with Black (1999) suggesting that a classical empirical research design adheres to this sequential process (shown in Table 5.5). Thus, this exploratory sequential process is adopted for this research.

Figure 5.1 Exploratory research design (Creswell and Clark, 2011, p. 124)



Table 5.5 Study Research Design

| | Methods | Latent scale development | Supporting Sources |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| Step 1 | Phase 1: Qualitative Interviews | Item generation & confirmation: model testing, and confirming items through interviews | DeVellis (2003), Noar (2003) |
| Step 2 | Phase 2: Quantitative Questionnaire | Scale structure & item reduction: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) | Schumacker and Lomax (2004), Blunch (2013), Anderson and Gerbing (1988) |
| Step 3 | | Scale validation and measurement model construction: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) | Schumacker and Lomax (2004), Blunch (2013), |

| | Methods | Latent scale development | Supporting Sources |
|---------------|---------|---|---|
| | | | Anderson and Gerbing (1988), Gerbing and Anderson (1988) |
| Step 4 | | Model testing: Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) | Schumacker and Lomax (2004), Blunch (2013), Anderson and Gerbing (1988) |

This sequential design, and previous reputation measurement scale research, advocate the use of a mixed methods approach, which a case study methodology supports (Farquhar, 2012). The use of both qualitative and quantitative data types brings a greater insight into the research problem, than either data type separately. Creswell and Clark (2011) suggest that this approach has a number of benefits to research, with the two most prominent benefits, which are applicable to this research, being:

- 1) The ability to answer different research questions (Bryman, 2006), whereby the first phase of data collection achieves a separate objective to the second phase; and
- 2) The development of a research instrument; the first phase (interviews) informs and develops the questionnaire used during the second phase of research (Bryman, 2006, Greene et al., 1989).

Sequential timing will be used within the data collection and analysis phase of this research, due to the research having two distinct phases (Creswell and Clark, 2011). As this research is testing an existing scale (RepTrak System) in conjunction with other adapted scales, the scale development process (Table 5.5) is adopted. DeVellis (2003) and Noar (2003) suggest that initial stages within this process involve item generation

and confirmation (step 1). Thus, after identifying reputation measurement characteristics from the literature, phase one of this research adopts a qualitative approach in the form of semi-structured interviews. The interviews aim to confirm the characteristics identified from literature, highlighting other possible characteristics relevant to university reputation, and finally, to achieve objective 1. This phase is used to inform the quantitative questionnaire used within the second phase of the research (Bryman, 2006, Greene et al., 1989).

Phase 2, the quantitative phase of this research (steps 2-4, Table 5.5), addresses objectives 2-6. The scale development process suggests conducting an initial exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (step 2, completed in Section 8.2.2), as existing measures are being used in a new way, with additional characteristics included from the interviews. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Model (SEM), steps 3 and 4 respectively (completed in Section 8.3.3 and 8.4), can then be completed. This is done as a means to confirm or reject the research assumptions (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988, Blunch, 2013, Hair et al., 2006, Schumacker and Lomax, 2004, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007), and therefore answer the research objectives. These phases are discussed in more detail below.

5.4.3 Qualitative Method: Phase 1 Interviews

5.4.3.1 Method

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews are selected for phase 1 of data collection. The purpose of the interviews is to establish the role of events as a strategic communication tool (Research Objective 1, Section 5.1.1), and to determine the sample population of events to be used in phase two of the research. Additionally, the interviewees will aid the researcher in item generation and confirmation (DeVellis, 2003, Noar, 2003), by suggesting additional characteristics to be included within the measurement scale. This final purpose of the interviews, is commonly used, in addition to focus groups, as the

initial phase of reputation measurement research (Davies, 2003, Dowling, 2004, Helm, 2005, van Riel and Balmer, 1997), thus advocating this method within this research design.

According to Howell (2013, p. 198), interviews 'enable description, interrogation, evaluation and consideration of personal accounts' that allows the interviewer to better understand the researched phenomenon (King, 2004, Mishler, 1986). The semi-structured interviews adopt a qualitative nature to collect rich, in-depth responses about the researched phenomenon (Fontana and Frey, 2000, Jennings, 2005, King, 2004). This includes using open-ended, pre-determined questions (Appendix 8), which can be adapted during the interview to elicit more information dependant on the interviewee's responses (Howell, 2013, Jennings, 2005). Thus, enabling the researcher to better understand why the university holds events and their intended impact on stakeholder's perceptions of the university.

5.4.3.2 Selection of participants

The corporate strategy of an organisation is the overall plan of how the company aims to achieve its objectives (Robbins and Coulter, 2009), with the communication strategy forming a key part of it (discussed in Section 3.2). The communication strategy is responsible for delivering messages to key stakeholders, with the purpose of sharing the organisation's vision (Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004). As events are a communication tool, they are used as a mechanism to achieve strategic objectives (discussed in Section 3.4) and thus, the purpose of holding events is suggested to be linked to these objectives (confirmed in Section 6.4.1), and target specific stakeholder groups.

Due to this reasoning, the strategic objectives of the case study organisation were identified (Table 5.6) (Plymouth University, 2012a); this recognised four key strategic ambitions. The themes of these ambitions were viewed by the researcher to be related

to departments and event areas within the university, and consequently, university stakeholder groups, as identified by Chapleo and Simms (2010), could be linked to each ambition. This enabled the researcher to determine if all key groups would be represented within the research.

Table 5.6 Case study institution's Strategic Ambitions, Event Areas and Stakeholders

| Strategic Ambitions | Raising aspirations and driving engagement | | World-class research and innovation | Learning in partnership with students |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| | Achieving resilience, sustainability and effectiveness | | | |
| Event Area | <i>External Relations events</i> | | <i>Research events</i> | <i>Student experience events</i> |
| | <i>Community events</i> | <i>Other University events</i> | | |
| Event attendees (University stakeholders) to include | Local community | University staff and students | Postgraduate students | Current students |
| | Local Businesses | University Governors | Research centres/ bodies | Student Bodies (Unions/ NUS) |
| | Local media | Alumni | Researchers | Local Businesses |
| | Local government | National/ international stakeholders | Staff/ students from other Universities/ HEIs | University Partners |
| | University staff and students | Partner Institutions | Partner Institutions | |
| | Local education (schools)/ potential students | Local/ National media | | |
| | University Partners | National stakeholders (parents) | | |

Purposive sampling was used to identify interview candidates (Teddlie and Yu, 2007, Tongco, 2007), linked to each strategic ambition. As an objective of the interviews is 'to

determine the strategic purpose of holding events', and owing to the fact that strategy is viewed as a management function (Grunig, 2013), management level candidates were selected. The interview candidates are identified in Table 5.7, which indicates the event area they are associated with, and their management level.

Table 5.7 Interview candidates

| Interview | Event area | Employment level |
|------------------|--|--|
| 1 | External Relations - Community Engagement | Partnerships and Community Engagement Manager |
| 2 | Research Events | Head of the Graduate School |
| 3 | External Relations - other University events | Director of Development/ Events and Graduation Manager |
| 4 | Student Recruitment | Head of Student Recruitment |
| 5 | Student Experience Events | Deputy Vice-Chancellor |

To identify the sample of events to be used within the second phase of the research, interviewees were requested to identify up to ten possible events from their area of the university, which were thought to be of strategic importance. Interviewees were provided with a set of criteria that the events needed to address (Table 5.8). These criteria were identified to ensure consistency of the type of event to be research. This was to ensure that all events were organised by the University for the University, rather than being a third party⁹, secondary¹⁰ or sponsored event¹¹, which The University

⁹ Third party events are defined in the Chapter 3, as events run by an external organisation which The University attends/ has a presence at.

¹⁰ Secondary events are defined in the Chapter 3, as events run by The University on behalf of an external organisation

¹¹ Sponsored/partnered events are recognised in the Chapter 3, as those events where The University has paid sponsorship towards, or is running the event in partnership

would not have full control over. Additionally, the criteria requested that the interviewees guarantee access to the events, for data collection to take place.

Table 5.8 Event selection criteria

| Event Selection Criteria |
|--|
| Please identify up to 10 University events that comply with the criteria below, and include the stakeholders identified within your area. These events will be used within the second phase of the research in order to access Plymouth University event attendees |
| 1. Organised by PU department |
| 2. Not organised internally on behalf of external organisation |
| 3. Agree to allowing access for sending out questionnaires/ attending event to administer questionnaire |
| 4. Are able to provide contact details for attendees where available. If an event is selected where attendee details are not available, permission for a researcher to attend the event is granted |
| 5. Are between the dates of January 2015 and December 2015 |

5.4.4 Qualitative analysis

Qualitative data analysis include a range of analysis types, including descriptive analysis, describing the phenomenon under investigation; and interpretive analysis, which aims to gain a deeper understanding of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

Some commonly used qualitative analysis methods include Thematic Analysis (TA), Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Grounded Theory (GT) and Pattern-Based Discourse Analysis (PBDA). These methods are often used due to their accessibility and ease of use for the researcher, unlike methods such as Conversation Analysis (CA) and Narrative Analysis, which are time-consuming due to their intricate interpretive nature.

The purpose of the qualitative phase of this research is to identify the strategic purpose of events for the case study organisation. Analysing the linguistic meaning of the

dataset would not result in any relevant findings, thus, PBDA would not be a suitable method of analysis. Similarly, this phase of research does not aim to produce new theory, as in the case of GT (Charmaz, 2000, Cutcliffe, 2005, Glaser and Strauss, 1967), which would also be difficult to complete due to the small number of interviews undertaken (Braun and Clarke, 2013). While IPA could be used for this study, identifying respondents' experience of events and reputation of the university, it was thought to provide a similar result to TA, however it lacks the flexibility of TA (Parker, 2005). Consequently, TA has been selected for this research project, and is discussed in more detail below.

5.4.4.1 Thematic analysis (TA)

Thematic analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data to identify themes and patterns of meaning within a data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). While it was first identified as a method of analysis in the 1970s (Merton, 1975), it has only recently (2006) become a recognised method with a distinctive set of procedures within the Social Sciences (Braun and Clarke, 2006, Braun and Clarke, 2013). Researchers had previously used the principles of TA prior to this, however, referred to it as GT or discourse analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Thus, Braun and Clarke developed criteria, and suggested different phases of analysis that TA should address. Since the publication of these criteria, TA is more widely recognised and discussed as a method of qualitative analysis (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006, Guest et al., 2012, Joffe, 2011), with authors such as Joffe (2011) and Guest et al. (2012) suggesting alternative procedures for conducting TA. The differences between these approaches are discussed below, to determine the TA approach that is most suitable for this research.

The work of four predominant authors (Boyatzis, 1998, Braun and Clarke, 2006, Guest et al., 2012, Joffe, 2011) of TA is considered for this research to determine the suitability of their approaches. Two main differences between the approaches to

conducting TA are recognised, with the first key difference identified as their theoretical underpinning. Joffe (2011) suggests that TA is not tied to any specific theoretical assumptions, however advises that the use of this method is better suited to being underpinned by a social phenomenology and critical realism framework. Conversely, Guest et al. (2012) recommend that it is better suited to a positivist framework, while Boyatzis (1998) proposes that TA bridges the gap between a positivist and interpretive social science foundation. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that TA has a 'theoretical flexibility and does not prescribe theoretical positions, epistemology or ontological frameworks' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 178). They recognise TA as 'just a method' (2013, p.178), and suggest that the flexibility in their approach is a key strength of TA.

The second key difference between these approaches is the process of coding and identifying themes from the data set, and whether this should adopt an inductive or deductive (also referred to as a theoretical approach) approach. An inductive approach recognises that themes 'emerge' from the data and is not shaped by existing theory, while a deductive approach identifies themes from existing literature and the researcher aims to find these within the data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, Creswell and Clark, 2011). Joffe's (2011) method primarily uses an inductive approach and suggests that TA is 'best suited to elucidating the specific nature of a given group's conceptualisation of the phenomenon under study' (Joffe, 2011, p. 212). Boyatzis (1998) and Guest et al. (2012) primarily adopt a deductive approach in their views of TA and use the literature and their disciplinary knowledge to guide their research. Braun and Clarke (2006) however, recognise that coding and identifying themes can adopt an inductive or theoretical (deductive) approach, or a combination of both.

Due to the flexibility of Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of TA, it has been selected as the most appropriate approach to use during this research. They identify six phases of TA shown in Table 5.9, and suggest that these phases are a recursive process

rather than linear (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The flexibility and the ability to apply a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning to their approach, follows the principles of a pragmatic framework and thus, is adopted for the qualitative analysis process.

Table 5.9 Phases of Thematic Analysis (adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006))

| Step | Process | Description of process |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Step 1 | Familiarising yourself with the data | Transcribing data, reading data and noting initial ideas |
| Step 2 | Generating initial codes | Coding interesting features of the data, collating data relevant to each code |
| Step 3 | Searching for themes | Collating codes into potential themes, gathering data relevant to each potential theme |
| Step 4 | Reviewing themes | Checking the themes in relation to the coded extracts, and the whole data set, generating a thematic 'map' of analysis |
| Step 5 | Defining and naming themes | Ongoing analysis to refine each theme, generating clear definitions and names for each theme |
| Step 6 | Producing the report | Selection of vivid and compelling extract examples, final analysis, relating analysis back to research question and literature |

Software Package - NVivo

The software package NVivo was used during the analysis of qualitative data, and it acted as a useful tool to aid interpretation. NVivo provides a platform to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of qualitative research and in so doing supports a wide range of methodological approaches to qualitative data analysis (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). While using qualitative data analysis software, such as NVivo, has its strengths, some authors still express their concerns, suggesting that it distances the researcher from their data. Nevertheless, it was thought that the advantages of using NVivo

(identified in Table 5.10), rather than manually coding the qualitative data, outweighed the concerns.

Table 5.10 Strengths and Concerns of using NVivo (Adapted from Bazely (2013))

| Strengths of using NVivo | Concerns about using NVivo |
|---|---|
| Increases organisation and management of data | A computer can distance the researcher from their data |
| Increases efficiency making the process of coding and analysis quicker and easier (only if you are familiar with the programme) | Computers can mechanise analysis making it more akin to positivist approaches |
| Enables quick searching for codes and data | Reliability and trustworthiness of the software. |
| Increase transparency of qualitative research process | |
| Useful to manage large data sets | |

The reliability¹² of the coding scheme used and the validity¹³ of the findings is increased by showing transparency of research, such as using a single project and keeping a researchers journal (Hammersley, 1992). As a solo researcher, Bazeley and Jackson (2013) suggests that this transparency is important. The researcher's ability and understanding of the software helps to address the concerns of the software's trustworthiness. Furthermore, NVivo is able to support the steps taken in conducting a

¹² Reliability is the 'degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions' (Hammersley, 1992, p.67)

¹³ Validity concerns 'whether a relationship discovered in an experiment can be generalised to other situations (Hammersley, 1992, p.66)

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.316) states that: "Since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the latter [reliability;]".

TA. Thus, NVivo was used to assist with the thematic analysis of this research as detailed below.

Step 1

The interviews were voice recorded and transcribed in Microsoft Word using a transcription service. Partial transcription was requested in order to explore general themes and patterns from the interviews (McLellan et al., 2003). Converting the voice files into transcripts was done as they are a useful tool for interpreting the data (Kvale, 1996, Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, McLellan et al., 2003). As the transcripts were produced by a typist, Bazeley and Jackson (2013) recommend the researcher review the transcripts to check their accuracy. The researcher anonymised the transcripts at this stage, removing names of participants and mentions of the institution and town name of the case study organisation. Where names/identifying characteristics were mentioned, these were replaced with a pseudonym as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2013). Once the accuracy of the transcripts was established, these were imported into NVivo for the remainder of the analysis.

A combination of inductive and deductive coding and analysis is used (Appendix 9), as researcher bias and knowledge of the research area inhibits a fully inductive approach. Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 66), define a code as 'an abstract representation of an object or phenomenon'. While Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 206) suggest that the process of coding is to identify 'aspects of the data that relates to your research question... or to identify anything and everything of interest or relevance from your data set'. A common approach to coding data is to start with some general categories and then code the data in more detail (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, Coffey and Atkinson, 1996); thus adopting a deductive followed by an inductive approach. The topics addressed by the interview questions were used as the initial codes for categorising the data, as these were designed to elicit specific information from the interviewees.

Step 2 - 5

Free nodes¹⁴ were used to categorise sections of the transcripts into the initial codes identified in step 1 (deductive coding). Through increased familiarisation with the data, further free nodes were identified (inductive coding) and data coded to these nodes (step 2). These free nodes reflected themes identified within the literature such as event characteristics, stakeholder types, and initial ideas on the strategic purpose of holding events (an objective of the interviews). These free nodes were then further developed to form tree nodes through collating and merging nodes into common themes, such as those identified within the conceptual framework (step 3). The themes were analysed to identify relationships between nodes and a thematic 'map' created to assist with ongoing analysis (step 4). Refinement of the themes enabled the researcher to identify clear definitions and names for each theme (step 5) (Appendix 9).

Step 6

A purpose of the interviews was to help inform and confirm items used in the questionnaire. As such, items such as 'Social Media' and 'Campus and Facilities' were included in the questions relating to communication type and reputation characteristics respectively. Discussion on the findings of the interview themes and relation back to the research question are discussed in Chapter 6.

Questionnaire open questions

Thematic Analysis, using NVivo, was also applied to two open questions from the questionnaire (phase 2 of research, discussed in section 5.4.5, 7.3.1 and 7.3.5.3).

¹⁴ Nodes are the name of codes in NVivo. These are grouped into 'free nodes', which are individual codes with no relation to other codes, and 'tree nodes', which groups free nodes into a hierarchy.

These questions asked respondents to define reputation, and to describe the reputation of the case study institution. The process to analyse the responses to these questions followed the six steps identified above. Reputation definitions were initially coded according to Chun's (2005) reputation paradigms, with un-coded responses forming new free nodes. Whereas descriptions of the case study institution, were coded according to being positive, neutral, negative or a combination of positive and negative. Furthermore, the most common terms used to describe the institution's reputation could be identified. Thus, a comparison between Likert responses, and open responses can be made, as a means of triangulating participants' responses.

5.4.5 Quantitative Method: Phase 2 Questionnaire

5.4.5.1 Method

Questionnaires are commonly used in social science research, and have been a primary research tool for many reputation measurement and event satisfaction studies (Brown, 1995, Cravens et al., 2003, Davies et al., 2001, Getz et al., 2001, Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001a, O'Neill et al., 1999, Yoon and Uysal, 2005). This is due to their ability of collecting a large amount of data from a wide range of participants without the time or financial expense of conducting interviews (Bryman and Bell, 2007, Sheehan, 2001). The two main means of administering questionnaires are either as a postal questionnaire, or electronic questionnaire, with authors recognising many advantages of using electronic surveys (Bryman, 2012, Ilieva et al., 2002, McPeake et al., 2014, Robson, 2011, Sheehan, 2001). There are two primary types of electronic questionnaire; email questionnaires, sent via email either as an attachment or embedded within the text, or web-based questionnaires, where the survey can be found and completed on a website (Bryman, 2012). The survey type used within this research involves a combination of email and web-based questionnaires, as the

questionnaire is completed on a website, however the URL link is emailed to respondents.

Electronic questionnaires have been criticised due to being less flexible than interviews, and for not having a guaranteed response rate (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2008, Sproull, 1986). However, the cost effectiveness, ease of distribution, and speed efficiency of electronic questionnaires over traditional postal questionnaires is well recognised within research literature (Bryman, 2012, Bryman and Bell, 2011, McPeake et al., 2014, Sheehan, 2001). Ilieva et al. (2002) suggest that faster response rates for electronic questionnaires are a clear advantage. While Jones et al. (2008) recognise the ease of data analysis when using web-based packages. The ability to analyse and export data from web-based surveys is also suggested to reduce the chance of human error, which subsequently improves the reliability of the analysis (Bryman, 2012). Nevertheless, using electronic questionnaires is not without its disadvantages.

While the ease of distribution of electronic surveys is recognised as a clear advantage, the distribution list is thought to raise potential problems. These include the list being out of date and not including relevant email addresses (McPeake, 2014), and that people may have more than one email account, and not check them regularly (Bryman, 2012). Ahern (2005) also suggest that electronic questionnaires may be a cause of selection bias of participants, as not all groups have access to, or are familiar with using electronic/online software. Poor response rates, in comparison to other research methods, are a key disadvantage of electronic questionnaires (Robson, 2011, Sheehan, 2001). However, authors recommend various suggestions to improve this, including survey length, accurate pre-completion information, sending reminders, and using incentives.

Sahlqvist et al. (2011) suggest keeping a survey short however, others warn that shorter questionnaires are not necessarily associated with higher response rates (Beebe et al., 2010, Ganassali, 2008). Pre-completion information should include the

estimated time for completing the survey, as it informs potential respondents reducing the drop-out rate for completion (McPeake et al., 2014). Some authors recognise the importance of using a reminder email as it can increase responses (De Vaus, 2014, Duffett et al., 2012), while others suggest a monetary or pre-paid incentive. These factors have been taken into account and are addressed in Section 5.4.5.2 below.

Electronic questionnaires, using Qualtrics software, an online survey generation, delivery and analysis tool (Benton et al., 2011), were selected to be used for this research due to the advantages outweighing the disadvantages. The distribution lists were not viewed by the researcher to have issues of being out of date, as the university events selected, use email addresses to invite attendees to the event, or guests are asked to register their attendance using an email address. In terms of respondent selection bias, events where email addresses were not available, the researcher attended the event and administered the questionnaire in person (discussed in Section 5.4.5.3), thus providing the opportunity for all attendees to take part.

A quantitative questionnaire, using closed-ended questions, is a useful tool to gather data in connection with a specific area of research (Bryman and Bell, 2007, Howell, 2013). This method was used in the second phase of research to statistically analyse the perceptions of university event attendees. The design, development, distribution and analysis of the questionnaire are discussed below, with the aim of the questionnaire being to address objectives 2 to 6 (Table 5.1)

5.4.5.2 Questionnaire design and development

The questionnaire design was done using Qualtrics, which offers a subscription package that the researcher had access to, through a university account. This enabled the researcher to make use of advanced features of Qualtrics, such as personalising the visual appearance of the questionnaire, and having multiple questionnaires open at any time. This was beneficial as it enabled the theme of the questionnaire to include a

university logo, demonstrating support from the University, which is thought to encourage participation (Deutskens et al., 2004). An additional design element that was included was the use of a progress bar (also referred to as a point of completion indicator), showing the respondent the percentage of the questionnaire that was completed, reducing drop-outs later in the questionnaire (Dillman et al., 1998, Healey et al., 2005). As filter questions were used, a progress bar was thought to be better than the use of question numbers, as question numbers would not always be sequential.

It was necessary to have multiple questionnaires open at any one time, as each event had a separate questionnaire. This enabled the researcher to include a filter question ensuring attendance to a specific event prior to completing the full questionnaire. This was important as the respondents needed to have attended a University event. Additionally, it enabled the researcher to identify responses from specific events, providing the opportunity for feedback to be given to the event managers.

It was identified during the early stages of research that SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and AMOS would be used for data analysis (discussed in Section 5.4.6.1). As such, questions were developed in a format that allowed for data to be compatible with selected analysis methods. The questions included in the questionnaire were generated from the literature and as a result of responses from the interviews. This resulted in three sections to the questionnaire including: reputation specific questions, assessing and determining characteristics of reputation; event related questions, analysing attendees' perceptions of the event attended including service quality and satisfaction; and personal information questions, determining age, gender, employment status, education, and relationship to the university.

Pilot study

Bryman and Bell (2015) suggest conducting a small pilot study to determine the accuracy and operation of self-completion research questionnaires, as the researcher will not be present to resolve any misunderstanding. They also highlight that pilot studies help to determine adequacy of instructions given, and the flow of the questionnaire (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Following this recommendation, a pilot questionnaire was sent to 12 people who were a combination of university staff, students, alumni, and community members, with six responses received within the timeframe (it was also reviewed by five senior managers at the university (the interviewees used during phase 1), and two senior academics (the research supervisors)). Pilot respondents were asked to complete the survey as if they had attended an event (all respondents had previously attended a university event), and were asked to provide feedback to the points in Table 5.11 below. This determined the readability of the questionnaire, identifying if questions were easily understood; the accessibility of the online questionnaire; as well as to identify if the questions will provide the information necessary to achieving the research objectives. The pilot study results (shown in Appendix 10) confirmed that the questionnaire took on average 15 minutes to complete, it highlighted a couple of grammatical and spelling errors, and that some questions would be easily missed. As such, some questions were consolidated, the page arrangement of the questionnaire altered, and the format of two questions was altered from selection boxes to Likert type questions. This was completed prior to distribution of the first questionnaire.

Table 5.11 Pilot respondent questions

| Pilot respondent questions |
|---|
| 1. What the survey was accessed on (PC/Mac/tablet/phone, Internet explorer/ chrome ect) |
| 2. How long the survey took to complete? |

| Pilot respondent questions |
|---|
| 3. If the meaning of all questions were clear? |
| 4. To check for spelling or grammatical errors? |
| 5. To provide any other general comments. |

The questionnaire that resulted from the pilot, was sent to the first identified event in January. An acceptable average response rate for questionnaires is suggested by McPeake et al. (2014) to be 60%, however others have previously suggested that email and web-based responses could be much lower (Nulty, 2008, Scott et al., 2011, Sheehan, 2001). While survey length is statistically recognised as not being associated to the response rate, researchers have identified that survey length is the biggest problem for high drop-out rates¹⁵ (Cook et al., 2000, Manfreda and Vehovar, 2002). Subsequently, a drop-out rate of 68% for the initial survey was considered as very high, and a completion rate¹⁶ of only 5% to be very low, resulting in the researcher deeming it necessary to further amend the questionnaire. The questionnaire was amended in the following ways:

- a) The personal information section was included first, rather than last. This enabled easier questions to be answered first, providing the illusion that they had completed more of the questionnaire (demonstrated through the progress bar), thus making the respondent more willing to complete the whole questionnaire.
- b) The methods of analysis were reassessed and it was determined that suitable data could still be gathered by omitting two questions, this was done to help reduce completion length.

¹⁵ The drop-out rate is calculated based on the number of respondents that start the survey in comparison to the number of respondents that complete the survey.

¹⁶ The completion rate is calculated as the percentage of complete responses in comparison to the number of participants the email questionnaire is sent to.

- c) A group of Likert questions (emotional response and future intentions) was separated onto two different pages.

The final questionnaire included 41 questions (Appendix 11), however respondents would only answer a maximum of 35, and a minimum of 30 questions (provided they had attended the event) due to response filtering and branching¹⁷. Section 1 (personal information) included single item response questions, and short open-ended questions. The single item response questions were to determine gender, age, employment status, highest level of education, and their relationship to the University.

Predetermined categories were identified for these questions based on categories used by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and university stakeholder groups as identified in Chapter 1 (Chapleo and Simms, 2010). The short open-ended questions were to determine nationality and the town in which respondents currently live. These questions were coded during analysis to determine if nationality and the distance respondents lived from The University influenced their perceptions of the university. These responses are discussed in Chapter 7.

Section 2 is to determine event attendees' perceptions of The University's reputation and characteristics that they base their judgements on. This included Likert type, ranking order and short open-ended questions. The open-ended questions are used to determine what reputation meant to the respondents, in order to analyse if their perceptions are in line with definitions identified within the literature (Section 7.3.5). The characteristics used within this section were derived from the RepTrak System (discussed in section 2.5.2). Additionally, respondents were provided the opportunity to suggest additional characteristics that in their opinion, university reputation is measured on; this is used to inform future research (Section 7.3.3 and Section 10.1).

¹⁷ Participants' responses would determine which questions they would progress onto.

The third section of the questionnaire was used to assess event attendees' perceptions of the event that they attended. This was done through determining perceptions of service quality and overall satisfaction of their experience while at the event.

Additionally, respondents were asked to identify the number and type of university events previously attended, with the aim of identifying if increased attendance at events improves perceptions of reputation. The question types used within this section included Likert type, multiple response items and ranking scales.

5.4.5.3 Survey distribution and participants

The questionnaire was distributed to event attendees in two ways; via an email including a link to the electronic questionnaire, and face-to-face during attendance at certain events. Purposive sampling was also applied within this phase of the research (Teddlie and Yu, 2007, Tongco, 2007), as the questionnaire was only sent to specific event attendees by email. This is due to questionnaire respondents needing to have attended a selected event, in order to answer the questions accurately.

Email distribution was the primary method used as it was viewed as being the most time and cost effective method for this research (Bryman and Bell, 2011, Sheehan, 2001, Wright, 2005). This was possible as the majority of events selected, as the sample for this research, had an attendee list with contact details. The event manager of each event sent the email to event attendees (Appendix 12). This was done for two reasons. The first and key reason was due to data protection, and the university being unable to share contact details with the researcher (Data Protection Act, 1998). While the second reason was that it was thought attendees would view the email and questionnaire with greater importance if sent from an official 'events' email address (events@plymouth.ac.uk), rather than a personal email address, and therefore be more likely to complete the questionnaire. As an additional means of gaining responses, a

reminder email was sent to attendees two weeks after the initial email (Dillman et al., 2014). However, this had only a minimal effect with less than 1% of all responses completed after the reminder message. Additional reminder emails were not used, as it has been suggested by Solomon (2001) that it may be viewed as spam, irritating potential respondents without increasing response rates.

Three events that were selected did not have contact lists of attendees (shown in Table 7.1), and were attended by the researcher to collect responses face-to-face with event attendees. Additionally, one event was attended in person and an email questionnaire was distributed following the event; this was due to the limited amount of time available to attendees for completing the questionnaire. All face-to-face questionnaire completion was done electronically using iPads, rather than paper surveys; these remained self-completion questionnaires by event attendees. An incentive for completing the questionnaire was offered during these events to help increase response rate (Johnson, 2005 cited in Archer, 2008). This resulted in 369 (60% of all completed responses, discussed in Section 7.2) surveys being completed. These events represented 77% of the overall population, which coupled with face-to-face data collection, explains the high completion rate percentage.

A function of Qualtrics, is its ability to collect inactive surveys; surveys that have been started, but not completed or submitted. Surveys were collected after one week of inactivity, as it was viewed that respondents would not return to the surveys after this time. This function enabled accurate analysis of drop-out and completion rates for this research to be calculated. These surveys are referred to as incomplete surveys throughout this research (discussed in Section 7.2.2 and 8.2.1.2).

5.4.5.4 Population and sample size

For quantitative results to be generalizable, they need to achieve statistical significance, which is calculated based on the population size of the research. The population, which is the total number of possible event attendees from the selected events (Ritchie et al., 2013), was calculated at approximately 9050 attendees (Table 7.1). The sample size is the minimum number of questionnaire responses needed in order to gain significance (Altman et al., 2000, Fleiss et al., 2003). This is calculated using a confidence interval (also referred to as the margin of error), and a confidence level, which is the percentage that represents how often the population would select a certain answer (National Statistical Service, no date, Smith, 2013). For this study, a +-5% confidence interval and 95% confidence level were used. This recognises that the research findings can be 95% certain that the whole population would select a certain answer, with a 5% margin of error.

The sample size needed to achieve statistical significance to the above criteria is calculated as a minimum of 369 responses; this is based on the population of event attendees of approximately 9050. However, increasing the sample size can reduce the amount of variation (Bryman and Bell, 2015), and a higher response rate can reduce the risk of bias (Robson, 2011). Thus, the researcher aimed to gain more than 369 responses. In addition to calculating sample size to achieve generalisability of the findings, the use of structural equation modelling as an analysis method also requires a sample size based on unknown parameters within the model. This is discussed in Section 5.4.6.2 below, to determine if the calculated sample size is adequate to run the structural equation model.

5.4.5.5 *Sampling limitations*

While these survey distribution and sampling methods are deemed appropriate and valid, they are not without their limitations. The first limitation relates to the analysis method of Structural Equation Modeling (discussed in Section 5.6.4), as this analysis technique calls for a truly random sample (Hair et al., 2006), which this sampling technique does not achieve. As a consequence, results are not generalisable to other universities, but are rather indication of practices taking place specifically at the case study institution.

The second limitation is that a higher percentage of respondents completed the survey face-to-face in comparison to online (discussed in Section 7.2). A higher percentage of responses from the face-to-face events was anticipated, as these events made up a larger proportion of the overall population under research. Nevertheless, this is a limitation as respondents' overall perceptions may not have been fully formed as they were still emotionally engaged in the event, and may consequently have positively influenced their responses, therefore positively skewing the dataset. Duffy et al. (2005) suggest that online responses may therefore more accurately represent respondent's overall attitude towards the research topic. However, this was not found to be problematic, as responses were found to be generally positive from all events.

Finally, responses from all events were used as a minimum number from each event was not set. While this could be a limitation due to each event not having a representative sample, it was not recognised as being problematic. This is due to events not being assessed on an individual basis, and were rather assessed together as part of one data set.

5.4.6 Quantitative analysis

5.4.6.1 Selection of a multivariate analysis method

Multivariate analysis is the analysis of multiple variables simultaneously in a single relationship, using statistical techniques. The variables used should be random and interrelated in such a way that they cannot be meaningfully interpreted separately (Hair et al., 2006). As a result, the use of multivariate analysis has become increasingly popular within the social sciences as a means of explaining relationships between different and often complex concepts. There are a number of statistical techniques used to conduct multivariate analysis, with the selection of which is suitable is suggested by Hair et al. (2006), to be based on three factors:

- a) The type of relationship being examined – independent or dependent variables
- b) The number of dependent variables in a single analysis
- c) How both the independent and dependent variables are measured.

The first factor addresses whether the variables can be divided into dependent and independent variables, which indicates whether a dependence or interdependence technique should be adopted (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). While interdependence techniques are selected according to the structure of relationships between variables, cases or objects, dependence techniques are selected according to the number of variables being predicted (the second factor). Dependence techniques are grouped into three classifications in relation to the number of dependent variables. Appropriate techniques are then selected according to how the variables are measured, which are identified as follows (Hair et al., 2006):

- a) One dependent variable in a single relationship

- i. Quantitative/ numerical measurement: multiple regression and conjoint analysis
 - ii. Qualitative/ categorical measurement: multiple discriminant analysis and linear probability models
- b) Several dependent variables in a single relationship
- i. Quantitative/ numerical measurement: Canonical correlation analysis and Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)
 - ii. Qualitative/ categorical measurement: Canonical correlation analysis with dummy variables
- c) Multiple relationships of dependent and independent variables, which structural equation modelling is most appropriate (Blunch, 2013, Byrne, 2010, Hair et al., 2006).

Justification of using Structural Equation Modelling

As this research involves more than two variables that are suggested to be theoretically linked (identified in Chapter 4), it supports the application of using a multivariate technique. Furthermore, as this study aims to test the relationships between several dependent and independent variables using a Likert scale measurement, it adheres to the characteristics of which Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is the most appropriate technique to use (Hair et al., 2006, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Thus, SEM is recognised as a suitable multivariate analysis technique for this research.

This research aims to test the proposed model that consists of relationships between dependent and independent variables (Figure 4.1). The independent variables include Reputation characteristics, as identified within the RepTrak System (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007) and adapted to a university setting (Section 6.6), Knowledge and

Familiarity of the organisation, Event Influence, and Future Intentions (discussed in Chapters 2 – 4). A primary advantage of SEM is its ability to determine causal relationships between variables (Hair et al., 2006). Thus, a SEM approach provides the opportunity to analyse how these observed variables influence, and are influenced by other variables in the model, and organisation's reputation.

Software Package

The software programmes used during data analysis are IBM SPSS 22 and IBM SPSS AMOS 21. SPSS is widely used within the Social Sciences for statistical analysis (Blunch, 2013, Bryman and Bell, 2015, Pallant, 2016), and is used to analyse the descriptive statistics within this research (Chapter 7), and to conduct the pre-analysis for the Structural Equation Modelling measurement models (Section 8.2). AMOS (Analysis of MOment Structures) is used for the analysis of mean and covariance structures, more commonly known as structural equation modelling (SEM) (Section 8.3). AMOS Graphics, was selected for this research, as it allows the researcher to work directly from a path diagram¹⁸, a graphical interpretation of results, rather than equation statements (Byrne, 2010). Authors suggest the advantages of using a software package, such as these, to complete analysis includes reducing errors in calculations, more efficient and faster calculations, and data management (Blunch, 2013, Bryman and Bell, 2015, Pallant, 2016). Therefore, these software packages were viewed to be appropriate for this research.

¹⁸ A path diagram is a schematic representation of a model, providing a visual portrayal of presumed relations among variables under study (Byrne, 2010)

5.4.6.2 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modelling is a statistical methodology using a confirmatory approach to analysing a structural theory's bearing on a phenomenon (Byrne, 2010). SEM involves two key procedures: the first is that processes being studied, are represented by structural equations (such as regression models), and the second, that structural relationships can be demonstrated pictorially, enabling clearer understanding of the studied concepts (Byrne, 2010). SEM requires an *a priori* model to statistically test hypothesised relationships between variables (Ullman, 1996) in order to establish consistency between the model and data (presented in Figure 4.1) (Bentler and Chou, 1987, Byrne, 2010). Thus providing the opportunity for the researcher to accept or reject their hypotheses.

SEM adopts a confirmatory (hypothesis testing) rather than an exploratory approach to multivariate analysis, and aims to identify causal relations between multiple variables (Blunch, 2013, Hair et al., 2006). As such, a primary advantage of SEM is its ability to determine relationships between latent variables that are assessed by multiple independent variables (Sharma et al., 2005). This is done through the evaluation of two models: a measurement model (regression model) and a structural model (path model) that together form a *general structural equation model* (Blunch, 2013). The process of developing and evaluating these models generally goes through five stages; model specification (completed in Chapter 4), data collection, model estimation, model evaluation, and in some cases model modification (completed in Sections 8.3 and 8.4) (Hair et al., 2006). Model estimation includes a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the validity of the measurement model; while model evaluation is carried out on the structural model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). These processes are discussed in more detail in the following section.

The *measurement model* adopts a confirmatory factor analysis approach to define relationships between observed and unobserved variables (Section 8.3) (Byrne, 2010).

Consequently, it provides a link between scores on the measurement instrument (questionnaire), and the underlying constructs it set out to measure. In traditional regression, variables are measured without error, which Blunch (2013) suggests to be only valid when measuring a variable with an existing agreed measurement unit such as weight/ volume. However, an advantage of SEM is the recognition that any measurement will be an imperfect indicator of concepts without agreed on measurement units, such as that of reputation. Therefore, error variables are included on the variables within the measurement model.

Conversely, the *structural model* identifies the structural relations between the latent variables, and the degree to which these latent variables influence each other (Figure 4.1 and Figure 8.4) (Blunch, 2013, Byrne, 2010). The structural relations are hypothesised suggesting causal relations and directional influence between multiple variables (completed in Section 4.3). The aim of the structural model is to determine if the hypothesised relationships are consistent with the data collected. Hypothesis testing is a characteristic of post-positivism (Howell, 2013), however, as a pragmatic perspective has been adopted (Section 5.2.1), the 'hypotheses' have been termed as 'assumptions' to indicate a difference in philosophical perspective. These assumptions are evaluated through model-data fit indices and determining model validity. The criteria used to determine model fit and validity of the measurement and structural model, as well as other general assumptions of SEM are discussed below.

Assumptions of Structural Equation Modelling

Assumption 1: Sample size

Prior to testing the validity of a SEM, three primary assumptions of the data collected and variables used are made. The first assumption recognises the importance of sample size, as SEM typically requires a large sample (>200) (Hair et al., 2006, Kline,

2005). Previous guidelines suggest sample sizes of 300 are required, however Hair et al. (2006) recognises this as no longer being appropriate, and that the sample size required should be based on five considerations. These include (Hair et al., 2006, p. 740):

a) Multivariate distribution of data

Normal data distribution is the second assumption of SEM (discussed below).

However, in terms of calculating sample size, Hair et al. (2006) suggests a minimum ratio of 15 respondents for each estimated parameter within the general model in the case of non-normal data (Data normality is tested in Section 8.2.1.3).

b) Estimation technique

A commonly used estimation procedure is maximum likelihood estimation (MLE), which recommends sample sizes of 100-150 to ensure a stable MLE. Sample sizes of 150 to 400 are considered to be ideal for using this method, as samples of >400 become sensitive to goodness-of-fit models causing errors.

c) Model complexity

The sample size can be dependent on model complexity. Complexity is considered through the number of estimated parameters; more parameters indicate higher complexity. It is suggested that five to ten responses per estimated parameter is needed in order to achieve a stable result (Crowley and Fan, 1997, Floyd and Widaman, 1995b). Once the minimum number has been exceeded, larger samples indicate increased stability and less variability in the results (Hair et al., 2006).

d) Amount of missing data

Researchers should plan for missing data through increasing the sample size needed to offset any issues that missing data may cause. A missing data approach should be adopted (Hair et al., 2006, p. 739). For this study two approaches of missing data are taken, the first is Listwise deletion, deleting the whole response, for incomplete/unfinished responses. The second approach to dealing with missing data is Expectation Maximisation, which replaces values missing at random with a maximum likelihood solution (discussed in Section 8.2.1.2) (Howell, 2007, Little and Rubin, 1987).

e) Amount of average error variance (AVE) among the reflective indicators

Hair et al. (2006) suggest that communality is a more relevant means of calculating sample size issues. Communality represents the average variation among measured variables explained by the measurement model, and can be calculated from construct loadings. As communality values become smaller, larger sample sizes are required. Communalities of <0.5 need bigger sample sizes in order to achieve convergence and model stability.

The specified model, identified in Section 4.3 and revised in Section 6.7, has 81 estimated parameters¹⁹. Assuming a normal distribution of data, communality values of >0.5 , and once all responses containing missing data are removed, the sample size needed, is calculated based on the complexity of the model. As such, a minimum sample size of 405²⁰ responses is recognised as being required. As this value is larger

¹⁹ The model has 100 parameters (presented as each arrow in the measurement models, and the assumption arrows) (Section 4.3.2, and revised in Section 6.7), with 81 Estimated Parameters due to the first item in each latent variable 'fixed' to 1.0 (Blunch, 2013) (discussed in section 8.3.3).

²⁰ Calculated as $81 \times 5 = 405$

than the sample needed for the generalisability of the findings (369) (Section 5.4.5.4), this is the minimum sample that will be used for this study.

Assumption 2: Normal data distribution

The second key assumption of SEM is the normal distribution of data, which is evaluated through univariate and multivariate normality (completed in Section 8.2.1). Univariate normality is investigated through the skewness and kurtosis of each variable (Hair et al., 2006, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). When assessing a variable's skewness, values of >3 indicate an extremely skewed variable, suggesting a non-normal distribution of data. Similarly, when measuring the kurtosis of a variable, values >10 indicate a problem of normality, while values of >20 indicates a serious problem of normality.

Multivariate normality relates to the joint distribution of indicators and variables (Hair et al., 2006, Jaccard and Wan, 1995, Kline, 1998). According to Kline (1998), multivariate non-normality can be identified through the investigation of the univariate distributions. A large sample size, as well as deleting variables outside a normal range can enhance multivariate normality.

Assumption 3: Multi-collinearity

The third key assumption in SEM analysis is the lack of multi-collinearity, which occurs when different variables correlate to the same construct (Kline, 1998). Kline (1998) recognises that variables with a correlation of >0.85 among two different variables could be conceptually indistinguishable. Multicollinearity is assessed using the tolerance levels and Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) for combinations of variables (Kock and Lynn, 2012). A VIF of more than 5, and tolerance levels below 0.2, are signs

of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2006, Kline, 1998, O'brien, 2007). This is tested in section 8.3.1.1 using parcelled variables following factor analysis.

5.4.7 Reliability and validity of research

Reliability within qualitative research is the 'degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 67). However, the reliability of quantitative research is 'the extent that results are consistent over time, and an accurate representation of the total population under study' (Joppe, 2000, p.1 cited in Golafshani, 2003). Furthermore, a variable's reliability refers to the degree to which an observed variable measures the true value and is error free (Hair et al., 2006). These definitions highlight, that quantitative research should be replicable, to be deemed reliable (Golafshani, 2003). Validity on the other hand, from a qualitative viewpoint refers to 'whether a relationship discovered in an experiment can be generalised to other situations' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 66). However, from a quantitative perspective, refers to whether the research truly measures what it intended to (Adcock, 2001). Within Quantitative research and specifically within SEM, statistical tests and measures are used to determine the validity and reliability of the research; these are discussed below.

5.4.7.1 Testing the validity and reliability of a model

Testing validity within SEM involves an evaluation of the measurement model. Construct validity, or the validity of the model determines if the variables being measured are 'consistent with theoretically derived hypotheses concerning the concepts (or constructs) that are being measured' (Zeller and Carmines, 1980, p. 81). According to Zeller and Carmines (1980), there are three steps to assessing construct validity: (1) to specify the theoretical relationship between variables; (2) to measure the

empirical relationship between the variables; and (3) to interpret the findings. Construct validity is assessed using convergent validity, discriminant validity and unidimensionality (Fornell and Larcker, 1981a, Hair et al., 2006, Kline, 1998). Measures and their criteria to determine validity are discussed below, and completed in Section 8.3.4.2.

Prior to testing construct validity, a preliminary factor analysis should be conducted (completed in Section 8.2.2). In the case of complex models, such as the one used within this research, a preliminary factor analysis can be useful to determine if the data fits the expected structure, and for data reduction (Field, 2013). A principal component analysis is best suited to this situation as it summarises the original information in a minimum number of factors (Field, 2013, Hair et al., 2006). Furthermore, using a factor rotation method, such as a VARIMAX rotation, within the factor analysis assists in achieving a 'simpler and more meaningful factor solution' (discussed in Section 8.2.2.1) (Hair et al., 2006, p. 123). Cronbach's alpha is used to determine variables' suitability for factor analysis and should be >0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy should also be conducted, with values >0.6 indicating the variables are valid for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity, used to determine the suitability of a factor analysis in identifying correlations between variables, should be >0.05 in order to proceed (Hair et al., 2006, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). This process is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Convergent validity is the extent that indicators of a specific construct share a high proportion of variance in common (Hair et al., 2006) or the internal consistency of the measurement of the variable (completed in Section 8.3.4.2) (Kline, 1998). A high proportion of variance in common between indicators, suggest that they measure the same construct. Ways to determine convergent validity include factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and reliability (Hair et al., 2006). For factor loading to indicate convergence, values should be >0.5 , and ideally >0.7 (Hair et al., 2006). AVE is

calculated as the average squared factor loading, and should be >0.5 (Hair et al., 2006). This indicates that 50% or more of the variables are accounted for by the measured construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981a). Reliability is also a determinant of convergent validity, and can also be measured using Cronbach's Alpha. Reliability between 0.6 and 0.7 are also acceptable provided that other indicators of the models construct validity are good (Garson, 2008, Hair et al., 2006).

Discriminant validity determines the extent that a construct is different from other measured constructs within the model (Hair et al., 2006, Hulland, 1999). It is demonstrated by a higher AVE than the Maximum and Average Shared Variance (Fornell and Larcker, 1981a). Similarly, measuring a variable's unidimensionality demonstrates a set of indicators only has one underlying construct (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988), thus confirming the lack of multi-collinearity between constructs. This can be determined by assessing the cross-loadings of variables (multi-collinearity); no significant cross-loadings demonstrate unidimensionality. Anderson and Gerbing (1988) recognise the importance of unidimensionality, suggesting that it is crucial for theory testing. Thus, achieving a unidimensional measurement is important for this research to evaluate the validity of the theory (completed in Section 8.3.1).

Once the validity of the measurement model is confirmed, the goodness-of-fit of the model is evaluated. A number of goodness-of-fit models are suggested in the literature, with the most commonly used measures discussed below. This process is completed for the measurement and structural model in Sections 8.3.4.3, 8.4.2 and 8.4.3 respectively.

5.4.7.2 Assessing goodness of model fit

The goodness-of-fit (GOF) (also referred to as model-fit) indicates the extent that the specified model/ theory is a reflection of reality as demonstrated by the data (Hair et al.,

2006). This is achieved by comparing the estimated covariance matrix to the observed covariance matrix. Model fit is demonstrated by values within these two matrices being close together (Hair et al., 2006). Researchers are recommended to use a mix of fit indices to achieve model-fit as the results of each can vary statistically dependant on sample size, model complexity and degrees of error (Garver and Mentzer, 1999, Jaccard and Wan, 1995, Marsh et al., 1996). They suggest using Chi-Squared (X^2) as an absolute measure of fit, however X^2 will accept any model with a small sample, and reject any model with a sufficiently large sample (Blunch, 2013). Therefore, in addition to using Chi-Squared, Hair et al. (2006) suggest using multiple indices of differing types, including: one *badness-of-fit index* (Standard Root Mean Residual (SRMR)); one *goodness-of-fit index* (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) or Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)); and one *incremental fit index* (Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) or Comparative Fit Index (CFI)). These will be discussed in more detail below, with a summary of their criteria represented in Table 5.12.

Absolute fit models, such as goodness-of-fit indices and badness-of-fit indices, are direct measures of how well the suggested model represents the data collected (Hair et al., 2006). It evaluates the fit of a model without reference to other relevant models (Blunch, 2013). As a result, the model is assessed without any standard or basis on which to be judged; this means that it has no reference on what makes the model good or bad.

When using X^2 as an absolute-fit index in SEM, the researcher should look for a low X^2 value (referred to as CMIN in AMOS) and large p -value²¹. This demonstrates that the suggested model is a reflection of the data (Hair et al., 2006). The X^2 statistic 'is a mathematical function of the sample size (N) and the difference between the observed and estimated covariance matrices' (Hair et al., 2006, p. 747). As the sample size

²¹ The *p-value* represents the probability that an observed variable and estimated variable are equal in a given population

increases, the value of X^2 also increases. Similarly, an increase in the number of variables within a model also causes X^2 to increase, even if, in both situations, the other matrices remain identical (Hair et al., 2006). Consequently, properties of the X^2 GOF may reduce or increase the models validity without just reason. Some researchers suggest using a normed chi-square (NC) as this can reduce the effects of the sample size on the results (Bollen, 1990). This value is calculated as the X^2 divided by the degrees of freedom (df) (X^2/df); where the df represents the difference between the number of observations and the number of unknown parameters (Blunch, 2013). An acceptable NC value demonstrating GOF ranges from less than five (<5) (Kelloway, 1998, Schumacker and Lomax, 2004), or less than two (<2) (Kline, 1998). Due to this variability and the sensitivity of the X^2 , researchers are encouraged to use additional measurements to confirm GOF in SEM.

The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) was developed in an attempt to create a fit test that was less sensitive to sample size than X^2 however, sample size still indirectly affects GFI values. The possible range of the GFI measure is 0 to 1 with higher values indicating a better fit (Hair et al., 2006). Researchers have suggested that values higher than 0.9 are considered good, however more recently, it has been argued that GFI values should be greater than 0.95 to be considered a good fit (Harding et al., 2013, Hooper et al., 2008). A GFI was not produced within the AMOS output, and thus RMSEA is used a Goodness of Fit index to test model fit.

The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) accounts for the error of approximation in variables. It answers the question 'How well would the model, with unknown but optimally chosen parameter values, fit the population of covariance matrix if it were available?' (Browne and Cudeck, 1993, pp. 137-138). RMSEA values of less than 0.05 indicate a good fit (Steiger, 1990), with values as high as 0.08 demonstrating a reasonable fit (Browne and Cudeck, 1993, Hu and Bentler, 1998). Values greater than 0.1 are considered a poor fit (Byrne, 2010).

The Standardised Root Mean Residual (SRMR) is a measure of the predicted error for each covariance term, which creates a residual (Byrne, 2010). It is a standardised value of the Root Mean Square Residual (RMSR), which is calculated as the 'square root of the mean of the squared residuals (an average of the residuals between individual observed and estimated covariance and variance terms)' (Hair et al., 2006, p. 747). Low values of both SRMR and RMSR indicate a better fit, while high values indicate a worse fit (or a 'badness-of-fit') (Byrne, 2010). The average value for SRMR is 0, and it is suggested that the researcher should carefully analyse any residuals below -4.0 and above 4.0 (Hair et al., 2006). Byrne (2010) suggests that a well-fitting model should have an SRMR value of 0.05 or less. No *badness-of-fit* measures were produced in the AMOS output, and thus additional incremental fit indexes were considered.

An incremental-fit-index, such as the Tucker Lewis Index or Comparative Fit Index, differ from absolute fit indices as they assess how well a model fits relative to a baseline model (Hair et al., 2006). A commonly used baseline model is the null model, which assumes that all observed variables are uncorrelated (Hair et al., 2006). While CFI values are normed and range between 0 and 1, TLI is not normed and can have values ranging below 0 and above 1. In both indices, higher values indicate a better fit, with values less than 0.9 considered an unacceptable fit (Bentler, 1992, Hu and Bentler, 1998). Marsh et al. (1988) recommend using TLI as it is less sensitive to sample size as is the case with other fit indices.

Once the validity and goodness-of-fit of the measurement model is confirmed, it is possible to specify the structural model (Hair et al., 2006). This is achieved by assigning relationships from one construct to another (model assumptions) based on the proposed theoretical model (Figure 8.4) (Blunch, 2013, Hair et al., 2006, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Similarly to the measurement model, the validity and GOF of the structural model needs to be assessed in order for the proposed theory to

be tested and the relationships between constructs identified. This process is outlined below, and completed in Section 8.4.

A summary of all the criteria used for assessment during the EFA, CFA and SEM are presented in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12 Criteria of measurement types used within the SEM

| Validity Measure | Measurement | Criteria | Criteria indication | References |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|---|--|
| Sample size | Communalities | >0.6 | And <5 constructs = samples sizes of 100-150 | Hair et al. (2006) |
| | | 0.45-0.55 | Model has <3 items = sample size of 200 | |
| | | <0.45 | Model has <3 items = Sample size >300 | |
| | | <0.45 | Model has >6 factors = sample size of >500 | |
| Univariate Normality | Skewness | >3 | Extremely Skewed = non-normal data distribution | Hair et al. (2006); Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) |
| | Kurtosis | >10 | Problem of normality = non-normal data distribution | Hair et al. (2006); Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) |
| | | >20 | Serious problem of normality = non-normal data distribution | Hair et al. (2006); Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) |
| Factor analysis | Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) | >0.7 | indicates reliability of a variable | Nunally (1978) |
| | | >0.6 | | Garson (2008) |
| | Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) | >0.6 | Variables are valid for factor analysis | |
| | Bartlett's test of sphericity | >0.05 | Identifying correlations between variables | Hair et al. (2006) |

| Validity Measure | Measurement | Criteria | Criteria indication | References |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--|
| Multi-collinearity | Correlation matrix/squared multiple correlations | >0.85 | variables are conceptually indistinguishable | Kline (1996) |
| Convergent Validity | Factor loading | >0.5 | indicates factor convergence | Hair et al. (2010) |
| | | >0.7 | ideal indicator of factor convergence | Hair et al. (2010) |
| | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) | >0.5 | >50% of variables accounted for by model | Hair et al. (2010) |
| Discriminant Validity | AVE > Squared correlation estimate (R^2) (Maximum and Average shared variance) | | Variable is valid | Fornell and Lacker (1981) |
| Goodness-of-Fit indices | Chi-Squared (X^2) | Low X^2 , High p-value | Good fit | Hair et al. (2010) |
| | Normed Chi-squared (NC = X^2/df) | <5 | Acceptable fit | Schumacker and Lomax (2004); Kelloway (1998) |
| | | <2 | Acceptable fit | Kline (1998) |
| | Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI) | >0.9 | Acceptable fit | Hair et al. (2010) |
| | | >0.95 | Acceptable fit | Hair et al. (2010) |
| | Square Root Mean Residual (SRMR) | <0.05 | Good fit | Byrne (2010) |
| | Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) | <0.05 | Good fit | Stieger (1990) |
| | | <0.08 | Reasonable fit | Browne and Cudeck (1993) |
| | | >0.1 | Poor Fit | Byrne (2010) |
| | Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) | <0.9 | Unacceptable | Hu and Bentler (1999) |
| Comparative Fit Index (CFI) | <0.9 | Unacceptable | Hu and Bentler (1999) | |

5.4.7.3 Assessing the structural model validity

Testing the structural model's validity and GOF follows similar principles to testing the measurement model however, there are two primary differences. The first difference is that, while an overall model fit needs to be established, alternative models can be compared (Hair et al., 2006). The overall fit can be evaluated using the same GOF indices and criteria outlined above. Additionally, comparisons between the structural model and measurement model GOF should be made, with the closer the GOF values indicating a better structural model fit (Hair et al., 2006). Secondly, an emphasis is placed on the estimated parameters as they provide empirical evidence relating to the proposed relationships in the structural model (Hair et al., 2006). A structural model is recognised to be valid based on two parameter estimates (Hair et al., 2006, p. 758), which include:

- a) Statistically significant and in the predicted direction (parameters are greater than 0 for a positive relationship and less than 0 for a negative relationship)
- b) Nontrivial (checked using completely standardised loading estimates)

Consequently, a structural model is only considered acceptable, when it demonstrates acceptable model fit and the path estimates representing each proposed relationship is significant and in the predicted direction (Blunch, 2013, Byrne, 2010).

5.4.7.4 Modification of a misfit model

When a model possesses issues of validity and reliability, or an unacceptable fit, modification indexes can be considered to improve the specified model (completed in Section 8.3.4.3) (Byrne, 2010, Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). Investigations of large standardised residuals (SR) and modification indexes (MI) are used to avoid

specification errors influencing the proposed model and to modify it properly (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993). Researchers suggest a strategy for modification should be adopted in SEM research (Byrne, 2010, Hair et al., 2006, Schumacker and Lomax, 2004); the three predominant strategies are outlined below:

a) Strict confirmatory approach

A single model is specified in this approach, which is accepted or rejected following a SEM analysis. Modifications are unable to be made using this approach, which Byrne (2010) suggests to be very limiting, and in many cases, research concludes on a rejected hypothesised model.

b) Model development approach

Modifications to both the measurement and structural model can be conducted within this approach, to achieve a better fitting model (Byrne, 2010, Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). However, Byrne (2010) and Hair et al. (2006) recommend that modifications should be substantively meaningful and driven by the data, rather than adopting modifications with no theoretical justification to simply improve model fit.

c) Competing models approach

This strategy requires alternative models to be presented that are based on alternative, but potentially provide an equal or better fit to the data (Byrne, 2010). Each model is based on alternative theoretical justifications, with the best fitting model selected based on analysis results (Hair et al., 2006, MacCallum and Austin, 2000).

The '**model development approach**' is selected for this research, as no alternative models are identified from the conceptual framework, and the strict confirmation approach is seen to be too restrictive for the nature of this research. Model modifications are discussed and completed in Section 8.3.4.3 and 8.4.1.

5.5 Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter provides the foundation on which the remainder of this thesis will be conducted. It presents pragmatism as the research philosophy underpinning this research, and the justification for the use of a case-study methodology over other methodologies such as ethnography or action research. A sequential research design adopting a mixed methods approach is selected, as existing research has proven this to be beneficial in model development research. Subsequently, the two phases (qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires) of this proposed design are discussed.

Five senior managers at The University were selected, using purposive sampling, as participants for the interviews. These were selected following analysis of The University's strategy, which included five strategic ambitions, with each participant representing an ambition. The justification for using TA as an analysis technique, and the recommended process for conducting a TA is presented. Lastly, the interviews were used to identify the sample of events, and to inform the research questionnaire for phase 2 of the research

Phase 2 of the research design involves a quantitative questionnaire completed by university event attendees. The aim of this phase is to address objectives 2-6. As such the development and pilot study of the questionnaire is discussed. Structural equation modelling is selected as the analysis method for the questionnaire responses, as it is the most suitable for testing relationships between variables. The process of assessing the measurement and structural model developed within Chapter 4 is discussed. This identifies criteria for assessing the goodness-of-fit, validity and reliability of the proposed models, and finally, a modification strategy for the case of a mis-fitting model is selected.

6 The Strategic Purpose of Events: Interview analysis

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter seeks to identify what the strategic purpose of holding events is for The University (Objective 1). The interviews, while seeking to answer objective 1 (*To determine the role of university events as a strategic communication tool*), were also used for the following purposes:

1. To identify the purpose of events at the case study university
2. To determine the validity of existing reputation measurement characteristics (RepTrak System) and identify new university specific characteristics to be used in phase 2 of data collection
3. To identify events to be used as the sample for phase 2 of data collection

Five interviews were conducted with selected members of senior management staff from The University, as identified in Section 5.4.3 and 6.2. This led to interviews relating to events in research, student engagement, community engagement, and external relations (Table 6.1). The interviews lasted between 45 and 70 minutes.

The first section of this Chapter addresses objective 1 of this research, *the strategic purpose of holding events* (Section 6.4). This identifies the types of events held at the case study university and their purpose, as well as the importance of holding events and their use as a communication tool. The second section (Section 6.5 – 6.6) identifies what reputation means to The University, how it is currently measured, and the characteristics thought to be included in stakeholders' assessments of reputation. The analysis and results of this, are used to confirm and inform the questionnaire used within phase 2 of this research (Bryman, 2006), resulting in a revised conceptual framework being proposed (Section 6.7). Finally, the interviewees identified the events to use within the second phase of this study (Section 6.8).

6.2 Sample and respondent overview

Purposive sampling was used to select interviewees (Tongco, 2007), which was done based on their position, and the area in which they work at The University. These areas are in line with The University’s strategic objectives, and as such, the events held within these areas were considered to address these objectives (discussed in Section 5.4.3.2). Four interviewees [1, 3a, 3b, 4] are directly involved with the operational aspect of holding events at The University, with the others [2, 5] only involved from a strategic perspective. The ‘area of The University’ that each respondent is from, their employment level and length of time at The University, is summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Sample and Respondent summary

| Interview | Area of university | Employment level | Length of time at The University (at time of interview) |
|--|--|--|---|
| 1 | External Relations - Community Engagement | Partnerships and Community Engagement Manager | 5+ years |
| 2 | Research Events | Head of the Graduate School | 5+ years |
| 3* | External Relations - other University events | (a) Director of Development (b) Events and Graduation Manager | (a) 3 years (b) 5+ years |
| 4 | Student Recruitment | Head of Student Recruitment | >1 year |
| 5 | Student Experience Events | Deputy Vice-Chancellor | 5+ years |
| *Interview 3 was conducted with 2 members of staff | | | |

Interviewees were asked to describe their roles in terms of university events, with their responses shown in Table 6.2. These responses demonstrate that the interviewees roles, in terms of university events, are varied, giving a broad perspective of the events

taking place at The University and that management are involved with. Thus, it is thought that their opinions of events held at The University demonstrate a true reflection of reality. Additionally, all interview candidates, with the exception of 4, have worked at The University for longer than three years at the time of interview. Thus, their views and understanding of The University's events are considered to be based on significant experience, further suggesting that the views given during their interviews are based on processes taking place at The University, and accurately represent reality.

Table 6.2 Description of Interviewee's Roles

| |
|--|
| Interview 1 |
| <p><i>“My current role is managing strategic partnerships for Xxx University, so therefore a lot of those... the reason we have those partnerships is to connect with a wider community. So our mission is around transforming lives, we can't just do that as a University, we might have the most wonderful research going on here, the most talented students, the most talented graduates but if we've not got those roots to market if you like, it is really hard to expose all of that. So, in managing those partnerships, quite often one of the mechanisms for connecting partnerships with different University audiences is through events.”</i></p> |
| Interview 2 |

“So in terms of internal events, there are a number of things that we do in the Graduate School which I contribute to, such as induction... Other events that I get involved in, would be, well we run a research centre. Our research centre holds at least 2 Post Graduate Symposiums each year... Other events that I am involved in would be not put on by The University’s Events Team but I am there representing The University of xxx in my capacity using my expertise to field into a wide range of events and I think that’s incredibly important in raising The University’s profile nationally and internationally. So I am the Chair of the UK Council for Graduate Education, we have conferences every year and workshops and I attend as many of those as possible and it’s always xxx that is up there, so that actually promoting us. I sit on the European Council for Doctoral Education, they likewise do the same twice a year and I was represented there and because of that national and international profile I’ve been invited to things at Westminster to go and talk on various think tank panels around the country, mostly in London actually. So I’m constantly travelling to present those sorts of events and that is my expertise, which has been generated from my job experience here but also my deep understanding of what actually the challenges are facing Graduate Education.”

Interview 3a

“...I oversee as Director [of the Development Office], 5 key streams of programme focus where we have the ‘events’ led by [3(b)] and that includes Awards, Exams and Graduation. So we have ‘alumni’, we have ‘fund-raising’ and we have ‘partnerships and community engagement,’ and we

have 'campaign planning', campaign manager if you like, which is about helping to set up a University Wide Fundraising and Engagement Campaign."

Interview 4

"I've managed the team that is responsible for organising events that are focused around building awareness of higher education and also encouraging recruitment onto Xxx University Programmes. So within this team we have not only the responsibility for that direct recruitment but also we have widening participation within the context of encouraging aspirations into Higher Education, so we have that kind of dual purpose of our events really."

Interview 5

"So in terms of The University events I guess I've got a reasonable role in terms of the hierarchy of events that we run in determining what we might want to do. So at the moment I carry 2 roles, I've got a part-time role as Deputy Vice Chancellor, it's fairly new and my substantive role is around the student experience and the strategic look at that. So in terms of, and showing that we've got the right Open Days and applicant days, and there's, and I think more broadly any events, so I also look after sort of sports, or get involved in quite a few ad hoc events and routine events around that. Other events that are happening around The University such as conferences and things like that; so I've opened a lot of conferences... So yes in terms of trying to position The University through any of our external events,

obviously got a key interest in all of that. In terms of the direct granularity of the event itself, there are usually other people that are detailing that out.”

6.3 Identifying themes

The interviews were guided by research questions and analysed using the phases of TA as identified in Table 5.9. Both inductive and deductive approaches were adopted during this phase; while data familiarisation took place, familiar concepts, as identified from existing literature (step 2) (Braun and Clarke, 2006) became evident.

Furthermore, pre-determined interview questions were used to develop initial codes (the interview coding is shown in Appendix 13). Nevertheless, other interesting features of the data were also recognised, such as ‘the ability to take advantage of and create opportunities’ as a feature of reputation [1, 2].

Common themes were identified (step 3), which were guided by the literature presented in Chapters 2 and 3. This resulted in two overall themes within the data: Reputation, and Communication and Events, codes within these themes are identified in Table 6.3. However, upon reviewing these themes (step 4) an overlap between communication type (a sub-theme within communication), events as a communication type, and reputation building activities (a sub-theme of reputation) was recognised, and thus, these themes were revised. This recognised the link between ‘communication type’ and ‘reputation building activities’ (shown in Table 6.4).

These themes are discussed in Sections 6.4 to 6.6 below, with a focus on achieving objective 1. Firstly, the strategic purpose of holding events at the case study institution is identified, with the focus on The University’s communication, and events as a

communication type. The University’s reputation is then deliberated and a justification of why reputation is important to The University presented. The means of measuring The University’s reputation is discussed, supporting this research’s overall aim of developing a new university reputation measure, as no consensus was found of how The University currently measures its reputation. Finally, reputation characteristics, to use in phase 2 of this research, are presented.

Table 6.3 Initial Themes

| Theme | Sub-Theme 1 | Sub-Theme2 | Additional Codes |
|------------|--------------------------------|------------|--|
| Reputation | Reputation Characteristics | | Creating opportunities, Facilities, Research, Taking Opportunities, Community Engagement, Location, Campus, Accessibility, Student Experience, Teaching, Enterprise, Working in Partnership, Performance, Sustainability, Attractiveness, Transforming Lives |
| | Reputation Building Activities | | Putting words into actions, Experiencing university, Secondary/ third party events, Relationship Building, Celebrity endorsement, Showcasing university |
| | Visibility | | Internationalisation |
| | Reputation Measures | | |
| | University Reputation | | |
| | Different reputations | | |
| | Familiarity | | |

| Theme | Sub-Theme 1 | Sub-Theme2 | Additional Codes |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Recruitment impact on reputation | | |
| | Reputation Definitions | | |
| | Bad Reputations | | |
| | Importance of Reputation for University | | |
| Communication & Events | Events as a communication channel | Event Types | Dinner as an event |
| | | Purpose of Events | |
| | | Event Characteristics | |
| | | Event Impact | |
| | | Event Quality | |
| | | Event Operations | |
| | | Service Characteristics | Managing expectations |
| | | Importance of Events | |
| | Communication type | Events as a communication channel | |
| | | Word-of-Mouth Communication | WOM internal, WOM external |
| | | Digital Media | Social Media, Website |
| | | Media | |
| | | Sponsorship | |
| | | Internal Communication | |
| | | Written Communication | |
| | University Communication | Strategy 2020 | |
| | | Sharing information | |
| | | University Structure | Top-down Communication |

Table 6.4 Revised themes

| Theme | Sub-Theme 1 | Sub-Theme2 | Additional Codes |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Reputation | Reputation Characteristics | | Creating opportunities, Facilities, Research, Taking Opportunities, Community Engagement, Location, Campus, Accessibility, Student Experience, Teaching, Enterprise, Working in Partnership, Performance, Sustainability, Attractiveness, Transforming Lives |
| | Measuring reputation | University Reputation | |
| | Reputation Building Activities | Increasing visibility and Familiarity | Putting words into actions, Experiencing university, Secondary/ third party events, Relationship Building, Celebrity endorsement, Showcasing university |
| Communication & Events | Communication type | Events as a communication channel | Event Types, Purpose of events, Event characteristics, Event impact, Event quality, Event operations, Service characteristics, importance of events |
| | | Word-of-Mouth Communication | WOM internal, WOM external |
| | | Digital Media | Social Media, Website |
| | | Media | |
| | | Sponsorship | |
| | | Internal Communication | |
| | | Written Communication | |
| | University Communication | Strategy 2020 | |
| | | Sharing information | |
| University Structure | | Top-down Communication | |

6.4 Strategic purpose of events

6.4.1 University communication

The University's marketing and communication strategy, which is available on The University's staff intranet, identifies three key channels that it uses; digital, offline and face-to-face (Plymouth University, 2012b, Plymouth University, no date). The strategy states that, all communications from The University should be in line with The University's strategic objectives, thus suggesting that it is implemented in agreement with The University's Strategy 2020 (previously Strategy 2012/ 2015, these are available on The University's website) (Plymouth University, 2012b). This is in line with Cornelissen (2008) who recognises that the communication strategy is responsible for sharing the organisation's vision (Section 3.2), and confirms the assumption that university events should achieve a strategic ambition (Section 5.2.2.2).

The University's communication strategy also suggests that all marketing communication should address 'one or more of the 'R' functions' (Relationships, Revenue, Recommendations and Reputation) (Plymouth University, 2012b). Providing tailored communication to different audiences raises stakeholders' awareness about the organisation (Fombrun, 1996), which contributes towards perceptions of reputation (discussed in Section 3.3) (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998, Willems et al., 2016). Thus, increasing relationships, and generating revenue and recommendations, are considered to contribute towards a positive reputation for The University.

All interviewees recognised that The University's desired reputation is drawn from The University's Strategy 2020. This is developed by university senior leadership in consultation with university staff, suggesting an initial top-down approach to university communication (Cornelissen, 2008, Fill, 2009, McQuail, 2010). The University uses a variety of communication channels that include direct and indirect mediums (Mohr and Nevin, 1990, Shoemaker and Reese, 2013), and provide strategy guidance documents for all these types of communication, in an attempt to encourage staff to engage with

communications in a specified way. This is to ensure consistency of messages originating from The University to internal and external audiences, which is important for developing a strong reputation (Cornelissen, 2014, Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004).

The marketing strategy recognises that different audiences access different communication channels, which justifies the need to use a variety of mediums (discussed in Section 3.2, and supported by findings in Section 7.3.4). Interviewee 1, acknowledged the use of these different channels, by recognising that the younger generation mainly access information through digital communication such as social media, while older generations, such as the members of The University of the Third Age, are more responsive to face-to-face and printed communication. Martin and Cazarre (2016) recognise that a higher proportion of 18-29 year olds, in comparison to 65+, use social media. This is supported by results found from this research (discussed in Section 7.3.4, Table 7.13), which shows that:

- 41% of respondents 18-24, in comparison to 10% of respondents 65+, use social media to gain information about The University;
- 33% and 20% of respondents 65+ use events and meetings (face-to-face communication) to gain information, in comparison to 22% and 15% for 18-24 year olds.
- However, more 18-24 (26% in comparison to 10% for 65+) respondents used printed communication types, suggesting a knowledge gap in how stakeholders gain information by interviewee 1.

While many mediums of communication are utilised by The University, it is suggested that stakeholders are most responsive to face-to-face communication, as opposed to forms of digital and offline communication, such as that of the website (Fill, 2009, Jackson, 2013). Interviewee 5 supported this by stating that they 'can't see digital media overtaking the face-to-face physical event'. They continue by suggesting that

they ‘can’t see events not being a truly critical part of what we do but it is only one channel and it’s only one part of the marketing mix, but I think it’s a really important part’. This was further supported by other interviewees who recognise the importance of stakeholders coming onto campus to ‘experience The University’ [4], and that ‘for everything we do, there’s some kind of event attached to it’ [5]. Thus, it is purported that the interviewees generally accept the importance of face-to-face communication.

The marketing strategy highlights face-to-face communication as a key communication channel. All methods of communication within this channel (Table 6.5) are recognised to be a type of event, as they adhere to the characteristics of an event from the definition provided in Section 3.4.1. Consequently, events are deemed to be an important aspect of The University’s communication strategy, and thus a tool for communicating key messages (Crowther, 2010a, Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014).

Table 6.5 Face-to-Face Communication (Plymouth University, no date)

| Types of Face-to-face Communication |
|--|
| Conferences |
| Dinners |
| Events |
| Lectures (including Guest/special lectures, and normal lectures) |
| Open days/preview days |
| Panels |
| Roundtables |
| Seminars |

6.4.2 Importance of holding events

Events were identified by the interviewees to be of significant importance to The University’s communication strategy as they provided the ‘richness’ of face-to-face

communication (Cornelissen, 2008), while communicating specific messages (Crowther, 2010a). Events were recognised to be ‘absolutely core to building reputation’ [1], and that ‘few activities happen without some type of event involved with it’ [1]. By discovering the magnitude of events that take place at The University (over 500 during the year 2015), it is clear that many university initiatives are linked with an event, through launches, fund raising events, celebrations or visits to The University campus (Plymouth University, 2015d). Interviewee 3a recognises the events that are used, are not ‘a means to an end, [but rather a] part of a process’ to achieve a wider purpose/objective for The University (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014, Jackson, 2013). Consequently, many university events are used as a communication tool rather than as the final product as suggested in Figure 3.1.

The importance of using events, as suggested by the interviewees, link to The University’s reasons for holding the events. Interviewee 3b recognised that events at The University were set up on the ‘principles of the three Rs –Revenue, Relationships and Reputation,’ rather than the ‘4 Rs’ as identified in the strategy (Plymouth University, 2012b). The use of events to generate revenue was discussed in terms of sponsorship/fundraising for specific causes and recruitment of students. However, little was mentioned in terms of events being an income generating tool in their own right.

The principle of building relationships was discussed among all interviewees recognising the relationship marketing (Braggs, 2006) and public relations function that events can have (discussed in Sections 3.4.3 and 3.4.4 respectively) (Ledingham and Bruning, 1998). Similarly, ‘experiencing The University’ and ‘showcasing The University’s best features’ were discussed by all interviewees. This highlights the experiential nature of events (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014, Vila-López and Rodríguez-Molina, 2013), and suggests that events can be used as a marketing tool or public relations tool. These activities are thought to contribute to reputation, and are discussed in more detail below.

Building relationships and engaging stakeholders at events is suggested to be a 'way of unlocking potential' [1], and according to researchers, is considered to be of far greater value to an organisation than simple transaction based encounters (Kalwani & Narayandas, 1995 cited in Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). The University uses these relationships to leverage opportunities in line with their strategic objectives (Donlan and Crowther, 2014). According to interviewees, the events held are 'engineered' to 'influence key stakeholders' [1], and engage high profile individuals [3, 5], ensuring that 'people don't turn up and leave without engaging in any meaningful sort of dialogue' [3]. Therefore, implying the development of a relationship to increase awareness about the organisation's key objectives (Donlan and Crowther, 2014, Jackson, 2013). Without the use of events it was suggested that The University 'would be lacking the ability to engage well with stakeholders' [1], thus diminishing the opportunities available for relationship building, and achieving its strategic objectives.

The importance of the physical setting as a characteristic (Bitner, 1993, Theodorakis et al., 2015) and the staged experience created to provide an intended experience of the organisation (Section 3.5.2) (O'Dell and Billing, 2005, Ritchie and Hudson, 2009) was discussed by interviewees. They suggested that, in addition to engaging stakeholders, the events held are 'engineered' to highlight The University's best features [3, 4, 5]. This included picking 'the right route around campus when showing people around' [5], and the importance of 'selecting the right venue to use when holding events' [3]. Interviewee 4 suggests that events are 'hugely important' as without the use of events, 'we would never make the (recruitment) targets that we do, purely on our written reputation'. This recognises how experiencing The University can influence future decisions and perceptions of an organisation (Kim et al., 2014). Thus, events provide a direct (face-to-face) opportunity for stakeholders to experience The University (Wood, 2009b), and for The University to 'showcase its best features' [5].

The quality of the event was also recognised to be important, with interviewee 3b emphasising that 'we really do work hard to deliver quality'; it was also noted that 'events are only as good as people see you to be' [5]. This is supported in the literature, as authors have previously recognised the importance of event quality in achieving satisfaction (Clemes et al., 2011, Mason and Nassivera, 2013, Theodorakis et al., 2015). This too, identifies the importance and impact of engaging with good quality staff on satisfaction (discussed in Section 3.5.2) (Yoshida and James, 2011). Therefore, the experience people have while attending events is important as it influences their perceptions and future intentions towards the organisation. While findings from this research suggest that satisfaction (event impact) is found to influence attendees' perceptions of reputation, no link to attendees' future intentions was identified (discussed in Chapter 8 and 9)

6.5 University reputation

The definition and measurement of the term reputation has caused much confusion within the literature (discussed in Sections 2.3 and 2.5). As such, interviewees were asked to define what the term reputation meant to them and what it means to The University, which received an array of responses from the interview candidates. Interviewees 1 and 5 gave similar responses suggesting that 'reputation is defined by what people say about you' [1] and 'what people first think of when they hear the name... it's the first one or two bullet points that pop in their head that they associate with that word or institution' [5]. This suggests that reputation is based on judgements made by people who have had some level of experience with the organisation as they are able to say something about it (Helm, 2005).

Interviewee 2 suggested that different types of reputation exist within a university setting, whereas interviewee 3a proposed that reputation 'really comes down to what we're trying to achieve with individual projects'. Interviewee 1 suggested that 'the

reputation we have can vary according to different audience'. These views accept and acknowledge the field of thought that a single organisation can have multiple reputations (Caruana, 1997, Lewellyn, 2002) and that this can be in relation to different areas of the organisation, the projects The University is involved with or the stakeholder group.

'Academic reputation' was discussed by interviewee 2, which the researcher understood to be related to an individual 'academic' member of staff, rather than an academic field of study as a whole. They suggested that this academic reputation came from 'publication output and therefore your citations' [2]; implying a link to research quality as a contributing factor of reputation as is the case with existing university ranking scales (Ivy, 2001, Times Higher Education, 2014). Furthermore, they implied that invitations to other institutions also influenced reputation, highlighting the importance of an individual's visibility within their field of research (Fombrun et al., 2000).

The second type of reputation discussed by interviewee 2 was 'institutional reputation', which they suggest is 'built by the external perceptions', which similarly to interview 1 and 5 infers a judgement being made by stakeholders with an awareness of the institution (or familiarity) (Greyser, 1999, Helm, 2005). However, this definition of reputation specifies an audience of 'external' stakeholders, and is thus more closely linked to definitions of an organisation's image rather than its reputation (Section 2.3.2) (Alessandri, 2001, Walker, 2010). Consequently, it is recognised by the researcher that interviewee 2's perception of reputation is more in line with what the literature identifies as being an organisation's image.

Interviewee 4 states that institutional reputation in terms of recruitment is how the institution's 'qualities and strengths can be communicated to our potential stakeholders, and to potential students'. This implies that different institutions communicate different messages to highlight their areas of strength (discussed in Section 3.2). Similarly to

interviewee 2, interviewee 4 only recognises reputation as a judgement by those external to The University (potential stakeholders and students), and is also thought to be characteristic of an organisation's image (Alessandri, 2001). Furthermore, they specify a primary element of their job role (student recruitment) within their definition, suggesting that they perceive The University's reputation to be primarily concerned with the recruitment of potential students. However, unlike other interviewees, interviewee 4 does identify that reputation is a comparison judgement against competitor institutions (Philippe and Durand, 2011, Walker, 2010) accepting the comparative nature of reputation as a concept.

These differing definitions are recognised by the researcher to reflect the interviewee's roles at The University. The acknowledgement of research contributing to reputation, is thought by the researcher to be representative of interviewee 2's position and job role at The University, as research is an integral part of their role, and was selected to address the strategic ambition of 'world-class research and innovation' (identified in Table 5.6). Interviewee 4 specifically addressed reputation in terms of student recruitment, reflecting their role as Head of Student Recruitment, while interviewees 3a and 3b, who are responsible for delivering key projects at The University address reputation in terms of project delivery. Furthermore, interviewee 1 recognises that stakeholder groups may have differing perceptions; their role involves liaison with multiple university partnership groups and encounters diverse groups of stakeholders, and thus, their definition also reflects their role. Finally, interviewee 5, the most senior member of university staff who was interviewed, gave the most widely accepted definition. This definition is similar to Fombrun's (1996, p. 72) definition of reputation, 'Corporate reputation is a snapshot that reconciles the multiple images of a company held by all its constituencies' (Section 2.3.3).

6.5.1 Importance of reputation to universities

The increased marketization of HE and the globalisation of rankings (discussed in Chapter 1) has led to an increased importance for universities to have a good reputation (Hemsley-Brown et al., 2016, Marginson, 2014, Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016). The interviewees unanimously agreed that reputation is important to The University, with each giving a similar reason for this importance. Having a positive reputation was viewed as being critical to achieving The University's 'agendas' [1] (recognised by the researcher as The University's objectives) in areas of 'research, student experience, employability, enterprise and sustainability' [1], and therefore, creating a competitive advantage over other institutions (Dill and Soo, 2005, Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016). Reputation is thought to give The University a recognised profile by promoting the development of partnerships locally, nationally and internationally [3a], and thus increasing the organisation's visibility among its key stakeholders (Brammer and Millington, 2005). Interviewee 2 suggested that an international reputation was 'almost more important' than the national reputation, and is something that should be promoted more, to further increase visibility. This advocates that a positive reputation increases the visibility of an organisation, however no evidence to support this notion was found within this research (discussed in Chapter 8 and 9).

The importance of reputation was also addressed in terms of its benefits to The University. Interviewee 4 identified reputation to be important for recruitment, and is taken into account when students select one university over another, therefore attracting more customers and providing a competitive advantage (Deephouse, 2000, Fombrun and Low, 2011). This was also reflected in comments by interviewee 5, who suggested that reputation was 'one of the key determining factors that ensure the sustainability of our business'. They recognise that attracting more students provides a financial sustainability for the organisation through fee-paying students [5]. This notion could be compared to increased sales figures and profitability for for-profit organisations (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Roberts and Dowling, 2002, Saeidi et al.,

2015). Thus, benefits of a positive reputation are suggested to be similar in for-profit and non-profit organisations.

Other benefits of a positive reputation are believed to be an improved business sustainability in terms of academic and research performance, which as a result, attracts high quality staff and researchers (Highhouse et al., 2009). Furthermore, reputation improves the sustainability of partnerships and relationships that The University develops (Fombrun and Low, 2011). This enhances possibilities of research funding (Davies et al., 2010), or creates learning opportunities for students, resulting in an enhanced student experience, thus increasing employability of The University's graduates. Nevertheless, it is difficult to identify which of these areas is the most important and influential on an organisation's reputation, as it is difficult to isolate the success of one area over another.

6.5.2 What reputation the case study institution aims to have

When asked what reputation The University aims to achieve, all interviewees with the exception of interviewee 4 spoke of The University's mission and values [1,2,5]. Some interviewees specifically highlighted The University's Strategy 2020 [1, 2, 3a, 3b], discussing working in partnership with students and the community [1], and research and teaching [4, 5]. Interviewee 5 recognises that The University 'really wants to be known for world-leading education, alongside some of our pockets of excellence in research'. Similarly, interviewee 4 spoke of 'high quality research and high quality teaching'. The identification of these characteristics by these interviewees is thought to reflect their job roles and positions at The University. A key area of student recruitment is the promotion of the key service areas offered by the university, furthermore, high quality research and teaching is a priority for the role, and seniority of interviewee 5. Thus, these responses are expected from these interviewees. While neither interviewees 4 or 5 specifically mention The University's strategy, the areas they

discuss do form a part of The University's strategic objectives. Therefore, it is suggested that all interviewees recognise that The University aims to have a reputation in line with its strategic objectives.

This reflects Alessandri's (2001) model of corporate identity, and suggests that the 'organisation identity' (derived from the mission and vision of the organisation) is reflected in the image of the organisation, which together form an organisation's reputation. Interviewees 1 and 2 both mentioned The University's vision of 'transforming lives' and its mission statement to be the 'Enterprise University' (Plymouth University, 2012a), with interviewee 2 highlighting the importance of these statements being 'reinforced by actions.' According to interviewee 3a, this is what they aim to achieve through the projects they deliver, in the hope to enhance research performance, student engagement and consequently, The University's reputation. Therefore, communicating The University's strategic objectives to an external audience, enables the organisation to develop a reputation in line with its mission and vision.

6.5.3 Reputation building activities

Everything an organisation does contributes towards building its reputation (Hatch and Schultz, 1997, Melewar and Jenkins, 2002, Roberts and Dowling, 2002, Schuler, 2004). While it is difficult to control all areas of an organisation, interviewees recognise that The University has few planned activities, where reputation is not considered [1, 5]. They also highlight the importance of choosing to take part, and not taking part, in projects with external organisations that may damage The University's reputation, or are not in line with The University's objectives [5].

'I think we do very little, where we haven't considered the impact on our reputation and that's in our choice not to do things as well as choosing to do

them... We are building a brand and we're building on the back of that reputation for what we do. What we want everyone to consider is how they would engage with Xxx University in ways that synthesise well with that value set' [5].

From the interviews, a number of reputation building activities were identified. These were identified to form part of two overarching themes of 'increasing the visibility' of The University, and 'increasing familiarity' among key stakeholders. These characteristics are important in determining reputation, as an organisation needs to be visible for its stakeholders to be aware of it, with the visibility also suggested to influence stakeholder's familiarity of the organisation (Bushee and Miller, 2012, Fombrun et al., 2000, Fombrun et al., 2015). Furthermore, a degree of familiarity with the organisation is needed to be able to make an informed judgement of the organisation's reputation (Artigas et al., 2015, Christou, 2003, Govender and Abratt, 2016, Helm, 2005). Thus, these characteristics are considered important when assessing an organisation's reputation, and are ways that an organisation can influence the perceptions of its stakeholders.

Using events to increase visibility

"We're very well known in this part of the UK. I think Xxx University has a profile and stands on its own two feet here in the South West but when you look at The University's ambitions in that document (Strategy 2020) you will note that we're not just about regional local economy. We're about national and international partnerships and work, and so we've got to work hard to leverage our local reputation, if you like, the best that we can, through our various networks and contacts that have an international standing" [3a].

Visibility is the awareness that an organisation exists (Bushee and Miller, 2012) or the prominence of an organisation in the minds of its customers (Van den Bosch et al., 2005) (discussed in Section 2.7.2). It has been suggested that organisations that are more visible have better reputations (Brammer and Millington, 2005, Fombrun et al., 2015). Furthermore, organisations that are considered to be known internationally are thought to have enhanced reputations due to their global presence (Brammer and Millington, 2005). Interviewee 4 recognises that ‘people only know how good you are if you, *sort of*, broadcast it’, and suggests that much more can, and should, be done within the institution to further promote the strength of the organisation. Therefore, it becomes important for organisations to take part in activities whereby their visibility can be increased.

Through taking part in third party, secondary and sponsored/ partnered events and projects (discussed in Section 5.4.3.2), The University is able to increase its visibility among key and potential stakeholders. As a result, it will be seen to be involved in projects that positively contribute towards achieving its objectives. This was acknowledged by interviewee 5 who stated:

‘I would like to think that we’re quite principle driven in the decisions that we make and the activities we engage in. It is really about making sure that whatever we do, there is a high degree of visibility of The University in those elements and that there is a clarity about what The University is doing and why it’s doing it’ [5].

Three sponsored/ partnered events that were seen by the interviewees to be of key importance, were The University Forum that took place in Miami, USA in 2014, the Dementia Conference (2015), and the launch of the Brain Tumour research partnership (2014). Interviewee 1 suggested that sponsorship is a means of ‘buying our way into achieving some kind of reputational gain’ by creating a platform for increased visibility through association with well-known/supported events and research areas. This

supports research suggesting that endorsements with reputable celebrities or other organisations, improves reputation (Da Silva Lopes, 2016, Zamudio, 2016). Taking part at international events, contributes towards The University's internationalisation agenda (Plymouth University, 2012a), as interviewee 2 indicated that it 'really puts [The University] on a world stage, showing what we are and what we're trying to do... those sorts of activities are actually pretty important'. Consequently, these activities also contribute to The University's visibility. However, it is difficult to disassociate the impact of these activities with other university events and activities, and therefore are difficult to measure.

Attending third party events, such as University's Week that took place at the Natural History Museum in London [1], the Council for Graduate Education Conference, and House of Lords Select Committee [2], are seen to be of importance to The University as it raises the profile of it at a national and government level [2]. As rankings are increasingly being used by government agencies to determine funding opportunities available for universities (Salmi and Saroyan, 2007, Sponsler, 2009), it is also thought that institutions with a greater visibility at government level will also be considered for such benefits. Furthermore, winning awards and attending award ceremonies such as the Green Gown Awards increases awareness of The University. Interviewee 1 acknowledges this point by stating 'if you're not out there, winning awards, how do people know what you're doing'; highlighting the importance of increasing The University's visibility.

Nevertheless, visibility characteristics used within this research (Table 6.11) were found to have no significance in influencing stakeholder's perceptions of reputation. This is due to all visibility variables presenting with a low factor loading during the EFA (discussed in Chapter 8). A cause for this could be due to the types of events used within this research, as the activities mentioned by interviewees all include events out of the scope of this research. Thus, this becomes an area of future research, to

determine if the type of event held (sponsored, third party, or university run event), plays a part in determining the institution's visibility.

Using events to increase familiarity

A stakeholder's familiarity with an organisation is the knowledge they have of that particular organisation (discussed in Section 2.7.1) (Carroll, 2016, Helm, 2005, Monin, 2003). Authors suggest that the more familiar someone is with an organisation, the more accurate their perceptions of that organisation's reputation will be (Brooks and Highhouse, 2006, Brooks et al., 2003, Helm, 2005). This suggests that stakeholders who have been involved with the university the longest, may be more familiar with the university, and thus their opinions may more accurately represent reality. Therefore, in selecting the interviewee sample, their length of service at The University was established to ensure their level of familiarity with The University was high.

From the interviews, it became clear that the means of engaging stakeholders, to improve their familiarity, was through building relationships with them, and them experiencing The University. This suggests that The University takes both a marketing and PR approach to engaging its stakeholders (Gummesson, 2002, Horng et al., 2012, Ledingham and Bruning, 1998). This is primarily done through events, ranging from small dinners and meetings to The University's largest events such as open days and graduation ceremonies.

A purpose of engaging stakeholders with events is that it provides the opportunity to develop relationships with key and influential stakeholders [1, 3a], which are considered to be of great value to an organisation (discussed in Section 3.4.3) (Kalwani & Narayandas, 1995 cited in Donlan and Crowther, 2014, Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). Interviewee 3 suggests that through projects such as awarding Honorary Doctorates, The University is able to build a relationship 'in support of one of our key project areas

that we're looking to pursue.' This recognises that relationships are developed in line with The University's objectives, making the stakeholder aware of the strategic ambitions of The University [1]. Thus, providing the opportunity for stakeholders to become more familiar with the organisation (Cornelissen, 2008). Consequently, through building this relationship, familiarity with the organisation is increased.

Events were also recognised to be used to showcase The University and that it 'always tries to make use of its best buildings' [3b]. Holding events on The University campus or in 'idyllic locations' immerses the audience with the experience (Wood, 2009b), creating the opportunity to awaken emotions leading to pleasurable experiences (Schmitt, 1999a). Interviewee 4 suggests that holding events 'creates a reason' for people to visit and experience The University. Engaging people in events, creates an opportunity for The University to 'specifically show and showcase what is excellent about The University' [5], 'it's a showcase of the facilities... of things like research strengths, subject strengths' [4] to its audiences. Thus, events provide an experiential means of gaining information, which cannot be achieved through traditional forms of communication (Genasi, 2001, Wohlfeil and Whelan, 2005). Through this experience, stakeholders are able to 'get to see what The University is really like' [4], further enhancing their familiarity with it.

Organisations use events to engage their stakeholders with key activities, in an attempt to inform them of their strengths and achievements (Crowther, 2010a, Goldblatt, 2007). Providing this information using experiential face-to-face communication channels, enables the organisation to deliver more complex messages, and therefore enhancing the receiver's ability to understand the meaning of the message (Daft and Lengel, 1986, Peltokorpi, 2015, Robert and Dennis, 2005). Thus, hoping to increase the stakeholders' level of familiarity with the organisation, and subsequently, positively influence their perceptions of the organisation.

Increasing visibility and familiarity through other Forms of Communication

Other forms of communication, such as the media [1, 3, 5], word-of-mouth [1, 2, 5] and communications originating from The University [1, 2, 4, 5], are also suggested to be used to assist in reputation building (discussed in Section 2.4) (Belasen, 2008, Caruana and Ewing, 2010, Cornelissen, 2008, Crowther, 2010a). The University's Press Office is said to be the 'core' [1] of monitoring and evaluating stories in the media about The University, to assess their reputational impact; this is monitored by using the Advertising Value Equivalents and by identifying if stories are positive, neutral or negative (Sampson, 2016). Additionally, they are able to 'push a lot of stories out into the press about all the things that we're doing' [5] to increase awareness of activities taking place at The University. Thus, The University's visibility and familiarity among the wider public is increased, by having a presence in the media.

Word-of-mouth communication, specifically from internal stakeholders is suggested to be of great importance [1, 5]. Interviewee 1 states that 'your internal champions are your best ambassadors; if you don't influence them to say the right type of things, you'll negatively impact upon your reputation'. Interviewee 5 recognises that people will 'believe what they believe about The University from the word-of-mouth communication that goes around'. This highlights the importance of internal communication, and the 'top-down' communication approach to ensure that accurate and positive messages, in line with the organisation's strategic objectives, are disseminated (Cornelissen, 2008, Fill, 2009, McQuail, 2010). Word-of-mouth communication from staff and students was found to be the most common communication channel to gain information about the university within this research (discussed in Section 7.3.4). Thus, confirming the interviewees' views and acknowledging the importance of internal stakeholders speaking positively about the organisation.

Digital media, including The University's website and social media, is also viewed to have an impact on reputation (Dijkmans et al., 2015, Kaul et al., 2015, Lee, 2016b). Interviewee 2 identifies that 'the website is paramount... because it's the first port of call for anybody making an enquiry', which is evidenced by the number of unique visitors to the website (Lee, 2016a). Whereas interviewee 1 suggests that social media is becoming increasingly important for the younger generations as it is where they find information. This view is confirmed in Section 7.3.2, with 51% and 41% of 18-24-year-old respondents for this research using the website and social media to gain information about the university.

Having an increased media presence, through traditional media and online media, increases the visibility of organisations. Furthermore, as these forms of communication, and word-of-mouth communication, are used to gain information, those who use them will have an increased familiarity of university activities. This is due to messages from these sources originating from The University. The ability of these communication channels to increase visibility and familiarity among an organisation's stakeholders, suggests that they would also have an influence on an organisation's reputation. Thus, these types of media are considered within this research, to determine their impact on visibility and familiarity and consequently, the case study university's reputation.

6.5.4 How reputation is currently measured

Interviewees were asked to identify how The University's reputation is currently measured, which received an array of responses. Two respondents [1,5] identified that it was an 'interesting question' and appeared uncertain of how to answer. Both these interviewees identified assessing media coverage in terms of Advertising Value Equivalents (discussed in Section 2.5) and recognised that the Press Office at The University plays an important role in determining the impact of media stories on The University's reputation, and combating any negative publicity that may be received.

Monitoring of The University's social media presence was also mentioned, with interviewee 5 stating 'We have quite a lot of people looking at how often we get noted on social media, how often we appear on twitter'. Suggesting that reputation could be measured on the frequency or activeness of their social media accounts, and how often The University is mentioned ('get noted' [5]) within these.

The participants from interview 3 initially deflected the question, suggesting that the person responsible for Strategy and Performance at The University should be asked as they were unsure. They did however, mention the use of league tables as a possible measure for reputation, identifying that they were the obvious tool to use when measuring institution reputation. Nevertheless, they were unsure if these measured university performance or reputation, and suggested that the two concepts were closely associated by stating 'I suppose they go hand in glove' [3a].

League tables were also recognised as means of assessing university reputation by interviewees 2 and 4. It was identified that different league tables utilise different characteristics to assess universities, with the weighting of these characteristics playing an important role in where universities appear in the rankings (Dill and Soo, 2005, Usher and Savino, 2006). Therefore, dependent on the league table, a university could be ranked either high or low, based on the characteristics that that league table deems to be most important (Dill and Soo, 2005, Marginson, 2014, Usher and Savino, 2006). This showed acknowledgement by the interviewees of the methodological limitation of many league tables. While governmental organisations and institutions view league tables to be an important measure of reputation, respondents to the questionnaire ranked league tables fourth, behind personal experience, word-of-mouth, and attitudes of internal stakeholders, when judging a university's reputation (discussed in Section 7.4.1). Therefore, a gap between perceived importance of league tables by institutions differs from the importance placed by on them by key stakeholders.

Other means of how The University measures their reputation that were identified was market research with potential students who attend recruitment events. However, this research focusses more on what the attendees at these events 'perceive as needing more work' [4], and their future decisions to become a student of The University, and not on The University's reputation as a whole. However, this only identifies perceptions of potential students rather than a range of stakeholders for The University, thus causing a limitation for this type of research to assess reputation as a whole.

Interviewee 1 identified that a 'reputation audit' of The University was conducted by SERIO (a research partner of The University) in an attempt to 'understand what people's perception, internally and externally, amongst a whole breadth of audiences were' [1]. They also suggested that the 'Staff Survey' that takes place at The University looks at similar perceptions to this. However, assessment of only a single stakeholder group (staff) would also be a limitation of this research. Nevertheless, the results of these surveys were not publically available.

The literature suggests that university reputation is primarily measured through the use of league tables (Shin and Toutkoushian, 2011). However, these discussions, and findings in Section 7.3.4, support that this is not the only means of measuring university reputation, as if it was, a unanimous consensus from the interviewees would have resulted. This recognises an important gap between the ideology of senior management at The University and reality, as all interviewees' recognised reputation to be vitally important to The University (identified in Section 6.5.1). Nevertheless, no clear method of measuring The University's reputation appears to be in place, and even the most senior of interviewees was unsure of how The University measured its reputation. This supports the premise that there is a gap for an additional means of measuring reputation within the higher education industry within the United Kingdom, and therefore supports the need to achieve Objective 2 of this research.

6.6 Characteristics of measuring a university's reputation

6.6.1 Reputation characteristics

Interviewees were asked to identify potential characteristics that they thought reputation was measured by, and to confirm characteristics identified from the literature, in order to develop a new reputation measurement model (Objective 2).

Table 6.6 identifies characteristics and the number of interviewees that mentioned these characteristics. Some characteristics mentioned (marked with a *), were thought to be similar to characteristics already included within the RepTrak System, and to avoid duplication were removed when re-coding took place. Characteristics that were only mentioned by one interviewee, were thought to be typical of the area of The University from which the interviewee came; such as 'working in partnerships' was mentioned by the Partnerships Manager (interviewee 1), but not by other interviewees. Consequently, they were removed as if they were of significance, other interviewees would have also included them.

Table 6.6 Initial coding of reputation measurement characteristics

| Reputation characteristics | No of sources |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Creating opportunities | 5 |
| Campus | 4 |
| Facilities | 4 |
| Location | 4 |
| Research | 4 |
| Taking Opportunities | 4 |
| Community Engagement* | 2 |
| Performance | 2 |
| Teaching and academic | 2 |
| Good quality students | 2 |
| High achieving students | 2 |
| Accessibility of university | 1 |
| Attract quality staff | 1 |
| Commercialisation agenda | 1 |

| Reputation characteristics | No of sources |
|--|---------------|
| Employability | 1 |
| Enterprise* | 1 |
| Student Experience | 1 |
| Sustainability* | 1 |
| Working in Partnership | 1 |
| *characteristics already exist as part of the RepTrak System | |

The remaining characteristics were reviewed and, due to similarities within the original coding, they were recoded (Table 6.7). This resulted in six new characteristics to be tested within the new reputation measurement scale. Interviewees also suggested amending the wording of existing characteristics, as identified in Table 6.8, to ensure the wording was appropriate to the case study institution.

Table 6.7 Reputation measurement characteristics used in measurement scale

| Reputation characteristics suggested by interviewees | Characteristic used in measurement scale |
|--|---|
| Creating opportunities | Recognises and takes advantage of opportunities |
| Taking Opportunities | |
| Campus | Has an attractive campus with good facilities |
| Facilities | |
| Location | Is in a good location |
| Research | Has a strong academic and research performance |
| Performance | |
| Teaching and academic | |
| Good quality students | Attracts good quality students |
| High achieving students | Has high achieving students |

Table 6.8 Reputation Characteristics changed for new measurement scale

| Original reputation characteristics from RepTrak System | Characteristic changed to be used in measurement scale |
|--|---|
| First to market | Is enterprising in its approach to doing business |
| Environmentally responsible | Acts sustainably in the way it does business |
| Offers equal opportunities | Has good employment opportunities |
| Excellent management | Is well managed |
| | Has excellent leadership |
| Profitability | Performs well financially |

The University’s ability to recognise and take advantage of opportunities presented to The University is recognised by Fombrun et al. (2000) and Yang et al. (2008) as contributing to an organisation’s reputation. Interviewees acknowledged the importance of The University creating and taking opportunities presented to them. Developing partnerships to create educational and experiential opportunities for the students was recognised by Interviewee 1 to be ‘really important’. While interviewee 2 suggested examples of taking advantage of opportunities to be involvement with government initiatives, think tanks and policy making decisions. They suggested that these activities were important as they increased the visibility of The University. Additionally, interviewees 3 and 5 identified that developing relationships with existing honorary doctorates, and engaging in high-profile events created opportunities to gain media coverage, therefore enhancing the opportunity for The University’s messages to be heard (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014). Thus, the characteristic of ‘recognising and taking advantage of opportunities’ was deemed to be important in measuring an organisation’s reputation.

The inclusion of the ‘campus and facilities’ as a measurement characteristic, was recognised to be of key importance. This is in line with existing reputation measurement scales (identified in Chapter 2, Table 2.7) that suggest that appearance (Theus, 1993), facilities (Ivy, 2001, Plewa et al., 2016) and an attractive campus (Arpan et al., 2003) all contribute to a person’s perception of the institution’s reputation.

Furthermore, research in place reputation recognises the importance of infrastructure in forming positive reputations (Foroudi et al., 2016, Morgan et al., 2011). The physical surroundings of an organisation is also thought to play a key role in contributing towards a company's ability to provide good customer service (Bitner, 1992, Clemes et al., 2011, Theodorakis et al., 2015). The interviewees specifically identified that they 'pick the right route around campus,' and the use of events to 'showcase The University's best bits' [3, 5], suggesting that the physical appearance of The University was considered to be important when trying to make a good impression, and enhance reputation. Thus, perceptions of The University's campus and facilities were included within the questionnaire.

The location of an organisation is suggested to played a key role in determining reputation (Gunarto et al., 2016, Melewar and Jenkins, 2002). The University's location was seen as both a positive and a negative among interviewees. Interviewee 4 suggested The University was at a 'disadvantage due to our location', while interviewee 1 recognised the vast benefits the location had, such as access to the sea and the moors. Interviewee 1 also suggested that it is in an ideal location within the city centre, as all parts of The University and city are easily accessible. These differences in opinions is thought to reflect the interviewees job roles, as interviewee 1 aims to enhance relationships to create student experiences within the local area, and therefore can appreciate the benefits that the area has. Interviewee 4 however, is responsible for attracting prospective students from around the country, and as the university is not in a central location within the UK, visitors often have to travel long distances. Thus, identifying stakeholder's perceptions of The University's location was considered important, to determine if it is viewed as a strength or weakness and how this affects reputation. Findings for this research showed that 80.6% of responses agreed or strongly agreed that The University is in a good location. Thus, suggesting that interviewee 1's views are more in line with stakeholder perceptions, which could be

due to their length of employment at The University (more than 5 years), in comparison to interviewee 4's short time in their position (less than 1 year).

The University's academic and research performance is suggested to influence perceptions of reputation (Albers, 2015, Verčič et al., 2016). As this is one of the key differences between University's and other non-profit organisations (discussed in Chapter 1), it was important to include. Interviewee 2 suggested that 'if you have good research, you'll attract good academics and good teaching will follow', and implied that people will judge a university on these areas. This is also a characteristic frequently measured in university league tables (Shin and Toutkoushian, 2011) and has also been included in other university reputation measurement scales (Alessandri et al., 2006, Ivy, 2001, Treadwell and Harrison, 1994, Verčič et al., 2016, Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). Therefore, it was also included within this research, to determine its validity in measuring a university's reputation.

Attracting good quality students is suggested to be indicative of the perceptions of potential students, as they recognise that 'the best students go to the best universities' [2]. Interviewee 2 continues by identifying that 'The University cares about the students who it is bringing in... we actually don't want mediocre students and we don't want weak students, we want good students' [2]. This characteristic is assessed in existing university league tables (Arpan et al., 2003, Shin and Toutkoushian, 2011, Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). It is thought that by attracting good quality students to attend a university, they are more likely to achieve a better degree than weaker students [2] (Guardian, 2016, The complete university guide, 2016). Furthermore, by being perceived to be 'tough to get into' is indication of the 'prestigious-ness' of the institution, and therefore attracting good students is recognised to correspond to successful institutions (Arpan et al., 2003). Consequently, it is included as a performance indicator to assess perceptions of reputation.

High achieving students are also currently assessed in existing university league table measurements in the form of degree classification achieved by graduates (Guardian, 2016, The complete university guide, 2016). This too, is suggested to be linked to the academic excellence and performance of the institutions, which influences reputation (Alessandri et al., 2006, Arpan et al., 2003, Treadwell and Harrison, 1994).

Furthermore, Shin and Toutkoushian (2011) recognise the importance of high achieving undergraduates and graduates in university rankings. Therefore, this has been included as a characteristic to be assessed in the new measurement scale. Nevertheless, 'attracting good quality students' and 'high achieving students' were found not to be valid characteristics within this research due to low factor loadings (discussed in Section 8.2.2), and are therefore, not considered to be important in assessing a university's overall reputation.

The change in wording for the existing characteristics was supported by a number of researchers who included similar characteristics in existing measurement scales. It is recognised that employment opportunities are a way of attracting and retaining good employees (Fombrun, 1996, Highhouse et al., 2009, Turban and Greening, 1997) (Vidaver-Cohen, 2007), which supports the change and inclusion of 'has good employment opportunities' in place of 'offers equal opportunities'. 'Financial performance' is assessed rather than profitability (Sung and Yang, 2008, Yang et al., 2008), and 'has excellent leadership' has also been included in existing measurement scales (Alessandri et al., 2006, Yang et al., 2008). Being 'enterprising' was recognised by interviewee 1 and 2 as having similar traits to being 'first to market'. Similarly, sustainability is suggested to include environmentally friendly characteristics of an organisation (Wright, 2002; Stephens, 2010), with these terms often being used interchangeably within the literature (Blewitt, 2013; Wentworth, 2012). Furthermore, sustainability has also been found to contribute to perceptions of corporate reputation (Odriozola and Baraibar-Diez, 2017). The characteristics used in the final measurement scale are identified in Table 6.9 below.

Table 6.9 Reputation characteristics used

| Core group | Measured Characteristic |
|---|---|
| Innovation | Has innovative products and services |
| | Is enterprising in its approach to doing business* |
| | Has the ability to adapt to change |
| Citizenship | Is a positive influence on the community |
| | Acts sustainably in the way it does business* |
| | Supports good causes |
| Workplace | Has good employment opportunities* |
| | Cares about employee wellbeing |
| | Rewards employees fairly |
| Leadership | Has a clear vision for the future |
| | Is well managed* |
| | Has excellent leadership* |
| | Is well organised in its approach to doing business |
| Products & services | Offers good quality products/services |
| | Products/services offer good value for money |
| | Meets the needs of its stakeholders |
| | Stands behind its products/services |
| Performance | Performs well financially* |
| | Has good prospects for future growth |
| Governance | Behaves ethically |
| | Does business fairly |
| | Is open and transparent |
| New characteristics | Recognises and takes advantage of opportunities |
| | Has a strong academic/research performance |
| | Is in a good location |
| | Has an attractive campus with good facilities |
| | Attracts good quality students |
| | Has high achieving students |
| *represents the characteristics changed from original scale | |

The RepTrak System also assesses reputation based on four emotional appeal characteristics (Esteem, Trust, Admire, Feelings), which are also used as a short-form

measure of reputation, referred to as the RepTrak Pulse (Fombrun et al., 2015, Ponzi et al., 2011). While the original RepTrak System has ‘esteem’ as one characteristic, interviewees suggested this to be separated into two characteristics, ‘respect’, and ‘favourability’. Therefore, this research will investigate the contribution of these factors, to an organisation’s emotional appeal, and their impact on reputation separately. As such, the five measured characteristics for emotional appeal are identified in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10 Emotional Appeal Characteristics

| Core group (latent variable) | Measured Characteristic |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Emotional Appeal | Trust |
| | Admire |
| | Feels good towards |
| | Respect |
| | Thinks favourably |

6.6.2 Knowledge and Familiarity

Interviewees discuss visibility in terms of being well-known locally, nationally and internationally with interviewee 2 identifying that ‘our Graduate School is actually now European, [and] internationally known right across the World’. As such, the public’s perceptions of how well-known an organisation is, will be measured based on criteria of local, national or international recognition. This confirmed the measurement characteristics suggested in Section 4.3.2. Additionally, interviewee 2 and 5 recognised that certain research areas of The University may be better known than others. Therefore, visibility in the respondents ‘field’ was also included (shown in Table 6.11). The measurement characteristics for familiarity and the communication methods used for gaining information about The University, will remain the same as those suggested in the conceptual framework (Section 4.3). This is due to interviewees confirming these

characteristics, with no changes or additions provided. Thus, a revised conceptual framework is presented in the following section.

Table 6.11 Visibility Characteristics

| Core group (latent variable) | Measured Characteristic |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Visibility | Is not well known (reverse indicator) |
| | Is well known locally |
| | Is well known in the UK |
| | Is well known worldwide |
| | Is well known in my 'field'* |
| *field indicates area of teaching or research the respondent is associated with | |

6.7 Revised Conceptual Framework

Due to the changes suggested by interviewees, a revised conceptual framework is proposed. This reflects changes to the measurement characteristics for *reputation*, *emotional appeal* and *visibility* that were used in the second phase of the research. Interviewees confirmed the measurement characteristics for *service quality* at events, and the *future intentions* they hoped to achieve through these events (as presented in Section 4.3.2). In addition, the following changes were made:

- a) The latent variable of '*new characteristics*' has been renamed '*University characteristics*' to represent its overall trait.
- b) The new characteristic '*recognises and takes advantage of opportunities*' is grouped within the latent variable '*Innovation*', as it is considered to be an important trait for successful innovation (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2013, George et al., 2015). This is tested and confirmed in Section 8.2.2, as it loads strongly with other innovation variables.

- c) The variable '*has strong academic/research performance*' is a measure of university performance (Times Higher Education, 2012), and is grouped with the latent variable '*Performance*'. This too, is tested and confirmed in Section 8.2.2, as it loads strongly with other performance variables
- d) The latent variable '*Emotional Appeal*' now consists of five measured variables, rather than the original four (shown in Figure 6.1).

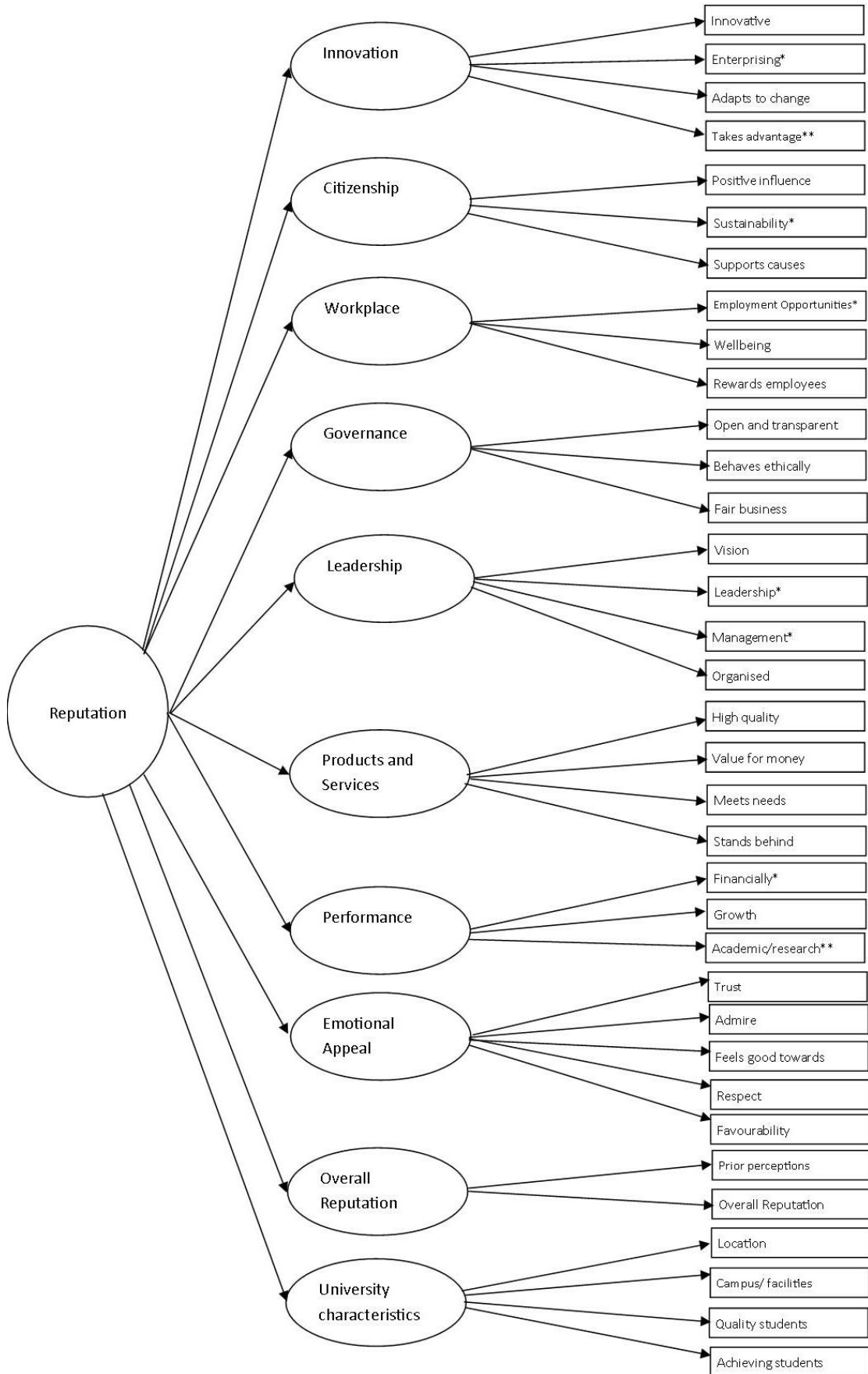
Consequently, The University's reputation was measured using 35 variables, rather than 29 (as proposed in Section 4.3.2). The revised conceptual framework measurement model for reputation, shown in Table 6.12 and Figure 6.1, reflects these changes.

Table 6.12 Reputation characteristics – Revised Conceptual Framework

| Core group | Measured Characteristic |
|-------------------|---|
| Innovation | Has innovative products and services |
| | Is enterprising in its approach to doing business* |
| | Has the ability to adapt to change |
| | Recognises and takes advantage of opportunities** |
| Citizenship | Is a positive influence on the community |
| | Acts sustainably in the way it does business* |
| | Supports good causes |
| Workplace | Has good employment opportunities* |
| | Cares about employee wellbeing |
| | Rewards employees fairly |
| Leadership | Has a clear vision for the future |
| | Is well managed* |
| | Has excellent leadership* |
| | Is well organised in its approach to doing business |

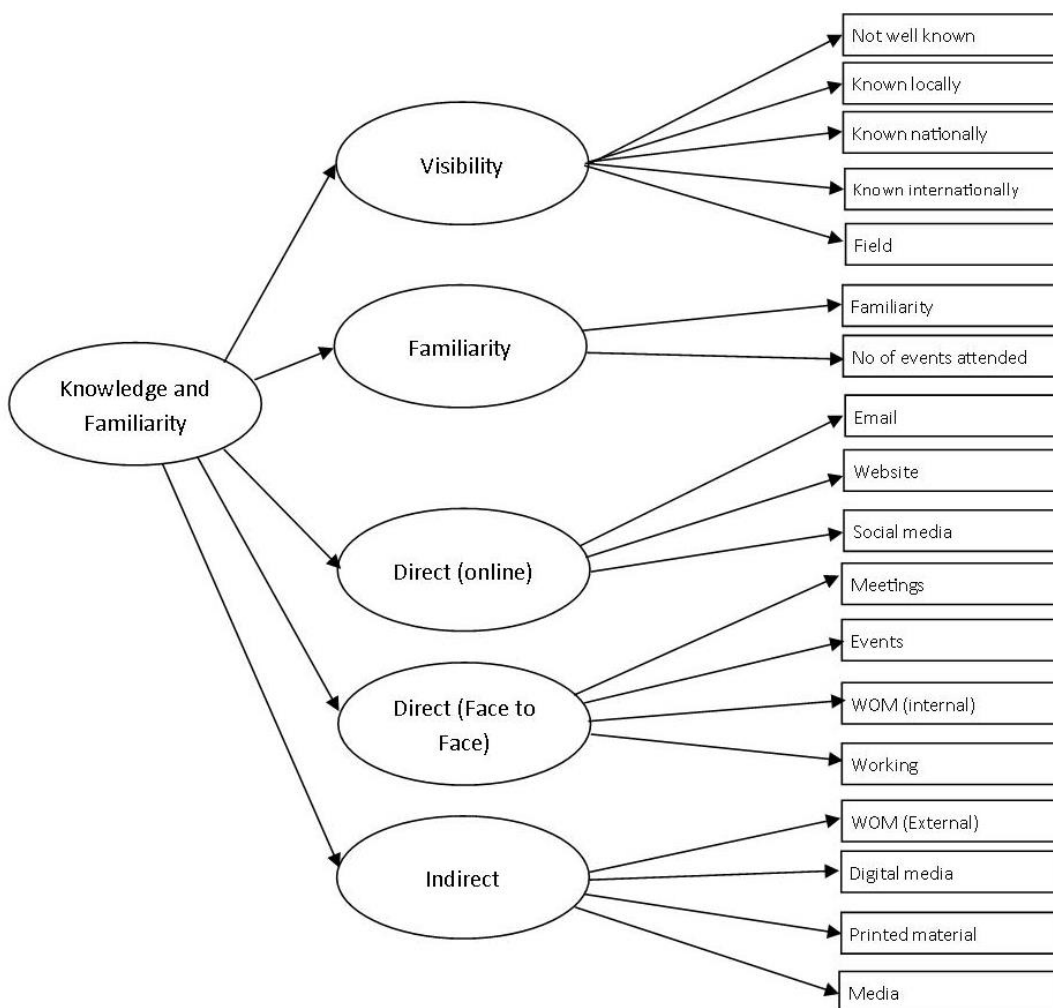
| Core group | Measured Characteristic |
|---|---|
| Products & services | Offers good quality products/services |
| | Products/services offer good value for money |
| | Meets the needs of its stakeholders |
| | Stands behind its products/services |
| Performance | Performs well financially* |
| | Has good prospects for future growth |
| | Has a strong academic/research performance** |
| Governance | Behaves ethically |
| | Does business fairly |
| | Is open and transparent |
| University characteristics | Is in a good location |
| | Has an attractive campus with good facilities |
| | Attracts good quality students |
| | Has high achieving students |
| * represents the characteristics changed from original scale ** represents new characteristics | |

Figure 6.1 Reputation measurement model: revised measurement model



The revised measurement model for '*knowledge and familiarity*' (Figure 6.2) reflects the change of visibility having five measured characteristics, rather than the original four suggested. No changes have been made to the measurement models for Event Influence and Future Intentions and therefore remain unchanged (these are presented in Chapter 4). While changes to the measurement models have been made, the structural model (as presented in Figure 4.1) remains unchanged.

Figure 6.2 Knowledge and Familiarity: Revised measurement model



6.8 Events identified for phase 2 of data collecting

Interviewees identified a number of events to be used within phase 2 of this research. As part of the event selection process interviewees were provided with a set of criteria (Shown in Table 5.8) to ensure the events selected, fitted within the scope of this research. These criteria ensured that the event was a university event, organised by a department within the university, rather than a third party or sponsored event.

Permissions for the event attendees to be contacted was also needed to distribute the questionnaire, and where contact details were not available, permissions to attend the event to collect data needed to be granted. Finally, the events selected needed to be within the data collection timeframe of January 2015 to December 2015.

In addition to addressing the criteria in Table 5.8, interviewees were asked to consider events that involved a wide range of university stakeholders, such as those identified in Table 5.6. This was to ensure that a diverse range of stakeholder opinions were taken into account for phase 2 of the research. This was necessary in order to address criticisms of existing measurement scales, and thus address the objectives of this research.

The events selected represented the different areas of The University from which the interviewees came, and are shown in Table 6.13 and Table 6.14 below. Table 6.14 shows events that were selected to be used, however, due to event cancellation or the events being moved to outside of the data collection timeframe, these events were not included in this research. This resulted in 23 events that were used for data collection.

Recruitment events were identified as being significantly important to the university as students are the primary source of income for the university. Nevertheless, recruitment events were not included within this research, as the student recruitment team already carry out research amongst this stakeholder group, and to avoid questionnaire fatigue by respondents, access to these events was denied. Thus, this becomes a limitation of this research.

Table 6.13 Events identified for second phase of data collecting

| Event name | End Date |
|---|-----------------|
| Sporting Excellence Awards | 28/01/2015 |
| ISSR research manifesto launch | 25/02/2015 |
| Postgraduate Society Conference 1 | 24/03/2015 |
| PedRIO Annual Conference | 17/04/2015 |
| ISSR Research Event | 29/04/2015 |
| Community Open House (Lord Mayor's Day) | 06/06/2015 |
| Community weekend - Alumni and respect festival | 21/06/2015 |
| Postgraduate Society Conference 2 | 23/06/2015 |
| Social Science DTC conference | 25/06/2015 |
| Vice-Chancellor's Teaching and Learning Conference | 26/06/2015 |
| House of Lords Engagement Event | 24/07/2015 |
| Student Faculty Welcomes (Business Faculty) | 25/09/2015 |
| Graduation (Graduates, Guests of Graduates) | 28/09/2015 |
| Graduation (VIPs)* | 28/09/2015 |
| Part-time jobs fair | 07/10/2015 |
| Marine Station Opening | 16/10/2015 |
| Education placement and graduate recruitment fair | 28/10/2015 |
| Business placement and graduate recruitment fair | 03/11/2015 |
| STEM placement and graduate recruitment fair | 04/11/2015 |
| DSRTP book launch (Enterprise week event) | 19/11/2015 |
| Hong Kong Graduation/Alumni Events | 20/11/2015 |
| Business FLUX | 25/11/2015 |
| Singapore Alumni Reunion | 25/11/2015 |
| International employability conference | 16/12/2015 |
| *This event was part of the main graduation ceremonies, but at the request of the event managers, separate questionnaires were sent to VIP guests | |

Table 6.14 Events identified but not used due to cancellation

| Event name | End Date |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Summer Schools | 31/08/2015 |
| Stakeholder Gala Dinner | 17/09/2015 |
| Marine Building community open day | 05/10/2015 |
| Science & Engineering Flux | 21/10/2015 |

| Event name | End Date |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Arts & Humanities HotSeat | 11/11/2015 |
| Beijing Alumni Event | 18/11/2015 |
| Health and human sciences FLUX | 09/12/2015 |
| Cornwall Lecture | tbc |
| Greek Alumni Event (Athens) | tbc |
| Gain Event | tbc |

6.9 Chapter Summary

Five interviews were conducted with six senior members of staff at the case study university. The interviewees were selected based on the area of The University that they represent, which are in line with The University's strategic objectives (discussed in Section 5.4.3.2). Although all interviewees are senior members of staff, their levels of seniority and time working in those positions ranges from manager to deputy vice-chancellor level, and from 1 to 5+ years of service at the university. The interviewees' positions at the university became apparent when asked to define reputation, as interviewees 1-4 all defined reputation in relation to their job role. However, interviewee 5, who is the most senior, defined reputation across the institution, with a definition similar to Fombrun's (1996) definition, which is commonly cited within reputation literature. However, when asked to identify the reputation that the case study institution intended to have, interviewee 5 did not overtly recognise that this should be drawn from the university's strategy, while other interviewees [1, 2, 3a, 3b] did. This was unexpected, and suggests the importance of linking reputation attainment to organisation strategy, is not always at the forefront of thinking of senior leaders, or others within an organisation. Nevertheless, interviewee positions at The University were not overly apparent in other responses, with interviewees generally providing similar responses.

The importance of reputation to The University was discussed, with all interviewees unanimously agreeing that reputation is important to The University's success (Section 6.5.1). They further recognised that The University's desired reputation was a result of their strategy, which is derived from the vision and mission of the organisation.

Nevertheless, the means The University uses to measure its reputation was unclear, as all interviewees gave varying responses to this question (Section 6.5.4). This further identified the gap in the higher education industry within the United Kingdom, to develop a measure of university reputation, which is valid across stakeholder groups.

Measuring reputation has been a disputed topic in both for-profit and not-for-profit organisations, as different measures use different characteristics and weightings to determine an organisation's reputation (Dill and Soo, 2005). As such, interviewees were asked to identify possible characteristics, and evaluate the characteristics used within the RepTrak System for measuring university reputation (Section 6.6). This resulted in six new characteristics being identified, and five existing characteristics amended due to their suitability (Table 6.9). Changes were also suggested to the emotional appeal, and visibility latent variables, while communication methods, familiarity, event influence and future intentions remained the same. The changes to the measurement models for Reputation and, Knowledge and Familiarity are represented in a revised conceptual framework (Section 6.7).

The importance of events to the case study university was identified, with interviewees recognising them as a 'vital' tool for communication. This is due to their 'richness' of being able to communicate specific messages to their desired audiences (Cornelissen, 2008, Crowther, 2010a, Jackson, 2013). By providing the platform for audience engagement while at events, The University is able to stage a desired experience to positively influence the attendees (Akyıldız et al., 2013, O'Dell and Billing, 2005, Yazıcı et al., 2016). These experiences are able to provide an opportunity for The University to achieve wider objectives (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014), such as building

relationships with key stakeholders and increasing their familiarity and visibility; all of which are considered to impact on an organisation's reputation.

The final purpose of the interviews, to identify events to be used for the distribution of the questionnaire, was also achieved. This identified 23 events (Table 6.13) to be used as part of the sample for the second phase of data collection. The events chosen adhered to the criteria set out by this research. In addition to this, they include the diverse range of stakeholders that form a part of the case study university, and therefore attempt to address criticisms of previous university reputation measurement scales. Thus, objective 1, and the three overall purposes for holding the interviews (identified in Section 6.1) have been achieved.

7 The impact of Events on Reputation: Descriptive Analysis of Statistics

7.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies and discusses the initial findings of the quantitative questionnaire. It aims to provide a context to the responses given for each variable prior to developing the SEM model in Chapter 8. It is divided into three sections, with the first identifying the general characteristics of the sample (Section 7.2), which is comprised of 592 completed responses, and shows the breakdown of responses from each event used for data collection. The socio-demographic data of the respondents is outlined, and includes respondent gender, age, employment, education and relationship to The University. Significant associations for the event and reputation variables are calculated, using the demographic data as independent variables (Section 7.2.4, Table 7.11). The results of these tests are discussed in Section 7.3 and 7.4.

The second section of this chapter (Section 7.3), identifies how respondents define reputation in relation to definitions existing in the literature. It continues by highlighting the most commonly used methods of assessing reputation according to respondents and discussing the characteristics used to measure reputation. The importance of 'rich' mediums for increasing familiarity of university stakeholders is identified, as well as the impact that university visibility has on reputation (Section 7.3.4). This section concludes by outlining the overall perceptions of the case study university's reputation, through assessing respondent's prior reputation, overall reputation and the way in which respondents describe The University's reputation (Section 7.3.5).

The third section (Section 7.4) continues by providing a discussion of the event related variables. This identifies the motivation for attending university events (Section 7.4.1), and the service quality characteristics which need to improve to increase event

satisfaction (Section 7.4.2). Finally, the impact of events on stakeholder's perceptions is identified in relation to their future intentions (Section 7.4.3).

7.2 General characteristics of the sample

Events used to gather data were all held by the case study institution, which identifies events to be an important part of their communication strategy. The events selected for phase 2 of this research (Table 6.13), were selected according to a set list of criteria (Section 5.4.3, Table 5.8), to gain the perspectives of a representative sample of university stakeholders (Chapleo and Simms, 2010). Purposive sampling was applied within this phase of the research (Teddlie and Yu, 2007, Tongco, 2007), due to questionnaire respondents needing to have attended a selected event; this was to accurately answer event specific questions in section 3 of the questionnaire.

7.2.1 Questionnaire distribution

The questionnaire was distributed to event attendees in two ways; via an email including a link to the electronic questionnaire, and face-to-face during attendance at certain events (discussed in section 5.4.5.3). Email distribution was the primary method used, which was possible as the majority of events selected for this research had an attendee list with contact details. The events that were attended to collect data in person, are identified by a '*' in Table 7.1 below. These events yielded a higher response rate than the email distribution, making up 60% of the completed responses. Furthermore, the dropout rate was lower with only a 13% drop out rate as compared to 65% for the emailed responses.

The impact of events on Reputation: Descriptive Analysis

Table 7.1 Summary of response rate by event

| Event name | End Date | No. of potential population (event attendees) | No. of started responses | No. of completed responses |
|---|------------|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sporting Excellence Awards | 28/01/2015 | 120 | 16 | 4 |
| ISSR research manifesto launch | 25/02/2015 | 89 | 6 | 6 |
| Postgraduate Society Conference 1 | 24/03/2015 | 64 | 22 | 17 |
| PedRIO Annual Conference | 17/04/2015 | 130 | 2 | 2 |
| ISSR Research Event | 29/04/2015 | 237 | 6 | 2 |
| Community Open House (Lord Mayor's Day)* | 06/06/2015 | 500 | 13 | 12 |
| Community weekend - Alumni and respect festival* | 21/06/2015 | 500 | 108 | 102 |
| Postgraduate Society Conference 2 | 23/06/2015 | 64 | 14 | 9 |
| Social Science DTC conference | 25/06/2015 | 30 | 5 | 5 |
| VC Teaching and Learning Conference** | 26/06/2015 | 153 | 35 | 25 |
| House of Lords Engagement Event | 24/07/2015 | 136 | 39 | 23 |
| Student Faculty Welcomes | 25/09/2015 | 300 | 69 | 27 |
| Graduation (Graduates, Guests of Graduates)* | 28/09/2015 | 6000 | 256 | 230 |
| Graduation (VIPs) | 28/09/2015 | 40 | 13 | 10 |
| Part-time jobs fair | 07/10/2015 | 120 | 38 | 32 |
| Marine Station Opening | 16/10/2015 | 62 | 22 | 11 |
| Education placement and graduate recruitment fair | 28/10/2015 | 100 | 18 | 13 |
| Business placement and graduate recruitment fair | 03/11/2015 | 100 | 25 | 18 |
| STEM placement and graduate recruitment fair | 04/11/2015 | 100 | 30 | 20 |
| DSRTP book launch (Enterprise week event) | 19/11/2015 | 25 | 6 | 4 |
| Hong Kong Graduation/Alumni Events | 20/11/2015 | 40 | 8 | 6 |
| Business FLUX | 25/11/2015 | 40 | 5 | 3 |
| Singapore Alumni Reunion | 25/11/2015 | 40 | 12 | 7 |
| International employability conference | 16/12/2015 | 60 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | | 9050 | 772 | 592 |
| *Events attended in person | | | | |
| **Events attended in person to collect data, and questionnaire emailed to attendees | | | | |

7.2.2 Sample size

The response rate for the questionnaires is shown in Table 7.2. A total of 772 questionnaires were collected from the 23 events. Of these questionnaires 25 respondents had not attended the events, however remained on the email distribution list, and as such were not able to complete the full questionnaire²². There were 155 participants who did not complete the questionnaire (incomplete responses – discussed in 5.4.5.3), representing a drop-out rate of 20.1%. While much research exists that identifies causes for increased drop-out rates and techniques to reduce dropout rates in online surveys (Cook et al., 2000, Frick et al., 1999, Manfreda et al., 2002, Manfreda and Vehovar, 2002, Tuten et al., 2000), few authors have suggested an absolute empirical figure of what constitutes an acceptable drop-out rate. Hoerger (2010) suggested that a 10% dropout rate could be expected with an extra 2% for every 100 question items included in the survey. As the research survey contained approximately 240 question items (dependent on the questions answered), Hoerger (2010) theory would explain roughly 15% of the drop-outs, and therefore the dropout rate is not considered to be overly large.

The total number of completed questionnaire making up the sample was 592. This sample size was deemed sufficient for the research as it was higher than the sample size identified in Section 5.4.6.2 to gain statistical significance (369²³), and higher than the sample calculated as being needed for the SEM model (405) .

The total size of the population of event attendees was estimated to be 9050, however, not all of these attendees contact details were known²⁴. As such, the questionnaire was

²² The first question of the questionnaire was a filter question asking if participants had attended a specific event. Participants who had not attended the event were automatically directed to the final page of the questionnaire thanking them for their time.

²³ Based on population of 9050 event attendees

²⁴ The Graduation events only collected contact details for the students graduating, and not their families that attended the ceremony, and the Community weekend did not have contact details for any attendees

only emailed to approximately 5500 attendees, and therefore a response rate of 6.6% to 10.8% was achieved. While McPeake et al. (2014) suggested a 60% response rate was deemed to be adequate for mail surveys for the pharmaceutical industry, others identified that an acceptable rate for electronic surveys was far lower (Hager et al., 2003, Scott et al., 2011, Sheehan, 2001). Nevertheless, authors such as Olson (2000) and Sheehan (1996), while conducting research in the non-profit sector, have reported acceptable response rates of 10% and 16% respectively. Therefore, the response rate for this research has been deemed acceptable.

Table 7.2 Questionnaire response rate

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Sample | Did not attend | 25 | 3.2 |
| | Incomplete Questionnaires | 155 | 20.1 |
| | Completed questionnaires | 592 | 76.7 |
| Total | | 772 | 100.0 |

7.2.3 Respondent characteristics: socio-demographic data (Section 1)

Universities have a wide range of stakeholders that should be taken into account when assessing perceptions of institutional reputation as a whole (discussed in Section 1.1.3.3) (Chapleo, 2017, Chapleo and Simms, 2010). Thus, respondents were asked to complete socio-demographic data and to identify their relationship to The University during section 1 of the questionnaire. Information gathered in this section included, gender, age, education, employment status and stakeholder group (Table 7.3 and Table 7.4).

Information relating to nationality, country of residence and town/city of residence of those respondents living in the United Kingdom was also gathered. The town of residence was recoded to determine the distance from The University which respondents lived, similarly the county in which they live was coded. The results are summarised in Table 7.5 to Table 7.8.

Table 7.3 Participant Socio-Demographic Data

| | Measure | Total % |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Gender | Male | 43.2 |
| | Female | 56.8 |
| | Total | 100 |
| Age | 18-24 | 37.6 |
| | 25-34 | 14.2 |
| | 35-44 | 13.9 |
| | 45-54 | 17.4 |
| | 55-64 | 10.6 |
| | 65+ | 6.3 |
| | Total | 100 |
| Education | Some secondary school | 4.6 |
| | GCSE level | 4.6 |
| | A-level | 14.4 |
| | Education School level total | 23.6% |
| | College/ further education | 9.6 |
| | Vocational qualification | 4.6 |
| | Undergraduate degree | 33.4 |
| | Postgraduate qualification | 23.1 |
| | Doctorate degree | 5.7 |

| | Measure | Total % |
|------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| | Education | |
| | FE/HE total | 76.4% |
| | Total | 100 |
| | | |
| Employment | Student in part-time education | 3.5 |
| | Student in full-time education | 21.6 |
| | Employed part-time | 10.6 |
| | Employed full-time | 43.8 |
| | Self-employed | 6.9 |
| | Retired | 6.4 |
| | Unemployed | 7.1 |
| | Total | 100 |

The 'Education' and 'stakeholder group' variables were both recoded into fewer groups to increase the likelihood of finding significance (Pallant, 2016). As such education was grouped into respondents with only school level education, and those with further/higher education. The stakeholder groups were recoded into internal respondents and external respondents. This stakeholder grouping is due to the Relational School suggesting reputation should be measured from both internal and external stakeholders to an organisation (Chun, 2005). Table 7.4 shows that 43.1% of responses were from internal stakeholders, while the remaining 56.9% of stakeholder groups were from external audiences. By segmenting the responses, the contribution of each stakeholder group will be able to be determined, and consequently, the image and identity of the organisation can be determined (discussed in Section 2.3 and 8.4).

Table 7.4 Stakeholder group

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Stakeholder group | Student (Undergraduate) | 112 | 18.9 |
| | Student (Postgraduate/ Research) | 63 | 10.6 |
| | Staff (Academic/ Research) | 38 | 6.4 |
| | Staff (Non-Academic) | 38 | 6.4 |
| | Staff (Governor/ Trustee) | 5 | 0.8 |
| | Total internal respondents | | 43.1% |
| | Prospective Student | 5 | 0.8 |
| | Local Business | 14 | 2.4 |
| | National Business | 27 | 4.6 |
| | University Partner | 24 | 4.1 |
| | Parent/ Guardian/ Relative/ Friend | 126 | 21.3 |
| | Other University/ College/ School | 6 | 1.0 |
| | Community Member | 40 | 6.8 |
| | Other (did not specify) | 20 | 3.4 |
| | Alumni | 57 | 9.6 |
| | Student Body (Unions - SU/ NUS) | 5 | 0.8 |
| | Government (Local) | 5 | 0.8 |
| | Government (National) | 7 | 1.2 |
| | Total External respondents | | 56.9% |
| | Total | 592 | 100.0 |

Table 7.5 shows that 94.8% of respondents live in the United Kingdom, with the remaining 5.2% of respondents living abroad. These responses were recognised to be alumni of The University. Table 7.6 shows the county of residence for those who live in the United Kingdom, which highlights that the majority of these respondents live in Devon (58.2%). This is expected as this is where the case study institution is located, thus, many of the stakeholders who took part in the research will live in this area.

Table 7.5 Participant country of residence

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Country of residence | United Kingdom | 561 | 94.4 |
| | Australia | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Belgium | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Italy | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Spain | 3 | 0.5 |
| | Turkey | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Gibraltar | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Jersey | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Singapore | 9 | 1.5 |
| | Hong Kong | 7 | 1.2 |
| | Denmark | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Germany | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Portugal | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Poland | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Total | 592 | 100.0 |

Table 7.6 Participant county of residence

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| County of respondents from United Kingdom | Devon | 345 | 58.2 |
| | Cornwall | 43 | 7.4 |
| | Dorset | 5 | 0.8 |
| | Somerset | 42 | 7.1 |
| | Wiltshire | 8 | 1.3 |
| | Gloucestershire | 6 | 1.0 |
| | Hampshire | 9 | 1.5 |

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---------|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| | South Glamorgan | 3 | 0.5 |
| | Monmouthshire | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Berkshire | 6 | 1.0 |
| | Herefordshire | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Glamorgan | 3 | 0.5 |
| | Oxfordshire | 6 | 1.0 |
| | Worcestershire | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Surry | 5 | 0.8 |
| | West Sussex | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Warwickshire | 4 | 0.7 |
| | West Midlands | 5 | 0.8 |
| | Greater London | 28 | 4.7 |
| | East Sussex | 3 | 0.5 |
| | Hertfordshire | 5 | 0.8 |
| | Derbyshire | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Staffordshire | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Shropshire | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Pembrokeshire | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Kent | 5 | 0.8 |
| | Bedfordshire | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Nottinghamshire | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Greater Manchester | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Merseyside | 4 | 0.7 |
| | South Yorkshire | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Cambridgeshire | 2 | 0.3 |
| | North Yorkshire | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Lincolnshire | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Norfolk | 3 | 0.5 |
| | Durham | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Total | 558 | 94.3 |
| Missing | 99 | 3 | 0.5 |
| Total | | 561 | 94.8 |

Table 7.7 shows the distance respondents live from The University. This information was gathered to determine if any statistical significance existed between the distance a person lives from an organisation and their overall perceptions of reputation. Proximity has previously been found to have an effect on brand awareness and image

(Kastenholz, 2010, Yu and Lester, 2008), and decisions to attend events (Isabirye and Surujlal, 2012). Furthermore, The University received greater media coverage in local/regional news than national news (discussed in Section 5.2.2.2) (Sampson, 2016). Consequently, it is suggested that those who live closer to the organisation, may have a greater familiarity with it, and are more likely to attend the events. However, no statistical significance was found.

Table 7.7 Distance lived from Case Study Institution

| | Measure | Total % |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Distance from The University | Less than 10 miles | 50.3 |
| | 10 - 20 miles | 3.7 |
| | 21 - 50 miles | 8.4 |
| | 51 - 100 miles | 5.2 |
| | Over 101 miles | 26.5 |
| | Missing | 5.8 |
| | Total | 100 |

Respondent nationality was also gathered to determine if any significance existed between nationality and familiarity with The University, and their perceptions of The University’s reputation. Due to the number of different nationalities of respondents, these were recoded into fewer groups to increase the likelihood of finding significance (Table 7.9). Similarly to ‘distance lived’, UK respondents were thought to have greater familiarity due to their proximity, and potential expose to media coverage. Nevertheless, no significance was found using respondent nationality.

Table 7.8 Nationality of respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Nationality of respondents | British | 477 | 80.6 |
| | British other | 6 | 1 |
| | Welsh | 7 | 1.2 |
| | Scottish | 3 | 0.5 |
| | Irish | 9 | 1.5 |
| | American | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Australian | 4 | 0.7 |
| | Belgium | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Brazilian | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Bulgarian | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Canadian | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Chinese | 6 | 1 |
| | Danish | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Dutch | 3 | 0.5 |
| | French | 1 | 0.2 |
| | German | 7 | 1.2 |
| | Hong Kong | 5 | 0.8 |
| | Indian | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Iraqi | 5 | 0.8 |
| | Greek | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Italian | 7 | 1.2 |
| | Jamaican | 4 | 0.7 |
| | Jordan | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Kenyan | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Kurdish | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Latvian | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Libyan | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Lithuanian | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Malaysian | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Mauritian | 1 | 0.2 |
| | New Zealand | 1 | 0.2 |
| | Nigerian | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Polish | 3 | 0.5 |
| Portuguese | 1 | 0.2 | |
| Singaporean | 7 | 1.2 | |
| Spanish | 8 | 1.4 | |
| Swiss | 1 | 0.2 | |
| Syrian | 1 | 0.2 | |
| Taiwan | 1 | 0.2 | |
| Zimbabwean | 1 | 0.2 | |

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---------|-------|-----------|---------|
| | Total | 591 | 99.8 |
| Missing | | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | | 592 | 592 |

Table 7.9 Nationality of respondents grouped

| Nationality grouped | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| British | 502 | 84.8 |
| European | 40 | 6.8 |
| Rest of the world | 49 | 8.3 |
| Missing | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | 592 | 100.0 |

7.2.4 Significance of variables: Chi-square results

Chi-square significance correlations were conducted using the socio-demographic variables as independent variables, and seven dependant variables from sections two and three of the questionnaire (Table 7.10). The significant correlations and valid tests between these variables are shown in Table 7.11 below. The null hypothesis that no relationship exists between the dependent and independent variables, were all rejected. The ‘% level to reject null hypothesis’ column, shows that one relationship (gender*familiarity) was rejected at the 95% level, suggesting a 95% certainty that there is an association between the variables, with a 5% probability that this result occurred by chance (Pallant, 2016). Seven relationships were rejected at the 99% level, and four at the 99.999% level suggesting a 99%/ 99.999% certainty of association, with a 1%/ 0.001% probability that this result occurred by chance respectively (Pallant, 2016). The meaning of these associations is discussed in relation to events and overall reputation in Section 7.4, and 7.3 respectively.

Table 7.10 Independent and Dependent variables used for Chi-Square tests

| Independent variables | Dependant variables |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gender | Familiarity |
| Age | Event impact |
| Education | Event Rep Chance |
| Education Recoded | Expectations |
| Employment | Prior perceptions |
| Stakeholder group | Overall Reputation |
| Stakeholder group (internal/external) | Rep description coded |
| Country of Residence | |
| Nationality | |
| Distance from Plymouth | |
| County | |
| No of events attended | |

Table 7.11 Summary of Valid and Significant Chi-Square results

| Independent | Dependant | % of cells with count less than 5 | Minimum expected count | Pearson Chi-Square | | % level to reject null hypothesis |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | | | df | Asymp. Sigs (2-sided) | |
| Gender | Familiarity | 0% | 17.3 | 3 | 0.045 | 95% |
| Gender | Expectations | 20% | 1.3 | 4 | 0.003 | 99% |
| Education | Familiarity | 20% | 1.3 | 4 | 0.003 | 99% |
| Education (School/ HE) | Familiarity | 0% | 9.39 | 3 | 0.000 | 99.999% |
| Education (School/ HE) | Overall Reputation | 20% | 1.17 | 4 | 0.002 | 99% |
| Employment | Familiarity | 17.90% | 1.42 | 18 | 0.011 | 99% |
| Stakeholder (Internal / External) | Familiarity | 0% | 16.63 | 3 | 0.000 | 99.999% |
| Stakeholder (Internal / External) | Event impact | 16.70% | 4.81 | 2 | 0.000 | 99.999% |
| Stakeholder (Internal / External) | Expectations | 20% | 1.31 | 4 | 0.001 | 99% |

| Independent | Dependant | % of cells with count less than 5 | Minimum expected count | Pearson Chi-Square | | % level to reject null hypothesis |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | | | df | Asymp. Sigs (2-sided) | |
| Stakeholder (Internal / External) | Overall Reputation | 20% | 2.19 | 4 | 0.001 | 99% |
| Event No. | Familiarity | 0% | 10.13 | 6 | 0.000 | 99.999% |
| Event No. | Overall Reputation | 20% | 1.27 | 8 | 0.004 | 99% |

7.3 Reputation discussion: Descriptive Data

The means to define and measure reputation has been extensively debated within the literature (discussed in Chapter 2) (Fombrun et al., 2015, Gotsi and Wilson, 2001b, Helm, 2005, Walker, 2010), resulting in the existence of multiple definitions and perspectives. Thus, the respondents' perspective of the term was sought, to determine their understanding (Section 7.3.1). Multiple measures exist to assess university reputation (discussed in Section 2.6), and as such, the primary method used by university stakeholders is identified. The University's reputation is assessed using characteristics proposed in the conceptual framework (Section 4.3.2 and 6.7), and the overall perceptions of The University's reputation is identified. Furthermore, the significant associations between variables are discussed to determine the meaning of their relationships. These are discussed in Sections 7.3.1 to 7.3.5.

7.3.1 Reputation definitions

Respondents were asked to define what reputation meant to them as an open question in section 2 of the questionnaire; responses were analysed in NVivo, following the steps suggested for TA (discussed in Section 5.4.4). Initially, responses were coded according to Chun's (2005) reputation paradigm categories (discussed in Chapter 2), however, an additional ten groups (codes) were added based on common responses

given, thus following an inductive and deductive approach (Creswell and Clark, 2011) (Appendix 14). A summary of the coded responses and the frequency of responses for each category can be seen in Table 7.12. These are discussed below to determine if respondent's views of reputation are in line with definitions given within the literature.

Table 7.12 Summary of reputation definitions by respondents

| | Coded number | Chun's (2005) School of thought | Code description | Frequency | % |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|----------|
| Reputation Paradigm categories | 1 | Evaluative School | Single stakeholder (investor or managers) | 1 | .2 |
| | 2 | Impressional School | Image/corporate/ identity | 18 | 3.0 |
| | 3 | | Linking reputation to buyer's intention | 4 | .7 |
| | 4 | | Customers' view of company and salesperson image | 8 | 1.4 |
| | 5 | | Linking reputation to employee identification | 1 | .2 |
| | 6 | | Management perception of image and identity | 1 | .2 |
| | 7 | | Media Linking reputation to favourableness of media coverage | 1 | .2 |
| | 8 | | Relational School | Multiple stakeholders in general | 8 |
| | 9 | Linking internal view (identity) and external views (image) of corporate reputation | | 2 | .3 |
| | 10 | Linking reputation (external view) and identity (internal view) | | 0 | 0 |
| New categories added | 11 | Relational School | General perception | 160 | 27.0 |
| | 12 | | External perceptions only | 122 | 20.6 |
| | 13 | | Good/bad perceptions | 53 | 9.0 |
| | 14 | | What you are known for/ how well known you are | 58 | 9.8 |
| | 15 | Impressional School | Quality, success, achievement, popularity, ranking | 71 | 12.0 |
| | 16 | | Branding, name, values, attitude, ambition | 40 | 6.8 |
| | 17 | | Links to community | 11 | 1.9 |

| | Coded number | Chun's (2005) School of thought | Code description | Frequency | % |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------|---|------------|--------------|
| | 18 | | Reputation among peers/ within a specified industry | 9 | 1.5 |
| | 19 | | Other | 5 | .8 |
| | 20 | | Not relevant | 19 | 3.2 |
| Total | | | | 592 | 100.0 |

Only one response identified reputation with the Evaluative School with a link to investor behaviour (Fryxell and Wang, 1994). This respondent suggested reputation was linked to the '*likelihood for people to invest and engage with*'. However, similarly to the literature this school was not widely supported, or recognised to be associated to the meaning of reputation among university stakeholders. This could be due to the nature of a university being an NPO, and therefore financial performance and investment potential may not be highly considered.

The Impressional School (discussed in Section 2.3.3), was more widely supported amongst respondents. This school considers reputation from mainly a single stakeholder viewpoint (Chun, 2005), including customer's views of the organisation (Weiss et al., 1999), media coverage (Deephouse, 2000) and the image/ identity of organisations (Balmer and Wilson, 1998). Responses such as '*the collective experience of your customers*' and '*feedback from service users*', were provided, which links reputation specifically to a customer perspective. One respondent suggested reputation was what '*sounds good in the media*', while several respondents suggested reputation to be '*an image of someone or organization*'.

Organisational behaviour is considered as part of this school, however, employee identification, management perceptions and media are the only categories considered as part of this (Chun, 2005). From the new categories included within this coding scheme, reputation based on an organisation's 'branding, name, values and attitude'

and reputation based on the 'quality, success, achievement, popularity and ranking' of an organisation are considered to be included within this school. Respondent's answers coded within these categories included that reputation was '***an opinion or consensus, whether informed by evidence or not, of quality, integrity and performance***', and that reputation was a '***description of core values and behaviour***'. While these responses generally did not specify a stakeholder group, they are considered to be a part of this school, due to the implicit links between quality, organisational values and the organisational behaviour within an organisation.

The categories '*links to the community*' and '*reputation among peers/within a specified industry*' also form part of the Impressional School. Responses within these categories consider reputation to be '***how much of a positive impact The University has in the wider community***', '***the standing of a person or institution among their peers***' and the '***standing within the education sector***'. This recognises reputation to be an overall impression of the organisation, from mainly a single stakeholder view, and therefore, have similar characteristics to categories already included within this school.

The final school suggested by Chun (2005) was the Relational School, which suggests that reputation is a combination of internal and external views of an organisation, and therefore involves perceptions of multiple stakeholders. While only eight respondents specifically mentioned 'multiple stakeholders' as part of their descriptions of reputation, 160 respondents (27%) responses recognised reputation to be a 'general perception of an organisation/ person'. Answers included '***the collective perceptions of all stakeholders***' and '***how you are judged by the majority of stakeholders***'.

Responses suggesting a 'general perception' included '***how something is viewed by individuals, often in comparison to another similar body***', '***a commonly held belief about a certain thing or person***' and '***the general beliefs or opinions an individual has about someone or something***'. These responses demonstrate a similarity between the original category suggested within the Relational School and the

new code identified during analysis. This recognises that 'general perceptions' are considered to involve the views of multiple stakeholders and due to this, is included within the Relational School.

A commonly held perception (20.6%) of reputation, among respondents, was that reputation is solely based on perceptions of people external to the organisation²⁵.

Responses such as '***impression of an institution provided by stakeholders perceived by outsiders***' and '***how something is viewed by those who do not have direct experience of it***' were grouped within this category. This forms a part of the Relational School as it implies that respondents are aware of a difference in stakeholder groups when assessing reputation.

Two other new categories that were commonly used among respondents related to how '*good and/or bad perceptions* of an organisation' were and that reputation was '*what an organisation is known for/ how well it is known*'. While these categories identify specific characteristics by assessing the perceptions of an organisation and determining the organisation's familiarity and visibility, they are also considered to be 'general perceptions'. Consequently, they are viewed to be additional categories within the Relational School.

This demonstrates that many varying perceptions of what reputation consists of exists, and further supports the need for a more commonly understood definition of reputation to be developed. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents associate reputation to be a 'general perspective' and thus supports the Relational School's approach to defining reputation (Chun, 2005). However, responses from this research identify the need to expand the Relational School, by including two additional categories ('*good and/or bad*

²⁵ Responses identifying the 'general public' or considered opinions of 'others' were recognised to relate to stakeholders external to the organisation

perceptions of an organisation and *'what an organisation is known for/ how well it is known'*), thus contributing to literature on defining reputation.

7.3.2 Methods used to judge reputation

Multiple means to assess reputation exist (discussed in Section 2.5 - 2.6), with league tables considered the most common for determining university reputation (Shin and Toutkoushian, 2011). Respondents were asked to identify their primary means of judging a university's reputation (Table 7.13). This identified that league tables were not the most used method of judging a university's reputation, as it received a response of only 13% for 'used all the time' in comparison to 32.3% basing their perceptions on personal experience, and 20.9% and 20.4% using WOM from staff and students and staff and student attitude as the basis of their judgements. This therefore demonstrates that people more frequently make judgements on reputation based on direct contact with internal members of the organisation than using league tables. Thus, suggesting a disparity between the literature and findings from this research.

Table 7.13 Methods used to judge reputation

| Q. How would you normally judge a university's reputation | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | All of the Time | Total | Missing | Total % |
|--|--------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| From personal experience | 8.8 | 5.2 | 14.6 | 38.7 | 32.3 | 99.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| On what staff and students of The University say about it | 5.2 | 3.5 | 22.9 | 47.1 | 20.9 | 99.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Attitudes/behaviour of staff and Students | 5.6 | 3.4 | 25.4 | 44.9 | 20.4 | 99.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |

The impact of events on Reputation: Descriptive Analysis

| Q. How would you normally judge a university's reputation | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | All of the Time | Total | Missing | Total % |
|---|-------|--------|-----------|-------|-----------------|-------|---------|---------|
| League table rankings | 9.6 | 9.9 | 30.6 | 36.0 | 13.0 | 99.2 | 0.8 | 100.0 |
| Teaching methods | 14.1 | 13.3 | 28.5 | 32.0 | 11.8 | 99.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Engagement with the local community | 12.8 | 15.8 | 34.5 | 26.8 | 9.8 | 99.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| On what people outside The University say about it | 7.4 | 13.3 | 33.3 | 36.2 | 9.4 | 99.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Research output | 14.8 | 16.3 | 33.2 | 26.3 | 9.1 | 99.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Sustainability practices | 18.0 | 20.2 | 32.2 | 21.7 | 7.6 | 99.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| From stories in the media | 11.1 | 18.4 | 39.4 | 24.6 | 6.2 | 99.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |

7.3.3 Measuring reputation

7.3.3.1 Reputation Characteristics

The reputation characteristics (discussed in Section 4.3.2 and 6.7) were assessed using Likert scale questions, which respondents answered, based on their opinion of the case study organisation. The responses (shown in Table 7.14) demonstrate that respondents typically have a positive perception of the characteristics, with the majority of responses 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with the statements. These characteristics are used to develop a measure of university reputation, achieved through the development and discussion of a SEM model in Chapters 8 and 9.

The summary of responses shows that GovTransparent, GovEthical, GovBusiness and CitizenSupports were subject to high amounts of missing data. From further analysis of

the data, it became evident that the majority of these missing cases were from events where data was collected in person. As face-to-face data collecting was completed on an iPad, it is thought that these questions were not shown on the initial page, and as such, were missed when participants scrolled to the 'next' button. Missing data is discussed in Section 5.4.6, and dealt with in Section 8.2.1.

Table 7.14 Reputation characteristics summary of responses

| Core group | Measured Characteristic | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Missing | Total % |
|-------------|--|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Innovation | Has innovative products and services | 1.3 | 1.7 | 33.0 | 53.4 | 10.3 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Is enterprising in its approach to doing business* | 1.0 | 3.4 | 32.2 | 50.5 | 12.6 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Has the ability to adapt to change | 0.8 | 5.7 | 28.1 | 50.8 | 14.1 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Recognises and takes advantage of opportunities | 1.0 | 4.5 | 27.6 | 50.5 | 16.0 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Citizenship | Is a positive influence on the community | 0.7 | 1.3 | 19.0 | 51.5 | 27.1 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Acts sustainably in the way it does business* | 0.7 | 4.9 | 32.7 | 45.3 | 16.2 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Supports good causes | 1.5 | 18.2 | 23.4 | 33.8 | 14.0 | 9.1 | |
| Workplace | Has good employment opportunities* | 1.7 | 5.2 | 31.8 | 45.6 | 15.3 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Cares about employee wellbeing | 1.5 | 5.2 | 41.4 | 38.6 | 13.0 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Rewards employees fairly | 1.9 | 4.2 | 40.4 | 38.9 | 14.3 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Leadership | Has a clear vision for the future | 1.5 | 4.4 | 31.0 | 49.5 | 13.3 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Is well managed* | 3.0 | 12.5 | 29.0 | 42.1 | 13.1 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Has excellent leadership* | 4.2 | 10.4 | 35.4 | 37.2 | 12.5 | 0.3 | 100.0 |

The impact of events on Reputation: Descriptive Analysis

| Core group | Measured Characteristic | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Missing | Total % |
|--|---|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| | Is well organised in its approach to doing business | 1.3 | 8.1 | 34.8 | 42.8 | 12.6 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Products & services | Offers good quality products/services | 0.8 | 3.5 | 26.6 | 52.7 | 16.0 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Products/services offer good value for money | 1.7 | 7.7 | 37.5 | 43.3 | 9.4 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Meets the needs of its stakeholders | 1.3 | 3.4 | 49.7 | 38.2 | 7.1 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Stands behind its products/services | 1.0 | 2.9 | 28.5 | 53.7 | 13.6 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Performance | Performs well financially* | 2.9 | 10.8 | 52.2 | 26.8 | 7.1 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Has good prospects for future growth | 0.3 | 3.0 | 25.8 | 48.5 | 22.1 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Has a strong academic/research performance | 0.7 | 3.2 | 27.3 | 49.3 | 19.2 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Governance | Behaves ethically | 2.0 | 5.6 | 25.1 | 34.3 | 14.8 | 18.2 | 100.0 |
| | Does business fairly | 0.8 | 3.5 | 34.7 | 34.0 | 9.4 | 17.5 | 100.0 |
| | Is open and transparent | 2.4 | 9.8 | 25.9 | 32.7 | 12.5 | 16.8 | 100.0 |
| University Characteristics | Is in a good location | 1.0 | 3.4 | 13.6 | 41.9 | 38.7 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Has an attractive campus with good facilities | 1.7 | 5.2 | 17.0 | 47.3 | 28.5 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Attracts good quality students | 1.2 | 5.1 | 28.5 | 49.8 | 15.2 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Has high achieving students | 0.5 | 3.9 | 29.1 | 46.5 | 19.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| *Characteristics changed from original RepTrak | | | | | | | | |

Respondents were also given the opportunity to identify additional characteristics, through an open question, which they felt a university's reputation should be measured by. This identified an additional 29 characteristics identified in Table 7.15, and the number of respondents that suggested these additional characteristics. From these

additional characteristics, 13 were thought to be included as part of the RepTrak System characteristics. The remaining characteristics were only suggested by, at most, two respondents, and consequently were not considered to be of significant importance for this research. Nonetheless, they could be variables to be included in future studies.

Table 7.15 Additional characteristics suggested by respondents

| Characteristic suggested by respondent | Number of times suggested |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Academic performance of students* | 2 |
| Creates critical thinkers | 1 |
| Graduates* | 1 |
| Happiness of students | 1 |
| Student placement | 1 |
| Student satisfaction | 2 |
| Student to staff relationship | 1 |
| Happiness of people | 1 |
| Calibre of teaching staff* | 2 |
| Research output* | 3 |
| Listening to staff and students | 1 |
| Listening to student perspective | 1 |
| Diversity | 1 |
| Community Relationship* | 1 |
| Student attitude towards the local community | 1 |
| Equality for employees in all sectors of employment within the institution* | 1 |
| Friendliness | 1 |
| Governance* | 1 |
| How fairly it pays all staff (i.e. pay ratio)* | 1 |
| Professionalism* | 1 |
| Staff attitude* | 1 |
| Involvement in important world issues* | 1 |
| Is "ahead " of competitors / market leader* | 1 |
| Specialisms | 1 |
| Peer estimation | 1 |

| Characteristic suggested by respondent | Number of times suggested |
|--|---------------------------|
| Has an understanding of the importance of student funding and where it should be applied | 1 |
| Support for specific courses within The University | 1 |
| Transparent and fair admission/ recruitment procedures* | 2 |
| Provision of accessible information to prospective students | 1 |
| *characteristics recognised to be included in measured variables from RepTrak System | |

7.3.3.2 Emotional Appeal

Emotional appeal attributes are valid indicators of an organisation’s reputation, with positive emotions towards an organisation, linked to improved reputation (Deng et al., 2013, Ponzi et al., 2011, Willems et al., 2016). As such, emotional appeal attributes were included within the questionnaire, to gauge respondents emotional appeal perceptions of the case study institution. The results (shown in Table 7.16), demonstrate that respondents typically have positive emotional perceptions of The University. This positivity is echoed in the responses of ‘overall university reputation’ (Section 7.3.5), thus supporting existing literature, which suggests that emotional appeal and perceptions of reputation are linked (Highhouse et al., 2009, Ponzi et al., 2011). These characteristics are discussed, in relation to the SEM model, in Chapter 8.

Table 7.16 Emotional Appeal summary of responses

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Missing | Total % |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| XXX is an organisation I trust | 0.8 | 12.5 | 69.0 | 17.3 | 0.3 | 100.0 |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Missing | Total % |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| XXX is an organisation I admire | 1.2 | 17.0 | 63.0 | 18.5 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| I have good feelings towards XXX | 1.0 | 7.4 | 60.6 | 30.6 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| I respect XXX as an organisation | 0.8 | 8.2 | 63.8 | 26.8 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| I think of XXX favourably | 0.8 | 7.7 | 53.7 | 37.2 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| *XXX represents the case study university's name | | | | | | |

7.3.4 Determinants of Reputation

7.3.4.1 Familiarity and communication

A stakeholder's familiarity with an organisation is suggested to be a result of direct and indirect communication they receive from that organisation (Ivy, 2001, Moise et al., 2012). Helm (2005) suggests that it is this familiarity that enables stakeholders to form their perceptions of an organisation. As respondents to the survey had attended a university event, it is anticipated that a certain level of familiarity with The University exists.

Respondents were asked to assess their own level of familiarity with The University based on a four point scale from 'not at all' to 'very well' (Table 7.17). Table 7.17 shows that the majority of respondents feel that they know The University at least 'a little', with only 6.8% of respondents suggesting that they do not know it at all. This familiarity was found to be significant with respondent's communication sources used, level of education, employment status, gender and the number of events they had attended at The University, which are all discussed below.

Table 7.17 Respondent Familiarity

| Q. How well do you feel you know xxx University? | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Not at all | 40 | 6.8 |
| A little | 153 | 25.8 |
| Reasonably well | 218 | 36.8 |
| Very well | 181 | 30.6 |
| Total | 592 | 100.0 |

Respondents were asked to identify the means of communication that they gain information about the institution from. This included a range of direct and indirect communication sources, including face-to-face, digital and direct sources such as email or the website, and word-of-mouth from external audiences and the media. The most commonly used method of communication (shown in Table 7.18) to gain information about The University is word-of-mouth from staff and students (44.1% selected often/all the time), followed by university emails/letters (40.5%), and working/studying at The University (39.8%). The least used methods were digital (7.1%) and news stories in the media (11.2%). This supports the Media Richness Theory (discussed in Section 3.3), which suggests face-to-face contact (through word-of-mouth from staff and students) is the most commonly sought after type of information due to its 'richness' (Daft and Lengel, 1986, Fill, 2009).

When assessing this in relation to perceptions of respondent familiarity (Appendix 15), it demonstrates that those using face-to-face and direct communication from The University are more likely (than expected) to have an increased familiarity with The University. This further supports the Media Richness Theory suggesting that face-to-face and direct communication is the most influential source of communication (Jackson, 2013, Peltokorpi, 2015, Robert and Dennis, 2005) for increasing stakeholder

familiarity with an organisation. Therefore, the type of communication and frequency that method is used by respondents is directly correlated to their familiarity.

Table 7.18 Communication methods used summary of responses

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | All of the Time | Missing | Total % |
|---|-------|--------|-----------|-------|-----------------|---------|---------|
| WOM Staff and students | 10.6 | 10.6 | 27.6 | 26.9 | 17.2 | 7 | 100.0 |
| From University emails/ letters (including event invitations) | 26.9 | 7.7 | 17.5 | 26.4 | 14.1 | 7 | 100.0 |
| Website | 15.8 | 13.8 | 24.9 | 24.9 | 13.8 | 7 | 100.0 |
| Working/ studying at The University | 33.2 | 6.2 | 11.3 | 20.4 | 19.4 | 10 | 100.0 |
| Social Media | 24.4 | 16.0 | 21.4 | 18.0 | 8.2 | 12 | 100.0 |
| Attending Events | 18.5 | 16.5 | 33.7 | 16.5 | 6.2 | 9 | 100.0 |
| WOM others | 18.9 | 20.7 | 27.3 | 16.2 | 7.9 | 9 | 100.0 |
| Printed promotional material (fliers, prospectus, banners) | 20.2 | 18.5 | 32.0 | 13.8 | 4.7 | 11 | 100.0 |
| Attending Meetings | 38.2 | 15.5 | 18.5 | 11.1 | 6.7 | 10 | 100.0 |
| News stories in the media (newspapers, TV, radio) | 27.3 | 26.6 | 25.4 | 7.2 | 4.0 | 9 | 100.0 |
| Digital (cinema/ television/ radio adverts) | 38.0 | 27.3 | 16.5 | 4.7 | 2.4 | 11 | 100.0 |

Interviewees highlighted the importance of using the right communication method for different stakeholder groups, and suggested that older stakeholders would be more likely to use traditional media, as opposed to newer digital mediums, such as social media (discussed in Section 6.4.1). The literature supports this idea, stating that more 18-29 year olds, in comparison to 65+, use social media (Martin and Cazarre, 2016). This is backed up with results found from this research (Table 7.19), which shows that 41% of respondents 18-24, in comparison to 10% of respondents 65+, use social media to gain information about The University. However, more 18-24 (26% in comparison to 10% for 65+) respondents use printed communication types, and 65+ respondents more frequently use events and meetings (face-to-face communication) to

The impact of events on Reputation: Descriptive Analysis

gain information (33% and 20%, in comparison to 22% and 15% for 18-24). Thus, the use of multiple communication methods in an organisation with such varying stakeholder groups is necessary, as stakeholder groups use different methods to gain information.

Table 7.19 Communication type use by age group

| Age | Email | Website | Digital | Social Media | Printed | Media | WOM Staff | Working | WOM others | Meetings | Events |
|-------|-------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|-------|-----------|---------|------------|----------|--------|
| 18-24 | 48 | 51 | 10 | 41 | 26 | 9 | 53 | 56 | 32 | 15 | 22 |
| 25-34 | 40 | 39 | 7 | 23 | 13 | 9 | 44 | 35 | 23 | 21 | 22 |
| 35-44 | 46 | 36 | 9 | 26 | 24 | 10 | 37 | 45 | 13 | 19 | 27 |
| 45-54 | 30 | 36 | 2 | 17 | 13 | 13 | 47 | 30 | 24 | 21 | 22 |
| 55-64 | 47 | 42 | 9 | 16 | 18 | 22 | 49 | 33 | 31 | 31 | 33 |
| 65+ | 43 | 13 | 0 | 10 | 7 | 27 | 37 | 17 | 20 | 20 | 33 |

Values shown as a % of respondents from each age group who selected 'often'/'all of the time'

The relationship between familiarity and reputation has been debated as to whether it is positive or negative (discussed in Section 2.7.1) (Artigas et al., 2015, Brooks et al., 2003, Highhouse et al., 1999). Brooks et al. (2003) has suggested that increased familiarity, provides the opportunity to gain more information about the organisation, that the information may be positive or negative, and that an indirect relationship between the two concepts may exist. Internal stakeholders, such as staff and students at The University, are considered to have an increased knowledge of The University due to the amount of time spent at it, and the multiple mediums of communication they have access to. This is shown to be true in this research, as a significant relationship between internal stakeholders and familiarity was found. While Table 7.20 shows that increased familiarity corresponds to better overall reputation perceptions, the relationship between internal stakeholders and overall reputation (discussed in Section

7.3.5) suggests that a negative relationship exists. Thus, confirming Brooks' (2003) notion that the relationship may be negative.

Similarly, education was significant both in their original categories and once recoded into School education/ FE&HE education. As 43.1% of respondents were university students and staff, it is considered this had an impact on this level of significance with familiarity, as these stakeholder groups both have a level of HE education and recognise themselves to be familiar with the organisation as they are directly associated to it.

Table 7.20 Familiarity and Overall Reputation

| Familiarity | Stakeholders | Overall Reputation | | | | | Total |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|------|------|------|-----------|-------|
| | | Very Poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | |
| Not at all | Internal | 1 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | External | 1 | | 13 | 14 | 9 | 37 |
| | Total | 2 | | 13 | 14 | 9 | 38 |
| A little | Internal | | 1 | 7 | 12 | 8 | 28 |
| | External | | 1 | 30 | 61 | 32 | 124 |
| | Total | | 2 | 37 | 73 | 40 | 152 |
| Reasonably well | Internal | 2 | 10 | 36 | 46 | 18 | 112 |
| | External | 0 | 4 | 20 | 53 | 26 | 103 |
| | Total | 2 | 14 | 56 | 99 | 44 | 215 |
| Very well | Internal | 1 | 7 | 30 | 55 | 22 | 115 |
| | External | 0 | 1 | 14 | 29 | 21 | 65 |
| | Total | 1 | 8 | 44 | 84 | 43 | 180 |
| Total | Internal | 4 | 18 | 73 | 113 | 48 | 256 |
| | External | 1 | 6 | 77 | 157 | 88 | 329 |
| | Total | 5 | 24 | 150 | 270 | 136 | 585 |

Employment status was also significant with familiarity. Similarly, to education and stakeholder group, this is suggested to be significant due to the student and staff responses from The University. This did however identify, that more students (in full-time education) indicated that they knew The University 'reasonably well' as opposed to 'very well', suggesting that they possibly do not receive as much information as The

University staff. Conversely, fewer full-time employed (than expected) selected they know The University 'reasonably well', while more full-time employed (than expected) selected they know The University 'very well'. This is as expected as employees of an organisation should have a good knowledge of that organisation.

More male respondents (than expected) identified that they knew The University 'very well' while fewer female respondents (than expected) said the same. This suggests that The University's male stakeholders consider themselves to have a better knowledge of the organisation, than their female counterparts. This could be due to multiple reasons including, male respondents having an increased self-knowledge than their female counterparts, that males are more receptive to communications sent by The University, or that they receive more information than the female respondents. Nevertheless, further research would be required to determine the cause of this significance.

Respondents who have attended more university events (receiving more face-to-face communication) view their familiarity to be greater than those who have attended fewer events. As familiarity is formed through communication channels such as previous visits and word-of-mouth communication (discussed in Section 2.7.1) (Ivy, 2001, Johnson and Russo, 1984, Moise et al., 2012), the significance between increased face-to-face contact and familiarity is expected. Furthermore, in assessing the stakeholder groups, it was found that internal stakeholders have attended more events than external stakeholders, and this too could be justification of why the number of events attended, has significance with their familiarity with the organisation.

7.3.4.2 Visibility

A critique of the literature shows that an organisation's visibility impacts perceptions of reputation, as those organisations that are most visible and therefore most well-known have a better reputation than organisations that are not widely visible (discussed in

Section 2.7.2) (Brammer and Millington, 2005, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). The levels of visibility were assessed in terms of 'not well known' (a negative indicator that was reversed to form a positive indicator), local, national and world-wide visibility, as well as visibility according to field (discussed in Section 6.6.2). The summary of visibility results are shown in Table 7.21, where 'is not well known' has been reversed. This identifies that 79.5% of respondents agree that The University is well-known locally, 57.1% agree it is well-known nationally, and 35.1% agree that it is well-known world-wide. While no significant correlations were found between visibility and reputation, results demonstrated that higher percentages of respondents who perceived The University to be more visible, also had more positive perceptions of their reputation. However, further research to confirm the significance of this relationship is needed.

Table 7.21 Perceived Visibility of institution: summary of responses

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Missing | Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Is not well-known | 5.6 | 25.1 | 24.1 | 29.0 | 9.4 | 6.9 | 100.0 |
| Is well-known locally | 2.5 | 3.5 | 13.1 | 38.4 | 41.1 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| Is well-known in the United Kingdom | 3.9 | 12.8 | 25.3 | 46.8 | 10.3 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| Is well-known World wide | 4.7 | 18.2 | 40.6 | 29.5 | 5.6 | 1.5 | 100.0 |
| Is well-known in my field | 2.4 | 7.2 | 25.1 | 21.7 | 10.9 | 26.9 | 100.0 |

7.3.5 Overall perceptions of University Reputation

7.3.5.1 Prior and Overall Reputation

Respondents were asked to gauge their overall perception of The University prior to attending the event, and their overall perception after attending the event. This was done using a Likert scale question, with a scale of Very Poor to Very Good, and included an option in ‘prior perception’ of ‘I didn’t think about it’ (Billiet and Matsuo, 2012), as it was recognised that respondents who were new to The University may not have any prior knowledge of the institution. Highhouse et al. (2009) suggests that identifying respondent’s perceptions of the organisation’s overall reputation elicit their perceptions of the organisation’s corporate reputation. Furthermore, as this research is attempting to identify the impact that events have on an organisation’s reputation, the respondents ‘prior perceptions’ were also requested.

Respondent’s perceptions of the organisation were more positive prior to attending the event, than after attending the event (shown in Table 7.22). These findings are in contrast with the responses given to identify the impact the event had on their perceptions, where the majority of responses, 61.8%, suggested the event made their impressions ‘better/much better’, and 55.9% suggesting the event made their perceptions ‘more favourable’ (discussed in Sections 7.4.3). Thus, these responses may be a result of other factors such as respondent fatigue (Hess et al., 2012), or due to the difference in how the questions were asked.

Table 7.22 Prior and Overall Perceptions of Reputation

| | Measure | Total % |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Prior Impression Q: Prior to attending xxx event, my impression of Plymouth University was: | Very Poor | 0.3 |
| | Poor | 1.0 |
| | Fair | 15.3 |
| | Good | 36.7 |
| | Very Good | 44.4 |

| | Measure | Total % |
|---|-------------------------|---------|
| | I didn't think about it | 1.9 |
| Overall Reputation Q: Overall, how would you rate Plymouth University's reputation: | Very Poor | 0.8 |
| | Poor | 4.2 |
| | Fair | 25.4 |
| | Good | 46.3 |
| | Very Good | 22.9 |

7.3.5.2 Significance of Reputation Characteristics: Chi square results

The results of the chi-square tests using the reputation variables showed that no significant associations were found with the 'prior reputation' variable (Table 7.11). In contrast, the results of these tests showed significant associations between education, number of events attended, stakeholder group and the 'overall reputation' variable that are discussed below. This further signifies a disparity between the responses given for each of these questions.

The significance between education and overall reputation showed that fewer than expected secondary educated respondents suggested The University's reputation was fair, while more than expected identified it to be good. Conversely, more than expected further/HE educated respondents thought The University's reputation was fair, and fewer than expected recognised it to be good. This could be due to the percentage of internal respondents who are also educated to further/HE level, and link to their familiarity of the organisation (discussed in Section 7.3.4).

Internal respondents are recognised to have poorer perceptions of The University's reputation than external respondents. This is evidenced by internal respondents selecting 'poor' more than expected, and 'good' less than expected. In contrast to this, external respondents suggested The University had a 'poor' reputation fewer times than expected, and a 'good' reputation more than expected. This acknowledges that external stakeholders have better perceptions of The University's reputation than internal stakeholders. This could be due to Brooks' (2003) proposition that those with

more information may have negative perceptions of the organisation, thus highlighting the link between familiarity, internal and external stakeholders, and perceptions of overall reputation.

A significant association was found between the number of university events attended and their overall perceptions of reputation. These results show that fewer than expected first time event attendees suggested their perception of The University's reputation was poor, while more than expected said it was fair. This suggests that stakeholders that choose to attend The University's events for the first time already had a positive perception of The University. Furthermore, attendees that had attended 2-4 events had the best perceptions of The University with more than expected selecting 'good'. As perceptions of reputation are partly formed from past experiences (discussed in Section 2.4) (Bromley, 2000, Caruana and Ewing, 2010, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Yoon et al., 1993), if no past experiences with the organisation exist, a greater emphasis may be placed on other forms of communication when forming perceptions (such as word-of-mouth and marketing materials (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998, Wepener and Boshoff, 2015)). The use of events as a face-to-face (and therefore rich) communication medium is important for organisations (Bowdin et al., 2006, Crowther, 2010a), as they provide a platform for the organisation to deliver planned messages in a positive way (Argenti and Druckemiller, 2004), which are then viewed with a greater importance by attendees. Therefore, if a lack of other information is available, respondents may place an increased importance on the information they receive at the event, and as this is staged by the organisation, a more positive outlook would result. Thus, positive perceptions are expected from respondents with limited or no prior experience of the organisation, as their perceptions are formed from positive messages.

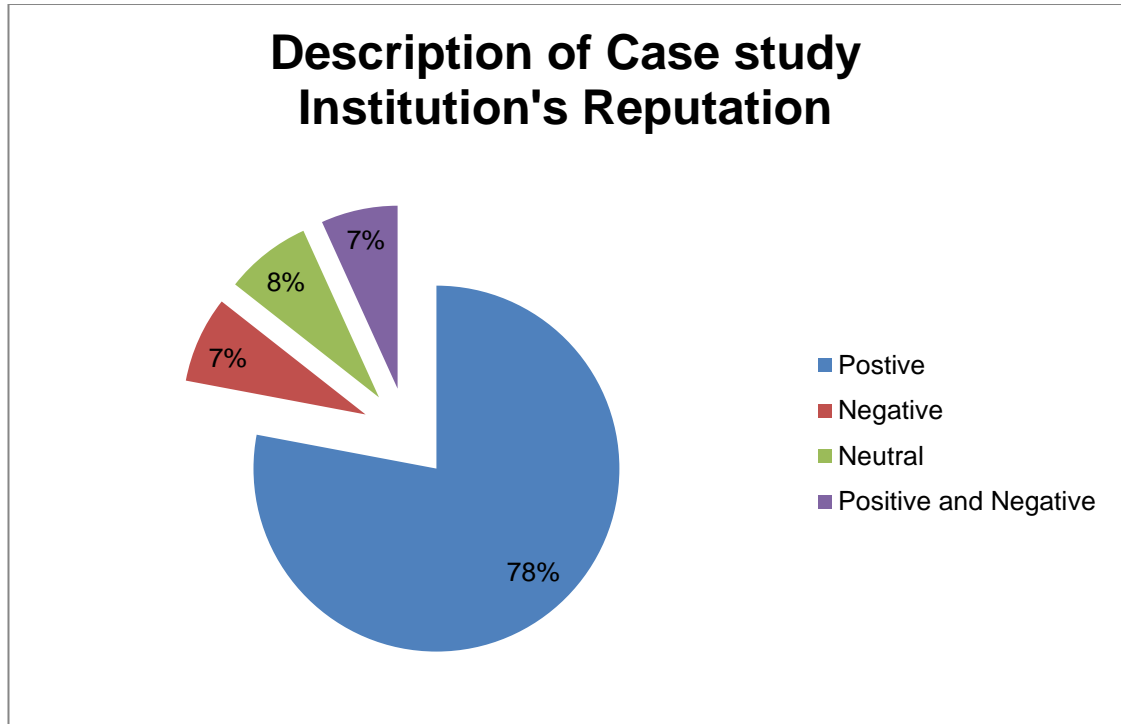
However, attendees that had attended 5 or more events, and therefore having more prior experience of The University, appeared to have poor perceptions, with fewer than

expected recognising The University to have a 'good' reputation, and more than expected suggesting The University had a 'poor' reputation. Results showed that internal respondents were more likely to have attended more events, whereas external audiences were more likely to be first time attendees. While this suggests another possible link between respondent's familiarity and overall reputation, it also highlights that internal respondents may base their perceptions on other forms of communication they receive. Thus, suggesting that the PR messages used during these events had little positive influence on the perceptions of stakeholders who were overly familiar with the organisation. Consequently, Pollock and Rindova's (2003) concept of a 'threshold level' (discussed in Section 2.7.1) for an events impact on familiarity is found to be true in the case of internal stakeholders at The University.

7.3.5.3 Descriptions of the Case Study University's Reputation

Respondents were asked to describe what they thought of the case study institution's reputation in three words, in addition to their Likert responses. The responses (shown in Appendix 16) were categorised according to whether they were deemed to be positive, negative, both positive and negative, or neutral. Figure 7.1 highlights that the majority of respondents (78%) described the institution to have a positive reputation. Comparing this to the 'overall perception of reputation' score that respondents gave (Table 7.22), shows that 78% describe the institution as having a positive reputation, compared to 69.2% of respondents that rate the institution as having a good/very good reputation. Furthermore, 81.1% of responses to 'prior impression' were positive, which is more in line with responses from their description of The University's reputation. This further highlights the possible anomaly in the variation between the prior and overall reputation responses.

Figure 7.1 Coded description of Reputation



7.4 Event discussion: Descriptive Data

A purpose of public relations events was that they should act as a medium of two-way communication between an organisation and its key publics (Grunig, 2013, Grunig and Hunt, 1984). This communication is used to share information about, and to build goodwill towards the organisation (Shamma, 2012, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007).

Therefore, it was assumed that publics engaging in this type of communication (attending events), do so with the aim of gaining information about the organisation.

This was found to be true with The University events used within this research, as the most commonly selected motivation (18.93% - Table 7.23) for attendees to attend the events was for 'acquiring knowledge and information'.

Another purpose of public relations, and therefore public relations events, is to improve perceptions of the organisation (Botan and Hazleton, 2010, McKie and Munshi, 2007), and build reputation (discussed in Section 3.4.4) (Grunig, 2006, Hutton, 1999).

However, in industries where sales are not used as a measurement indicator, there is

little evidence on how to measure the success of these events. A broad aim of this research is to assess if event attendees' satisfaction, measured through service quality characteristics of these events, impacts on their perceptions of reputation, and as such, becomes a method to determine the success of the event (discussed in Chapter 4). These sections discuss the responses to the questionnaire, providing a summary of responses, prior to setting up the structural equation model in Chapter 8, which evaluates the quantifiable impact that events have on the organisation's reputation.

7.4.1 Motivations for attending events

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were selected as reasons for attending The University's events (discussed in Section 3.5.1) (Baloglu and Uysal, 1996, Crompton and McKay, 1997, Dann, 1977). The most commonly selected reason for attending the events was 'to acquire information, knowledge and understanding' (18.93%), and 'spending time with family and friends' (13.71%). Acquiring knowledge from events is in line with the purpose of events as a communication tool (discussed in Section 3.4) (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014, Jackson, 2013), and thus recognises a link between attendee motivations and The University's objectives for holding events (discussed in Section 6.4.2). The graduation ceremonies made up 38.9% of responses, which is thought to contribute towards the high percentage of responses for 'spending time with family and friends'. This, along with celebration, is considered to be an objective of the graduation events, and is mirrored by the motivations selected by attendees. While these responses provide insight into university event attendee motivations, and therefore contribute to existing literature, further research would be required using a more even distribution of event types to confirm these findings. However, this research does support the suggestion by Nicholson and Pearce (2001) that multiple motivations may exist for a single attendee, as 65.7% of respondents selected more than one motivation for attending.

Table 7.23 Motivations for attending a University event

| Motivation | % selected |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Acquiring Info | 18.93 |
| Spending time with Family/friends | 13.71 |
| Networking | 13.07 |
| Leisure & Fun | 9.38 |
| Meeting new people | 9.22 |
| Work obligation | 8.90 |
| Attended similar | 7.30 |
| Event excitement | 5.69 |
| Draw of specific event | 5.37 |
| Escape from the ordinary | 3.77 |
| Nostalgia | 2.97 |
| Cultural/religious festival | 1.68 |
| Total | 100 |

7.4.2 Expectations and Satisfaction

Assessing if attendee expectations have been met or exceeded, is a commonly used method to determine if satisfaction has been achieved (discussed in Section 3.5.2) (Getz et al., 2001, Lee and Beeler, 2009, O’Neill et al., 1999, Petrick et al., 2013).

Satisfaction occurs when the level of gratification obtained exceeds the audience’s expectations, which are based on prior experience/ knowledge (Jain and Gupta, 2004).

The overall expectations (Table 7.24), for The University events shows that 56.6% of attendees expectations were exceeded, with only 6.6% of responses suggesting that the event was short of their expectations.

Table 7.24 Overall Expectations: summary of responses

| | Measure | Total % |
|--------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Expectations | Far short of expectations | 0.5 |
| | Short of expectations | 6.1 |
| | Equals expectations | 36.5 |
| | Exceeds expectations | 42.6 |

| | Measure | Total % |
|--|--------------------------|---------|
| | Far exceeds expectations | 14.0 |

A significant association was found between stakeholders and their expectations when responses were split into internal and external stakeholders. It was found that internal stakeholders have higher expectations of the events they attend at The University, as fewer than expected internal stakeholder's expectations were exceeded. Whereas, more than expected external stakeholder's expectations were exceeded, suggesting that internal audiences have higher expectations than external audiences do. Internal audiences were found to be more familiar with The University (discussed in Section 7.3.4) and have attended more university events. Consequently, it is thought that they have become familiar with the standard provided at university events, and therefore, more is needed to exceed their expectations. This further supports the idea that internal stakeholders reach a 'threshold level' (Pollock and Rindova, 2003).

Similarly, male stakeholders are viewed to have higher expectations than female respondents. Overall more female respondent's than expected expectations were exceeded, while fewer than expected male respondent's expectations were exceeded. This too, is suggested to be linked to respondent familiarity, as male respondents were found to be 'more familiar' with The University than female respondents. Therefore, it is suggested that The University needs to do more in order to exceed expectations of male respondents, and specifically internal male respondents, in order to improve expectations overall.

7.4.2.1 Service Quality characteristics

Event attendee satisfaction, similarly to customer satisfaction, has previously been measured using service quality characteristics and audience expectations (Brown et al., 2016, Getz and Page, 2016, Lee and Kang, 2015, Song et al., 2015, Theodorakis

et al., 2015). Satisfaction is used as a measure for event success, and has also been found to be a determinant of reputation (discussed in Section 3.5 and 2.7.4 respectively). Therefore, achieving event satisfaction can positively influence the organisation’s reputation.

Thirteen service quality characteristics were assessed, in terms of how satisfied the event attendees felt (Table 7.25), to measure their satisfaction. These included both intangible (satisfiers) and tangible (dissatisfiers) characteristics as suggested in previous research (Getz, 1997, Grönroos, 1984, Love and Crompton, 1996, Theodorakis et al., 2013, Theodorakis et al., 2015) and in line with Herzberg’s (1966) maintenance factors to measure satisfaction. The responses in Table 7.25 show that the two greatest contributors towards dissatisfaction were ‘information received prior to the event’ and the ‘food and drinks offering’ at the event. Nevertheless, the percentage of dissatisfied responses is significantly lower than the percentage of satisfied responses, which is echoed in the percentages of overall reputation. Thus, event attendee satisfaction could provide an indicator of an organisation’s reputation.

Table 7.25 Service Quality: summary of responses

| | Service Quality Characteristic | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Total Dissatisfied % | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Total Satisfied % |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|
| Dis-satisfiers | Information received Prior to event | 2.9 | 9.8 | 12.7 | 63.8 | 23.2 | 87 |
| | Ease of getting information while at the event | 1 | 5.2 | 6.2 | 61.6 | 31.8 | 93.4 |
| | Venue and facilities | 0.7 | 3.9 | 4.6 | 52.7 | 42.4 | 95.1 |
| | Seating/ viewing of the event | 1.2 | 7.6 | 8.8 | 57.2 | 33.7 | 90.9 |
| | Food and drinks | 2.5 | 7.9 | 10.4 | 52 | 37.2 | 89.2 |

| | Service Quality Characteristic | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Total Dissatisfied % | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Total Satisfied % |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|
| | Appearance of staff | 0.5 | 2.4 | 2.9 | 49.5 | 47.3 | 96.8 |
| | Friendly and approachable staff | 0.3 | 1.9 | 2.2 | 42.9 | 54.5 | 97.4 |
| | Staff were able to answer questions accurately | 0.5 | 3.5 | 4 | 51.3 | 44.3 | 95.6 |
| Satisfiers | Experience while at the event | 0.7 | 3.2 | 3.9 | 52 | 43.8 | 95.8 |
| | Event atmosphere/ ambience | 0.3 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 48 | 47 | 95 |
| | Engagement with other event attendees | 0.7 | 5.9 | 6.6 | 56.9 | 36.2 | 93.1 |
| | Event achieved its promised purpose | 0.7 | 5.4 | 6.1 | 49.5 | 44.1 | 93.6 |
| | Overall quality of event | 0.7 | 4.7 | 5.4 | 49 | 45.3 | 94.3 |

Ways to improve

To identify which service quality characteristics influenced overall perceptions of The University, two filter questions were used. Respondents who selected that the event had made their opinion ‘more favourable’ (event impact – discussed in Section 7.4.3) were asked which characteristics from the event contributed the most to this change (Table 7.26). While respondents that selected the event made their opinion ‘no different’ or ‘less favourable’ were asked what the event would need to change, for their opinions to improve (Table 7.27). This shows that respondents whose perceptions about The University changed positively, attributed this towards both tangible and intangible service quality characteristics. Similarly, respondents whose perceptions remained the same or worsened, also selected both intangible and tangible characteristics that would need to be improved for their overall perceptions to be more

favourable. It is notable that characteristics that featured highly with the 'more favourable' group, were not considered to be as important to be improved with the 'no change/lower favourability' group.

Table 7.26 Reasons selected for why 'event made impression more favourable'

| Service Quality Characteristic | % Change |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Staff Friendliness | 16.6 |
| Experience at event | 14.2 |
| Venue | 13.3 |
| Event Atmosphere | 12.6 |
| Event quality | 9.7 |
| Food & Drink | 6.2 |
| Information at event | 5.2 |
| Information prior to event | 4.6 |
| Event achieved its purpose | 4.5 |
| Staff are able to answer Questions | 4.1 |
| Engagement with other attendees | 3.7 |
| Seating | 2.9 |
| Staff Appearance | 1.8 |
| Other | 0.5 |
| Total | 100 |

Table 7.27 Reasons selected that event need to improve

| Service Quality Characteristic | % Selected |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Information prior to event | 15.8 |
| Food & drink | 10.5 |
| Event achieved its purpose | 9.8 |
| Engagement with other attendees | 9.4 |
| Information at event | 8.6 |
| Venue | 7.8 |
| Seating | 7.8 |
| Other | 6.4 |

| Service Quality Characteristic | % Selected |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Event Atmosphere | 5.9 |
| Event quality | 5.9 |
| Staff friendliness | 4.7 |
| Staff approachability | 3.3 |
| Staff are able to answer Questions | 3.1 |
| Staff Appearance | 1.0 |
| Total | 100 |

Respondents were asked to identify possible reasons of why their impressions were not improved (Table 7.28). This showed that a primary reason for the events not improving perceptions of The University was that respondents already had a good knowledge of The University, had attended previous events, and that no new information was learnt. Furthermore, it highlighted that the quality of the event was not a cause for the lack of improved perceptions. Thus, a link to stakeholder familiarity is evident, however this suggests that once a certain level of familiarity with an organisation is reached ('threshold level' (Pollock and Rindova, 2003)), little is to be gained by using events to improve perceptions. Thus, a contribution to existing literature is made, by providing evidence that 'threshold levels' of familiarity exist, in the context of communication in a higher education setting.

Table 7.28 Reasons identified for events not changing impression of reputation

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Not applicable | Total |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| I did not learn anything new about The University | 8 | 48 | 65 | 86 | 29 | 12 | 248 |
| I have attended many other University events | 18 | 33 | 57 | 87 | 43 | 10 | 248 |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Not applicable | Total |
|--|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| Other University events I have attended have been better than this event (Event quality) | 22 | 48 | 117 | 25 | 13 | 21 | 246 |
| I already knew a lot about The University | 6 | 17 | 59 | 97 | 65 | 5 | 249 |
| Other | 5 | 1 | 31 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 62 |

7.4.3 Event Impact and Future Intentions

Increased communication through a 'rich' medium, such as an event, is suggested to increase attendee familiarity with the organisation (discussed in Sections 3.3 and 7.3.4). As such, respondents were asked to identify the number of University events they had attended (Table 7.29). This was found to have significance with perceptions of reputation (discussed in Section 7.3.5.2), with respondents who had attended fewer events having better perceptions of The University's reputation.

The impact that the event had on respondent's perceptions of the organisation was assessed using two questions. The first asked the respondent to identify if the event made their perceptions of The University 'less favourable', 'more favourable', or 'no different', and the second asking if the event changed their opinion of The University on a scale of 'much worse' to 'much better'. This was asked in different ways to determine consistency of response from the event attendees (Billiet and Matsuo, 2012). The summary of the responses (Table 7.29) shows that a higher percentage of respondents (61.8%) suggested that the event improved their perceptions overall, in comparison to the initial 'event impact' question (55.9%). Thus, an inconsistency of responses is evident.

Table 7.29 Event Impact: summary of responses

| | Measure | Total % |
|---|------------------------|----------------|
| No of events attended | This is my first event | 31.0 |
| | 2 - 4 events | 28.3 |
| | 5 or more events | 27.4 |
| | Missing data | 13.3 |
| Event impact Q: Attending xxx event, made my opinion of XXX University: | Less favourable | 1.9 |
| | No Different | 42.1 |
| | More Favourable | 56 |
| Event Reputation change (RChange) Q: Overall, attending a XXX University event has made my opinion of it: | Much worse | 0.0 |
| | Worse | 0.3 |
| | About the Same | 37.7 |
| | Better | 46.5 |
| | Much Better | 15.5 |

The breakdown of responses for event impact, event reputation change, and the number of events respondents had attended, is shown in Table 7.30. This indicates that first time event attendees' perceptions were more positively influenced, than respondents who had attended multiple events. This supports and confirms the suggestions made in Section 7.3.5.2; that those with limited past experience, place a greater emphasis on the face-to-face communication received at events, in comparison to respondents with more experience, and access to other information about the organisation. The concept of a 'threshold level' is also supported by these responses. Therefore, large university events²⁶ are not recognised to be an effective long-term relationship tool, however, they are effective in influencing perceptions of reputation with new stakeholders.

²⁶ All events used in this research are considered large scale events

Table 7.30 Cross tabulation: Events attended

| | | No. of events attended% | | | Total % |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------|---------|
| | | This is my first event | 2 - 4 events | 5 or more events | |
| Event Impact | Less favourable | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.4 | 1.8 |
| | No Different | 12.4 | 14.2 | 18.6 | 45.2 |
| | More Favourable | 22.7 | 17.7 | 12.6 | 53 |
| Event Reputation change | Worse | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.4 |
| | About the Same | 12.0 | 13.2 | 14.6 | 39.8 |
| | Better | 17.3 | 13.6 | 13.2 | 44.1 |
| | Much Better | 6.4 | 5.4 | 3.9 | 15.7 |
| Total % values differ to table 7.29 due to percentage calculated based on 515 complete responses (Variable 'No. of Events Attended' has 77 (13.3%) missing responses) | | | | | |

The significant association between stakeholders and event impact shows that events are less likely to change the perceptions of internal stakeholders ('no different'), and more likely to make perceptions of external stakeholders 'more favourable'. This is in line with stakeholder familiarity (discussed in Section 7.3.4.1), as internal stakeholders were found to be more familiar with The University, than external stakeholders.

Therefore, it can be purported that events have a greater future impact on perceptions of external stakeholders, due to the stakeholder's limited familiarity with The University.

Future decisions, in terms of repeat visits to events, positive word-of-mouth and increased customer loyalty, is influenced by attendee satisfaction (discussed in Section 3.5.2) (Lee and Beeler, 2009, Lee et al., 2017, Li and Petrick, 2010, Mason and Nassivera, 2013, Mason and Paggiaro, 2012, Pettersson and Getz, 2009).

Furthermore, positive future intentions have been linked to a positive reputation (discussed in Section 2.7.5) (Fombrun, 1996, Fombrun and Low, 2011). Therefore, improving event attendee satisfaction is important, as it is linked to reputation, and positive future intentions. Thus, attendees' future intentions were assessed, with the responses shown in Table 7.31 below.

This research demonstrates, through significant associations between ‘expectations’ and ‘knowing more about The University’, and ‘thinking better of The University’, that attendees whose expectations were exceeded, were more likely to respond positively to these future actions. This was supported with a significant association between ‘event impact’ and ‘expectations’, however this test was found to be invalid, with an expected cell count of greater than 20%, and would need to be confirmed through collection of more data in a future study. Nevertheless, it is suggested that those whose expectations are exceeded at an event (and are consequently satisfied with the event), are more likely to have better future perceptions of The University.

Table 7.31 Future Intentions: summary of responses

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Missing | Total |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| I would attend another XXX event in the future | 0.7 | 1.3 | 10.3 | 41.9 | 45.5 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| I feel like I know more about XXX after attending one of their events | 1.0 | 6.4 | 27.3 | 41.6 | 23.4 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| The more I know about XXX, the better I think of it | 1.2 | 2.9 | 25.1 | 45.5 | 25.1 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| I am pleased to be associated with XXX | 0.5 | 1.0 | 17.7 | 44.4 | 34.3 | 2.0 | 100.0 |
| I would speak positively about my experience with XXX | 0.7 | 1.2 | 11.1 | 44.1 | 40.9 | 2.0 | 100.0 |

7.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the initial descriptive findings from the questionnaire data. In doing so, it identifies some key differences and similarities between these findings and existing literature. This discussion took place in three parts, firstly presenting the general characteristics of the sample, including the socio-demographic data of

respondents. Secondly, the variables relating to the definition and measurement of reputation were presented, and finally, the event related questions were discussed.

Discussions around the reputation variables discovered that the majority of respondents' definitions of reputation can be associated to the Relational School (Chun, 2005), and are therefore in line with the researcher's perspective of reputation. A contribution to Chun's (2005) reputation paradigms was suggested as two further categories of reputation definitions were identified by respondents (Section 7.3.1). A notable finding within this section of results was that league tables were not the most used method of judging a university's reputation (Section 7.3.2), with personal experience, and WOM from staff and students being the most commonly used methods to inform their judgements.

An inconsistency in the data occurred, which suggested that respondent's prior perceptions of The University's reputation were better than their perceptions of reputation after attending the event (Section 7.3.3). This was in contrast to the responses given to identify the impact the event had on their perceptions, where the majority of responses suggested the event made their impressions better/much better, and made their perceptions 'more favourable' (Section 7.3.4). Significant association were also found between 'overall reputation' and education, number of events attended, and the stakeholder group (Section 7.3.5.2). This showed that internal stakeholders have poorer perceptions of The University's reputation, than external stakeholders.

The communication medium most commonly used by respondents, to gain information about The University, was through face-to-face communication in the form of word-of-mouth from staff and students (Section 7.3.4). The methods and frequency of communication used by respondents was found to have an association with their suggested familiarity of The University. This connection demonstrated clear evidence of, and a link to the Media Richness Theory, whereby respondents using face-to-face

and direct communication more frequently, were more likely to have an increased familiarity with The University. Thus, a contribution to existing Media Richness Theory is made, by providing evidence in a new context. Additionally, respondent's level of education, employment status, gender and the number of events they had attended at The University, were also found to have significant associations with a respondent's familiarity.

A 'threshold level' of familiarity was found to have an impact on stakeholder perceptions. Results found that once a certain level of familiarity with an organisation is reached, little is to be gained by using events to improve perceptions (Section 7.3.5). Thus, a contribution to existing literature is made, by providing evidence that 'threshold levels' of familiarity exist, in the context of communication in a higher education setting. As a consequence of this 'threshold level', a further contribution was recognised (Section 7.3.4); this found that large university events are not effective long-term relationship tools, however, they are effective in influencing perceptions of reputation with new stakeholders.

The discussion around the event related questions, showed that motivations for attending university events were similar to motivations suggested in other event motivation research (Section 7.4.1). This highlighted the primary motivation for attending a university event was to 'acquire information, knowledge and understanding'. As a purpose of PR events is to provide information about the organisation, it is recognised as achieving this aim, as this is a commonly given reason by the respondents for attending the events.

Service quality characteristics of the events, and respondent's overall expectations were discussed, as these are recognised within the literature to be determinants of attendee satisfaction (Section 7.4.2); these included tangible and intangible characteristics of the events. The two greatest contributors towards dissatisfaction were 'Information received prior to the event' and the 'food and drinks offering' at the

event. Furthermore, it was found that 56.6% of attendees' expectations were exceeded, with the lowest satisfaction group being internal male respondents. Significant associations were found between expectations and future intentions, with those whose expectations are exceeded at an event, being more likely to have better future perceptions of The University. This is important as satisfaction and future intentions have been found to be a determinant and consequence of an organisation's reputation and are thus, essential in achieving the aim of this research.

8 Presentation of data and model development

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to develop the SEM model in order to confirm or reject the proposed assumptions, and in doing so, attempt to provide answers to objectives 2-6 of this study. The development of the model is done in four parts; (1) pre-analysis of the data (Section 8.2), (2) scale validation and construction of the measurement model (Section 8.3), (3) assessment of the structural model (Section 8.4), and finally, (4) operationalisation of the main findings (Section 8.5). This structure follows the four step approach for scale development as presented in Section 5.4.2.

The pre-analysis of the model includes data screening processes suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) to ensure the accuracy of the data. As such, univariate descriptive data is assessed to identify possible input errors, missing data is dealt with, data normality is assessed, and finally outliers are detected. The second stage of pre-analysis involves the assessment of the scale structure, and reliability of variables. Exploratory factor analysis, adopting a principle component analysis with a Varimax rotation, is used. Finally, the nature and validity of the retained factors are discussed.

Stage two of SEM model development involves validation of the scale and construction of the measurement model (Blunch, 2013, Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). Prior to this, item parcelling is conducted to provide a more simplified SEM model (Byrne, 2010). Specification of the measurement model is conducted using IBM SPSS AMOS 22, which provides a visual representation of the model. Assessment of the measurement model is completed by assessing construct validity and reliability, the goodness-of-fit of the model, and finally modifications made.

The modified measurement model is converted to the structural model as suggested in Chapter 4, to provide a numerical justification of the effect of each latent variable on the other. Two models are identified within this stage, as the reversed regression weights

between KF and EI were found not to be significant ($p > 0.05$) when presented together (Section 8.4.1). The data sample is divided into internal and external respondents, to identify if differences between stakeholder groups exist when measuring reputation. As such, the internal and external representations of both models are also presented.

Finally, the main findings from the models are presented, discussing the effect of each factor on their corresponding latent variable. Furthermore, the assumptions of the model are tested with four of the initially suggested assumptions being rejected, and four being accepted. This provides the basis for the discussions that take place in Chapter 9.

8.2 Pre-analysis for SEM measurement model

8.2.1 Data screening

Data screening is an important step in data analysis, as it ensures the accuracy of the data file, and improves reliability of findings from the data. Pallant (2005: 40) suggests that data screening can be segregated into three distinct stages; '1) checking for errors, 2) finding the errors, and 3) correcting the errors'. This is echoed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), who suggest a checklist for the data screening procedure (Table 8.1). Consequently, this checklist will be used as a guide to data screening within this research as it provides a more detailed approach.

Table 8.1 Data screening checklist (Adapted from Tabachnick and Fidell (2007, p91))

| Checklist for screening data | Section completed |
|---|---|
| 1) Inspect univariate descriptive statistics for accuracy of input, including univariate outliers | Section 8.2.1.1 (descriptive analysis), Section 8.2.1.4 (outliers) |
| 2) Identify and deal with missing data | Section 8.2.1.2 |

| Checklist for screening data | Section completed |
|---|-------------------|
| 3) Identify and deal with non-normal data a. Skewness and Kurtosis | Section 8.2.1.3 |
| 4) Identify and deal with univariate outliers | Section 8.2.1.4 |
| 5) Evaluate variables for multi-collinearity | Section 8.2.1.5 |

8.2.1.1 Univariate descriptive analysis

Descriptive data was assessed to identify if any input errors, spurious data, or missing data was evident. Assessing the minimum and maximum values highlighted input errors from recoded variables, which were amended to reflect the appropriate coding scheme. Cases were evaluated to identify spurious data in the form of a respondent answering either negatively, neutrally or positively across all variables as this is evidence of a disengaged respondent (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Ten cases did show this trait for some variable groups (ie. Customer satisfaction or reputation characteristics), however, they did demonstrate variability across other variable groups and were therefore retained. During this process, it was identified that missing data was evident across a number of cases, and is discussed in Section 8.2.1.2 below.

8.2.1.2 Dealing with missing data

A common problem with questionnaires is missing data, with possible reasons for missing data including, respondent error and the respondents 'not knowing' the answer (Allison, 2002, Heerwegh and Loosveldt, 2008, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Nevertheless, missing data is considered a problem, as the majority of statistical tests rely on no missing data. While incomplete responses were removed in the initial evaluation of the data set (Section 8.2.1), cases where missing data was present were

kept as part of the sample²⁷. However, further scrutiny of the data set showed that missing data was evident across 300 of the remaining cases. As such, a missing value analysis was conducted on the variables to be used in the SEM (the main analysis procedure for this research).

Missing value analysis

Missing data is considered to be an inescapable problem in data analysis, however, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggest that the pattern of missing data is more important than the quantity missing from a data set. Randomly missing data is not considered to be problematic, however non-randomly missing data is recognised to cause problems for analysis (Hair et al., 2006). Missing data can be characterised according to three categories; missing completely at random (MCAR), missing at random (MAR) and missing not at random (MNAR). MCAR is thought to be an ideal type of missing data, while MNAR is problematic (Howell, 2007).

A missing value analysis was conducted on the groups of variable to be included within the factor analysis, and subsequently the SEM analysis, to determine if the data was MCAR, MAR, MNAR. Data missing at random can be subject to Expectation Maximisation (EM) to replace the missing values with a maximum likelihood solution (Howell, 2007, Little and Rubin, 1987). However, this procedure cannot be completed if it is deemed that the values are significantly missing. Therefore, the data was subjected to Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test (Little, 1988), which indicates the probability of a pattern of missing data, where $p < 0.05$ is an indication that

²⁷ Incomplete responses were recognised as questionnaires where respondents did not finish and submit the survey themselves, while questionnaires with missing data, were surveys that were submitted by the respondent, however they had not answered every question.

data is missing not at random (Little, 1988). The results of these tests are displayed in Table 8.2 below.

Table 8.2 Missing Value analysis summary

| Variables | Little's MCAR test | | |
|---|--------------------|-----|-------|
| | Chi-Square | DF | Sig. |
| Familiarity and communication | 385.559 | 397 | 0.650 |
| Emotional appeal | 3.074 | 4 | 0.546 |
| Future intentions | 2.579 | 3 | 0.461 |
| Reputation Characteristics | 679.997 | 256 | 0.000 |
| Visibility | 154.396 | 42 | 0.000 |
| Event Impact | 24.965 | 4 | 0.000 |
| Customer satisfaction* | 0 | 0 | . |
| * No data was found to be missing from the Customer satisfaction (SQ) variables, and therefore missing value analysis was not applied to these variables. | | | |

As the values for Familiarity and Communication, Emotion, and Future Intentions were not significant ($p > 0.05$), the null hypothesis could be accepted, signifying that the data was MCAR (Little, 1988, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Consequently, the missing data within these variables was replaced using the Expectation Maximisation function within SPSS missing value analysis. However, as the Reputation, Visibility and Event Impact characteristic's MCAR test values were found to be significant at $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that the missing data within these variables was MNAR (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Therefore, the missing data within these variables could not be replaced using the EM method.

Nevertheless, 245 cases still remained with missing values, and therefore case and variable deletion was considered. As case deletion would reduce the overall dataset to 349, which is lower than the suggested sample size needed (405) for the SEM analysis for this research (calculated in Section 5.4.5), variables were assessed to identify if missing values were concentrated among specific variables (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). This showed high item non-response (above 2% (Heerwegh and Loosveldt,

2008)), on seven variables (identified in Table 8.3 below). While four of these variables were included in the RepTrak system as reputation characteristics, it was deemed necessary to remove all seven variables in order to retain a larger sample size suitable for SEM analysis. Other missing data represented 22 cases across four variables (Table 8.4), and as such these were removed on a case by case basis in order to leave the data set with no missing data (Howell, 2007). This allowed for the factor analysis to then be conducted using the remaining 67 variables and 572 cases.

Table 8.3 Variables with high % of missing data

| Variable | % of missing data |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Visibility Not Known | 6.90% |
| Visibility Field | 26.90% |
| GovBusiness | 17.50% |
| GovOpen | 16.80% |
| GovEthical | 18.2% |
| Citizenship support | 9.1% |
| Events attended | 13.3% |

Table 8.4 Variables with low % of missing data

| Variable | % of missing data |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Visibility Local | 1.3% |
| Visibility World | 1.5% |
| Visibility UK | 1 % |
| Location | 1.3% |

8.2.1.3 Data Normality

An assumption of SEM is the normality of data (Section 5.4.5). Univariate normality of the data was considered by assessing the skewness and kurtosis of the variables (Hair et al., 2006, Kline, 1998, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Sposito et al. (1983) and

Bachman (2004) suggest variables with a skewness and kurtosis of less than 2.2, and greater than -2.2 are to be considered normal. Therefore, data within this dataset is considered to be of a normal distribution as all values fall between this range (Table 8.5).

Table 8.5 Assessment of Normality (Skewness and Kurtosis)

| Variables | Skewness | Std. Error of Skewness | Kurtosis | Std. Error of Kurtosis |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Fam | -0.359 | 0.102 | -0.789 | 0.204 |
| Email | -0.149 | 0.102 | -1.348 | 0.204 |
| Website | -0.235 | 0.102 | -0.944 | 0.204 |
| Printed | 0.090 | 0.102 | -0.700 | 0.204 |
| WOM others | 0.168 | 0.102 | -0.792 | 0.204 |
| Media | 0.578 | 0.102 | -0.225 | 0.204 |
| Meetings | 0.602 | 0.102 | -0.818 | 0.204 |
| Events | 0.006 | 0.102 | -0.683 | 0.204 |
| Digital | 0.929 | 0.102 | 0.398 | 0.204 |
| WOM Staff | -0.419 | 0.102 | -0.549 | 0.204 |
| Working | 0.015 | 0.102 | -1.575 | 0.204 |
| Social Media | 0.150 | 0.102 | -1.091 | 0.204 |
| Emotiontrust | -0.280 | 0.102 | 1.108 | 0.204 |
| Emotionadmire | -0.279 | 0.102 | 0.417 | 0.204 |
| Emotionfeeling | -0.422 | 0.102 | 0.759 | 0.204 |
| EmotionRespect | -0.316 | 0.102 | 0.783 | 0.204 |
| EmotionFavourably | -0.522 | 0.102 | 0.325 | 0.204 |
| FutureKnowMore | -0.444 | 0.102 | -0.147 | 0.204 |
| FutureAttend | -1.114 | 0.102 | 1.737 | 0.204 |
| Futurethinkbetter | -0.574 | 0.102 | 0.450 | 0.204 |
| FutureAssociated | -0.646 | 0.102 | 0.369 | 0.204 |
| FutureSpeakPos | -1.090 | 0.102 | 1.853 | 0.204 |
| SQVenue | -0.573 | 0.102 | 0.506 | 0.204 |
| SQSeating | -0.539 | 0.102 | 0.634 | 0.204 |
| SQFood | -0.831 | 0.102 | 0.909 | 0.204 |
| SQStaffAppearance | -0.591 | 0.102 | 0.368 | 0.204 |
| SQApproachable | -0.733 | 0.102 | 0.213 | 0.204 |
| SQQuestions | -0.537 | 0.102 | 0.257 | 0.204 |
| SQInfoprior | -0.665 | 0.102 | 1.280 | 0.204 |
| SQExperienceat | -0.572 | 0.102 | 0.558 | 0.204 |

| Variables | Skewness | Std. Error of Skewness | Kurtosis | Std. Error of Kurtosis |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| SQAtmosphere | -0.580 | 0.102 | -0.031 | 0.204 |
| SQquality | -0.667 | 0.102 | 0.415 | 0.204 |
| SQEngagement | -0.430 | 0.102 | 0.369 | 0.204 |
| SQInfoat | -0.452 | 0.102 | 0.962 | 0.204 |
| SQpurpose | -0.628 | 0.102 | 0.346 | 0.204 |
| Expec | -0.165 | 0.102 | -0.137 | 0.204 |
| InnovPS | -0.586 | 0.102 | 1.439 | 0.204 |
| InnovEnterprising | -0.468 | 0.102 | 0.744 | 0.204 |
| InnovChange | -0.465 | 0.102 | 0.299 | 0.204 |
| InnovAdvantage | -0.505 | 0.102 | 0.478 | 0.204 |
| CitizenCommunity | -0.630 | 0.102 | 0.875 | 0.204 |
| CitizenSustainability | -0.262 | 0.102 | 0.000 | 0.204 |
| UniFacilities | -0.891 | 0.102 | 0.806 | 0.204 |
| WorkOpportunities | -0.459 | 0.102 | 0.394 | 0.204 |
| WorkWellbeing | -0.191 | 0.102 | 0.234 | 0.204 |
| WorkRewards | -0.250 | 0.102 | 0.354 | 0.204 |
| UniStudents | -0.539 | 0.102 | 0.556 | 0.204 |
| WorkLocation | -1.022 | 0.102 | 1.089 | 0.204 |
| LeadVision | -0.515 | 0.102 | 0.675 | 0.204 |
| LeadLeadership | -0.410 | 0.102 | -0.035 | 0.204 |
| LeadManage | -0.477 | 0.102 | -0.168 | 0.204 |
| LeadOrganised | -0.359 | 0.102 | 0.111 | 0.204 |
| PSQuality | -0.516 | 0.102 | 0.672 | 0.204 |
| PSValue | -0.373 | 0.102 | 0.283 | 0.204 |
| PSMeetsneeds | -0.080 | 0.102 | 0.802 | 0.204 |
| PerfFinancial | -0.049 | 0.102 | 0.495 | 0.204 |
| UniAcademic | -0.400 | 0.102 | 0.296 | 0.204 |
| UniStudentAchieve | -0.310 | 0.102 | -0.039 | 0.204 |
| PerfGrowth | -0.343 | 0.102 | -0.114 | 0.204 |
| PSStandsbehind | -0.556 | 0.102 | 1.002 | 0.204 |
| Visibilitylocal | -1.174 | 0.102 | 1.345 | 0.204 |
| Visibilityworld | -0.210 | 0.102 | -0.203 | 0.204 |
| VisibilityUK | -0.608 | 0.102 | -0.019 | 0.204 |
| Prior | -0.642 | 0.102 | 0.256 | 0.204 |
| Event Impact recoded | -0.537 | 0.102 | -0.942 | 0.204 |
| RChange | 0.295 | 0.102 | -0.830 | 0.204 |
| PURep | -0.508 | 0.102 | 0.212 | 0.204 |

8.2.1.4 *Detecting outliers*

Univariate outliers

Univariate outliers are cases with an extreme value on one variable, while a multivariate outlier is a case with unusual combinations of scores on two or more variables (Stevens, 2012, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007, p. 73). Tabachnick and Fidell (2007, p.73) suggest that 99% of dichotomous variables data should fall within +3 or -3 standard deviations from the mean, and any data outside of this range could be considered outliers. The minimum and maximum statistics for each variable was as expected, with the mean ranging from 1.99 to 4.30, and standard deviation scores of variables between 0.536, and 1.579. The case-wise standard deviation ranges from 0.272 to 1.612. Consequently, no extreme outliers exist, as all data is within the +-3 standard deviations range.

For continuous variables however, standardised values (absolute z score) outside the range of +3.29 and -3.29 are considered to be an indication of univariate outliers (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007), however they also recognise that with a large sample size, a few scores outside of this range are expected. Detecting outliers using this method for Likert-type scale questions is questionable, as these variables have a set lower and upper limit. Therefore, these criteria were only used as a guide to identify possible extreme outliers. Using this method however, 67 cases were identified to be possible outliers, with one case having standardised scores outside the suggested range across 36 variables. These cases were assessed to determine the extent to which they could be considered outliers, and 16 cases were removed from the data set, leaving 556 responses.

8.2.1.5 Data multi-collinearity

Data multi-collinearity tests the extent to which variables are correlated, with highly correlated variables (above 0.85) suggested to measure the same construct (Hair et al., 2006, Kline, 1998). This is discussed in Section 5.4.6.2, SEM assumption 3, and tested in Section 8.3.1.1 using the parcelled variables following the factor analysis.

8.2.2 Scale structure and reliability assessment (Factor analysis)

As identified in Section 8.2.1.2, owing to high item non response 7 factors were removed from the analysis. This resulted in 67 variables being a part of the next stage of analysis, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). An EFA was necessary as the items within this research represented a new entity without a previously known structure (DeVellis, 2003). Furthermore, it is used to reduce variables into a more manageable set (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988), and is therefore considered to be the most suitable next step in analysis.

8.2.2.1 Exploratory Factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis is considered to be a complex and iterative process (Costello and Osborne, 2005). Its aim is to simplify large data sets (Kline, 1998) by loading observed variables onto unobserved latent factors; in doing so, it identifies underlying relationships between measured variables (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Stronger relationships are indicated by higher factor loadings, which indicate a more reliable and valid solution (Kline, 1998). Decisions regarding extraction method and rotation are required as direct extraction of variables often does not produce suitable solutions (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Through inclusion of a rotation method, the interpretation of factors is simplified.

EFA is a multistep process that requires a number of guidelines to be fulfilled.

Tabachnick and Fidell (2007, p. 670) provide a checklist for completing an EFA (Table 8.6) which is in line with the 'best practice' recommendations made by Costello and Osborne (2005). This process was completed using IBM SPSS version 22.

Table 8.6 Checklist for exploratory factor analysis

| Checklist for factor analysis |
|--|
| 1) Limitations |
| 2) Method for analysis and rotation |
| 3) Number of factors retained |
| 4) Nature of factors |
| 5) Internal consistency of factors (reliability) |

Limitations and assumptions

Two assumptions of the data when performing an EFA concern sample size and missing data, as well as data normality and outliers. In conducting an EFA, SPSS has the default to exclude cases list-wise where missing data is evident (Pallant, 2016).

This is due to an EFA only functioning with a complete dataset. The issue of missing data was dealt with in Section 8.2.1.2, producing a data set of 556 cases with full information. Sample sizes of greater than 200 are appropriate for conducting a factor analysis (Kline, 1998), therefore neither sample size nor missing data was considered to be a problem.

Assumptions of data normality and the absence of outliers was also dealt with in Section 8.2.1.3 and 8.2.1.4 respectively. The data was considered to be adequately normal, with skewness and kurtosis values within the specified ranges (Kline, 1998, Sposito et al., 1983). Additionally, outliers were identified and removed from the

dataset. Therefore, data normality and outliers are considered to be within the assumptions of conducting a factor analysis.

Method for analysis and rotation

The debate between using a principal component analysis (PCA), or a factor analysis (FA) has been extensive within the literature over the past decades (Brown, 2015, Costello and Osborne, 2005, Floyd and Widaman, 1995a, Jolliffe, 2002). Researchers have argued the benefits and disadvantages of either method in conducting research and identify cases where each method is suited (Brown, 2015, Costello and Osborne, 2005, Velicer and Jackson, 1990). Some researchers identify PCA as a type of EFA, however others recognise these methods to have statistically different procedures (Brown, 2015, Fabrigar et al., 1999). While PCA is not considered a true method of EFA (Costello and Osborne, 2005), some methodologist argue that it is a reasonable substitute due to it being conceptually simpler than FA, and often producing similar results (Arrindell and Van der Ende, 1985, Velicer and Jackson, 1990). As the aim of this stage of research was data reduction to produce a more simplified structure to be used within the SEM analysis (a primary function of PCA (Fabrigar et al., 1999)), PCA was deemed as an appropriate method to use²⁸ (Field, 2013, Hair et al., 2006). Furthermore, PCA yielded a better factor²⁹ solution for the research construct and was therefore selected over FA as the method for extraction for this research.

Rotation and extraction methods also need to be considered, both of which have a number of choices. Orthogonal rotations include Varimax, Quartimax and Equamax, which are the most common, while oblique rotations include Direct Oblimin, Quartimin

²⁸ Even though PCA was selected, this stage of research will still be identified as and EFA as it follows the same guidelines, producing similar results.

²⁹ PCA produces components rather than factors, and while differences between these terms exist, for simplicity, the term factors shall be used within this thesis.

and Promax (Hair et al., 2006, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The key differences between these rotations is that in orthogonal rotations, the factors extracted are uncorrelated and unidimensional, whereas factors in oblique rotations are not (Costello and Osborne, 2005). Consequently, orthogonal rotations are considered more appropriate for scale development (Hair et al., 2006, Kline, 1998). Varimax rotation is identified to be the most common choice of orthogonal rotation among researchers (Costello and Osborne, 2005), and is especially common within previous studies on reputation development scales (Caruana and Chircop, 2000, Davies, 2003, Davies et al., 2001, Yoon et al., 1993). Therefore, Varimax rotation was selected to be used within this research.

The factor extraction method used within this research was eigenvalues >1.0 , in conjunction with analysis of the scree plot. The eigenvalue represents the amount of variance accounted for by a factor, with the rationale being that any factor should account for at least a single variable if it is to be retained (Hair et al., 2006, Pallant, 2016, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Therefore, only factors with scores of >1 are considered to be significant; this is used as a criterion for determining the number of factors to retain. The scree test, involves assessing a graph of the eigenvalues, to identify the point at which the data curve flattens out (Costello and Osborne, 2005). The number of points above the 'break' (where the curve flattens) is usually the number of factors to retain (Pallant, 2016, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). However, analysis of a scree test can often be unclear if data points are plotted close together.

Number of factors retained

In the first iteration of the factor analysis, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at $p < 0.000$ and the Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) produced a value of 0.928 (Hair et al., 2006, Pallant, 2005), indicating the data was suitable for a factor analysis. A total of 14

factors were extracted with an eigenvalue of >1 . This accounted for 66.126% of the variance, with the individual factor variance ranging from 9.889% of variance for the first factor to 2.499% of variance for the 14th factor. Hair et al. (2006) suggests that % of variance extracted from the factor solution should be above 60% in order to explain the underlying construct, while Blunch (2013, p. 63) suggests a more relaxed 40%. As the factor solution variance extracted was above 60% this was deemed acceptable. The rotated component matrix showed the factor loadings for each variable (Table 8.7). For ease of interpretation, factor loadings <0.4 were suppressed, as any factors with this low loading are considered to be weakly related to the underlying construct (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

Variables that cross-load on more than one factor are considered to be problematic as they have potential for representing different constructs (Hair et al., 2006). However, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggest that where cross-loadings are separated by more than 0.2, the variable can be retained on the factor with the higher loading value. Pallant (2005) suggests two solutions for dealing with factors with low factor loadings (<0.4) and/or cross loadings with <0.2 difference, that are >0.4 . The first is to retain the variables, but ignore them, or the second is to delete the variables.

Table 8.7 Initial rotated factor matrix

| Variables | Factors | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|----|-------|----|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| SQpurpose | 0.851 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SQAtmosphere | 0.836 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SQquality | 0.806 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SQExperienceat | 0.783 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SQEngagement | 0.767 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Expec* | 0.614 | | | | | | | | 0.47 | | | | | |
| SQSeating* | 0.594 | | | | | | | | | | 0.427 | | | |

Presentation of data and model development

| Variables | Factors | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|-------|---|-------|----|----|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| SQVenue | 0.584 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SQFood* | 0.43 | | | | | | | | | 0.423 | | | | |
| LeadOrganised | | 0.721 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LeadLeadership | | 0.711 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PSQuality | | 0.7 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LeadManage | | 0.697 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PSValue | | 0.688 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PSStandsbehind | | 0.661 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PSMeetsneeds | | 0.648 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PerfFinancial | | 0.624 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| UniStudentAchieve* | | 0.603 | | | | | | 0.534 | | | | | | |
| LeadVision | | 0.585 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| UniAcademic* | | 0.578 | | | | | | 0.462 | | | | | | |
| PerfGrowth* | | 0.548 | | | | | | 0.419 | | | | | | |
| Working | | | 0.868 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Email | | | 0.842 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Website | | | 0.742 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fam | | | 0.711 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meetings | | | 0.698 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Events* | | | 0.607 | | | 0.417 | | | | | | | | |
| Social Media | | | 0.595 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WOM Staff* | | | 0.474 | | | 0.407 | | | | | | | | |
| EmotionRespect | | | | 0.79 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Emotionadmire | | | | 0.75 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Emotionfeeling | | | | 0.749 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Emotiontrust | | | | 0.737 | | | | | | | | | | |
| EmotionFavourably | | | | 0.737 | | | | | | | | | | |
| PURep | | | | 0.401 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Prior* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| InnovEnterprising | | | | | 0.692 | | | | | | | | | |
| InnovAdvantage | | | | | 0.691 | | | | | | | | | |

| Variables | Factors | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|---|-------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| InnovChange | | | | | 0.632 | | | | | | | | | |
| CitizenCommunity | | | | | 0.627 | | | | | | | | | |
| InnovPS | | | | | 0.619 | | | | | | | | | |
| CitizenSustainability | | | | | 0.568 | | | | | | | | | |
| Digital | | | | | | 0.77 | | | | | | | | |
| Media | | | | | | 0.722 | | | | | | | | |
| WOM others | | | | | | 0.682 | | | | | | | | |
| Printed* | | | 0.453 | | | 0.616 | | | | | | | | |
| FutureSpeakPos | | | | | | | 0.67 | | | | | | | |
| FutureAssociated | | | | | | | 0.663 | | | | | | | |
| FutureAttend | | | | | | | 0.615 | | | | | | | |
| Futurethinkbetter | | | | | | | 0.577 | | | | | | | |
| WorkLocation | | | | | | | | 0.66 | | | | | | |
| UniFacilities | | | | | | | | 0.532 | | | | | | |
| UniStudents* | | | | | | | | 0.499 | | 0.425 | | | | |
| Event Impact recoded | | | | | | | | | 0.762 | | | | | |
| RChange | | | | | | | | | 0.681 | | | | | |
| FutureKnowMore* | | | | | | | 0.497 | | 0.556 | | | | | |
| SQApproachable* | 0.49 | | | | | | | | | 0.702 | | | | |
| SQAppearance* | 0.534 | | | | | | | | | 0.641 | | | | |
| SQQuestions* | 0.516 | | | | | | | | | 0.629 | | | | |
| WorkWellbeing | | | | | | | | | | | 0.694 | | | |
| WorkRewards | | | | | | | | | | | 0.648 | | | |
| WorkOpportunities | | | | | | | | | | | 0.514 | | | |
| SQInfoprior | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.727 | | |
| SQInfoat* | 0.449 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.649 | | |
| VisibilityUK | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.819 | |
| Visibilitylocal | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.55 | |
| Visibilityworld | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.54 | |

*indicates problematic variables from the initial factor analysis

Following these guidelines, throughout the iterative process, 12 variables were removed from the factor solution (Table 8.8)³⁰. In the final attempt, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at $p < 0.000$ and the KMO produced a value of 0.921, indicating the data was still suitable for a factor analysis (Pallant, 2005). A total of 11 factors were extracted with an eigenvalue of > 1 , which accounted for 63.292% of the variance. However, on inspection of the factor rotation matrix (Table 8.9), only ten factors had variables with valid loadings. The ten factors accounted for 61.003% of the variance, therefore still within the acceptable range (Hair et al., 2006). The individual factor variance ranged from 10.745% of variance for the first factor to 2.894% of variance for the 10th factor. Table 8.9 shows the factor loadings for each variable, as well as the communalities scores. The scree plot (Figure 8.1) was also assessed to determine if this number of extracted factors was consistent however, due to a number of factors with similar eigenvalues it is difficult to determine where the 'break' in the curve is. Therefore, the scree plot provided little additional insights to the number of factors to retain.

Table 8.8 Variables removed during factor analysis

| Variable | Reason removed |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| WOMStaff | Cross loading on 2 factors |
| FutureThinkBetter | Cross loading on 2 factors |
| Expectations | Cross loading on 2 factors |
| FutureAssociated | Cross loading on 2 factors |
| FutureAttend | Loading on its own |
| SQInfoat | Cross loading on 2 factors |
| SQInfoPrior | Cross loading on 2 factors |
| SQApproachable | Cross loading on 2 factors |
| UniStudents | Cross loading on 2 factors |
| SQAppearance | Cross loading on 2 factors |
| SQQuestions | Cross loading on 2 factors |
| UniStudentAchieve | Cross loading on 2 factors |

³⁰ Due to the reduced number of variables in the final factor analysis, the overall sample size needed is reduced to 345 - (69*5)

Communality values, which is the variance accounted for by the factors, is the squared multiple correlation of the variable, as predicted by the factor (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Hair et al. (2006) suggests that communality values should be above 0.5 in order to achieve convergence and model stability in SEM, as values lower than this, require larger sample sizes. Costello and Osborne (2005) identify a more lenient acceptable communality value of >0.4. All but three variables have communalities of greater than 0.5, with the three lower than 0.5 still being greater than 0.4. Therefore, the variables used in this final factor solution are all deemed suitable to be retained.

Table 8.9 Final rotated factor matrix

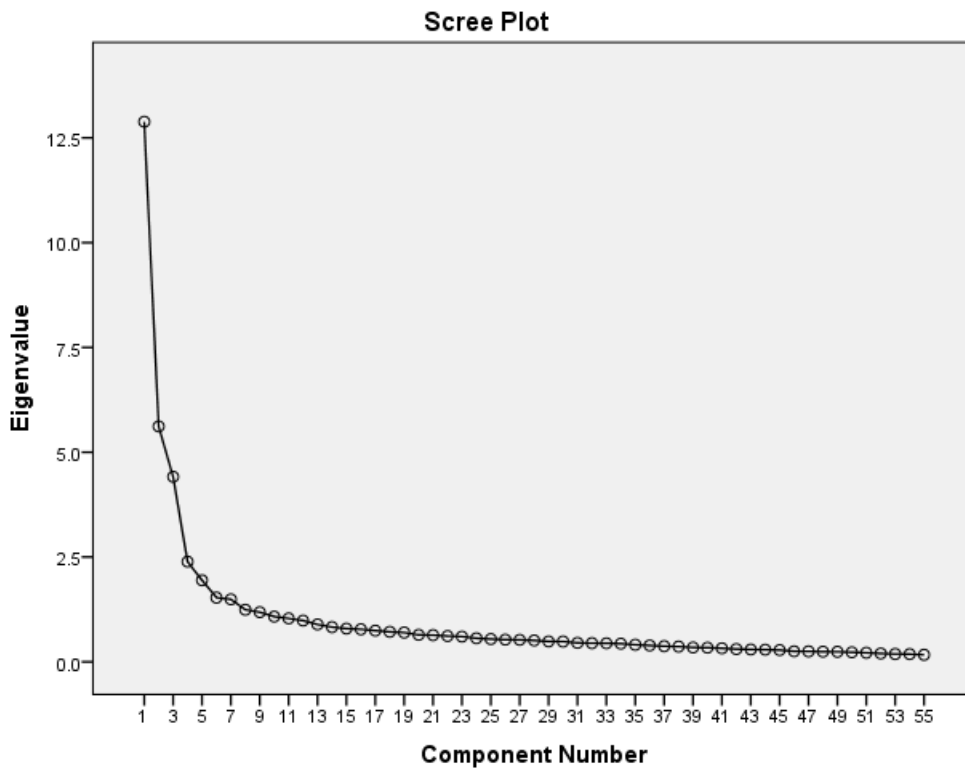
| Variables | Factors | | | | | | | | | | | Communalities |
|----------------|---------|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|---------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | |
| LeadOrganised | 0.754 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.695 |
| LeadManage | 0.736 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.746 |
| LeadLeadership | 0.733 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.722 |
| PSQuality | 0.672 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.647 |
| PSValue | 0.662 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.613 |
| PSStandsbehind | 0.643 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.625 |
| PerfFinancial | 0.638 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.526 |
| LeadVision | 0.616 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.587 |
| PSMeetsneeds | 0.614 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.617 |
| UniAcademic | 0.544 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.596 |
| PerfGrowth | 0.533 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.593 |
| SQAtmosphere | | 0.816 | | | | | | | | | | 0.724 |
| SQQuality | | 0.814 | | | | | | | | | | 0.756 |
| SQpurpose | | 0.807 | | | | | | | | | | 0.721 |
| SQExperienceat | | 0.8 | | | | | | | | | | 0.721 |
| SQEngagement | | 0.753 | | | | | | | | | | 0.654 |
| SQVenue | | 0.702 | | | | | | | | | | 0.572 |
| SQSeating | | 0.689 | | | | | | | | | | 0.541 |

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| Variables | Factors | | | | | | | | | | | Communalities | |
|-------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|----|----|---------------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | | |
| SQFood | | 0.591 | | | | | | | | | | | 0.422 |
| Working | | | 0.869 | | | | | | | | | | 0.769 |
| Email | | | 0.847 | | | | | | | | | | 0.727 |
| Website | | | 0.736 | | | | | | | | | | 0.606 |
| Fam | | | 0.713 | | | | | | | | | | 0.561 |
| Meetings | | | 0.708 | | | | | | | | | | 0.695 |
| Events | | | 0.615 | | | 0.421 | | | | | | | 0.611 |
| Social Media | | | 0.586 | | | | | | | | | | 0.579 |
| EmotionRespect | | | | 0.794 | | | | | | | | | 0.743 |
| Emotionfeeling | | | | 0.782 | | | | | | | | | 0.734 |
| Emotiontrust | | | | 0.765 | | | | | | | | | 0.682 |
| Emotionadmire | | | | 0.761 | | | | | | | | | 0.701 |
| EmotionFavourably | | | | 0.714 | | | | | | | | | 0.622 |
| FutureSpeakPos | | | | 0.531 | | | | | | | | | 0.522 |
| Prior | | | | 0.461 | | | | | | | | | 0.456 |
| PURep | | | | 0.446 | | | | | | | | | 0.664 |
| InnovAdvantage | | | | | 0.706 | | | | | | | | 0.668 |
| InnovEnterprising | | | | | 0.693 | | | | | | | | 0.625 |
| InnovPS | | | | | 0.671 | | | | | | | | 0.561 |
| InnovChange | | | | | 0.653 | | | | | | | | 0.589 |
| CitizenCommunity | | | | | 0.564 | | | | | | | | 0.549 |
| CitizenSustainability | | | | | 0.543 | | | | | | | | 0.476 |
| Digital | | | | | | 0.781 | | | | | | | 0.698 |
| Media | | | | | | 0.722 | | | | | | | 0.668 |
| WOM others | | | | | | 0.673 | | | | | | | 0.52 |
| Printed | | | 0.438 | | | 0.631 | | | | | | | 0.623 |
| Event Impact recoded | | | | | | | 0.785 | | | | | | 0.7 |
| RChange | | | | | | | 0.709 | | | | | | 0.703 |
| FutureKnowMore | | | | | | | 0.617 | | | | | | 0.594 |
| WorkLocation | | | | | | | | 0.728 | | | | | 0.617 |
| UniFacilities | | | | | | | | 0.545 | | | | | 0.55 |

| Variables | Factors | | | | | | | | | | | Communalities |
|---------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | |
| WorkWellbeing | | | | | | | | | 0.718 | | | 0.761 |
| WorkRewards | | | | | | | | | 0.622 | | | 0.654 |
| WorkOpportunities | | | | | | | | | 0.555 | | | 0.584 |
| VisibilityUK | | | | | | | | | | 0.838 | | 0.733 |
| Visibilityworld | | | | | | | | | | 0.582 | | 0.645 |
| Visibilitylocal | | | | | | | | | | 0.509 | | 0.546 |
| Eigenvalue | 12.884 | 5.616 | 4.415 | 2.389 | 1.946 | 1.532 | 1.49 | 1.243 | 1.183 | 1.079 | 1.035 | |
| % Variance Extracted | 10.745 | 9.912 | 8.123 | 8.052 | 6.262 | 5.034 | 3.58 | 3.409 | 2.992 | 2.894 | 2.29 | |

Figure 8.1 Scree plot for final factor solution



Nature of the factors

Identifying the nature and feasibility of the factors extracted is only possible if the variables creating them are feasible in practice (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). As such, items retained as part of the factor solution should have theoretical justification, sharing more than just the variance with other variables. In the solution identified in Table 8.9, the ten factors were assessed to show clear relationships. Although these relationships are similar to those presented within the conceptual framework, there are some key differences. While ten factors were extracted, they were recognised to contribute to three underlying constructs, identified as latent factors within the conceptual framework; overall Reputation, Event Influence (EI) and Knowledge and Familiarity (KF). The variables that formed the fourth latent variable (future intentions), were found to be a part of the overall reputation variable and the EI variable. Thus, suggesting a difference between the proposed typology and findings from this research. The factors contributing towards the three latent variables are identified in Table 8.10, with further information available in Appendix 17.

Table 8.10 Factors contributing to latent variables

| Latent variable | Factors contributing to variables |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Overall Reputation | 1, 4, 5, 8 and 9 |
| Event Influence (EI) | 2 and 7 |
| Knowledge and Familiarity (KF) | 3, 6 and 10 |

Reliability of exploratory factors

Testing the internal consistency of a scale following an exploratory factor analysis is important to assess the quality of the overall factor structure (DeVellis, 2003).

Cronbach alpha is a commonly used test to assess internal consistency of reliability of

factors, as it highlights problems associated with factor analysis, including poor validity and negative correlations (Hair et al., 2006). Cronbach alpha values above 0.7 are considered to be acceptable (Nunnally, 1978, Pallant, 2005), however Garson (2008) proposes greater than 0.6 is adequate. Furthermore, Pallant (2005) identifies that Cronbach alpha values of 0.5 are a common occurrence for factors with more than ten measurement indicators. DeVellis (2003) suggests that alphas below 0.7 can be raised by dropping items from the construct, however warns against this when the coefficient alpha is already at an acceptable value.

Table 8.11 shows the Cronbach alpha value for each of the factors identified from the EFA. This shows that all alpha scores are above 0.7, except for physical attributes (alpha = 0.560) and visibility (alpha = 0.503). As 'physical attributes' is a factor with only two variables, this is thought to contribute to the low reliability score, because Blunch (2013) suggests that factors should have a minimum of three variables in order to be included. As the visibility factor only has three variables, it is not possible to remove variables to attempt to increase the alpha score, since this then too will have an insufficient number of variables linked with it. Therefore, these factors and their associated variables were monitored in the remaining stages of analysis, with the view that should they cause issues with construct validity and reliability, they will be removed.

The overall Cronbach alpha for the scale is 0.920, and is therefore considered to be acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). Should physical attributes or visibility be removed, the Cronbach alpha reduces to 0.918 and 0.920 respectively. However, should both of these sets of variables be removed the Cronbach alpha is 0.917, which is still above the recommended 0.7, and therefore removing either visibility, physical attributes or both does not adversely affect the reliability of the scale.

Table 8.11 Factor Structure showing Cronbach alpha

| Overall latent factor | Latent factor | Measured variables | Cronbach Alpha |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------|
| Reputation | Leadership | LeadVision, LeadLeadership, LeadManage, LeadOrganised, | 0.869 |
| | Products and Services | PSQuality, PSValue, PSMeetsneeds, PSStandsbehind, | 0.823 |
| | Performance | UniAcademic, PerfGrowth, PerfFinancial, | 0.710 |
| | Institutional behaviour | InnovPS, InnovEnterprising, InnovChange, InnovAdvantage, CitizenCommunity, CitizenSustainability | 0.823 |
| | Physical attributes | WorkLocation, Uni Facilities | 0.560 |
| | Workplace behaviour | WorkWellbeing, WorkRewards, WorkOpportunities | 0.715 |
| | Emotional perceptions | Emotiontrust, Emotionadmire, Emotionfeeling, EmotionRespect, EmotionFavourably, PURep, Prior perceptions, Speak positively | 0.874 |
| Event influence | SQ Non-physical attributes | SQExperienceat, SQAtmosphere, SQquality, SQEngagement, SQpurpose | 0.919 |
| | SQ Physical attributes | SQVenue, SQSeating, SQFood, | 0.715 |
| | Event impact | Eventimpact, Rchange, Futureknowmore | 0.735 |
| Knowledge and Familiarity | Direct (Online) | CommsEmail, CommsWebsite, CommsSocial, Familiarity | 0.792 |
| | Direct (Face-to-Face) | CommsMeetings, CommsEvents, CommsWorking | 0.814 |
| | Indirect communication | CommsPrinted, CommsMedia, COMmsWOMOthers, CommsDigital | 0.795 |
| | Visibility | VisibilityLocal, VisibilityUk, VisibilityWorld | 0.503 |

8.3 Scale validation and measurement model construction

The extracted factors are included in the measurement model. This follows a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) approach, as is suggested by step 3 in the scale development process (Table 5.5) (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988, Blunch, 2013, Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). Through using CFA, a measurement model can be devised and validated for testing in step 4 (model testing: SEM), which will enable the research assumptions to be tested.

Model development and evaluation is suggested by Hair et al. (2006) to go through five stages; 1) model specification, 2) data collection, 3) model estimation, 4) model evaluation, and in some cases 5) model modification. Stages 1 and 2 were completed in Chapters 4-7 respectively. The next stage is model estimation, to assess the validity of the measurement model; this is carried out in Sections 8.3.1 - 8.3.4 below. Once the measurement model is deemed satisfactory, the relationships of the structural model can be tested (Brown, 2015). The structural model is assessed in stage 4 (model evaluation) and 5 (model modifications) of Hair et al.'s (2006) 5 step process and are completed in Section 8.4. These stages are discussed below however, prior to this the input matrix is prepared by applying item parcelling to the variables, furthermore the estimation technique to be used is specified.

8.3.1 Item parcelling

Item parcelling has become common practice within SEM analysis in recent years (Blunch, 2013), and is completed by grouping items (either through summing or averaging) into *parcels* (Blunch, 2013, Hair et al., 2006, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Researchers have warned against the use of item parcelling by suggesting it creates a 'smoke screen' hiding possible multidimensionality issues with data (Little et al., 2002). Nevertheless, advocates of parcelling have proposed that advantages of parcelling items include a simplified SEM structure, and improves model fit by reducing the

number of parameters to be estimated (Bagozzi and Edwards, 1998, Bagozzi and Heatherton, 1994, Bandalos and Finney, 2001). These researchers do however recommend that uni-dimensionality of items should be assessed as a prerequisite to parcelling procedures, to avoid causes for concern. Uni-dimensionality tests were completed during data screening (Section 8.2.1.5), and is therefore not a cause for concern.

Several techniques for item parcelling exist (Little et al., 2002) including random assignment (Kishton and Widaman, 1994), item to construct balance (Little et al., 2002), a priori questionnaire construction, radial parcelling (Cattell, 1974), exploratory analysis (Byrne, 2010) and items parcelled based on content (Byrne, 2010). While all parcelling techniques yield satisfactory results, the parcelling method selected for this research is by content. This is due to the theoretical justification of the factors identified from the a priori model and the EFA. Therefore, parcelled items will consist of the groups of measured variables as identified in Table 8.11. The parcels will be calculated by summing the variables related to each construct (Blunch, 2013, Hair et al., 2006). As such, the simplified measurement model will be comprised of 12 measured variables, rather than 55, which will make up the input matrix for AMOS.

The factor structure of the parcelled items was assessed to ensure consistency with the combination of factors identified in Section 8.2.2.1. This revealed that '*emotional perceptions*' was more related to the **EI** construct than the **reputation construct** (Table 8.12). Links between emotional appeal and satisfaction (EI) have been shown in the literature (Almeida et al., 2015, Deng et al., 2013), therefore, this relationship will be amended within the measurement model. Visibility was shown to have a low loading (<0.4), and could be deemed to be problematic for the measurement model. This, coupled with its low Cronbach alpha score, led the researcher to deem it necessary to delete this factor, and it therefore, will not appear in the measurement model.

Table 8.12 Factor solution of parcelled items

| Variables | Rotated factor matrix | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Reputation | Event Influence | Knowledge & Familiarity |
| ProductsService | .807 | | |
| Performance | .807 | | |
| Institutionalbehaviour | .804 | | |
| Workplacebehaviour | .763 | | |
| Leadership | .759 | | |
| PhysicalAttributes | .631 | | |
| SQNonPhysical | | .838 | |
| SQPhysical | | .829 | |
| EventImpactFactor | | .699 | |
| EmotionalPerceptions | | .617 | |
| Visibility | | | |
| DirectFacetoFace | | | .906 |
| DirectOnline | | | .892 |
| IndirectCommunication | | | .732 |

8.3.1.1 Assessment of parcelled data multi-collinearity

Prior to inserting the variables into the input matrix, the multi-collinearity between the parcelled variables was assessed. A lack of multi-collinearity is an assumption of SEM (as discussed in Section 5.4.6), and therefore necessary to determine prior to model specification (Hair et al., 2006). Variable tolerance and Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) are suggested to show indications of multi-collinearity (O'brien, 2007, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The results of these tests are shown in Appendix 18), with no multi-collinearity detected, as tolerance levels and VIF are all above 0.2 and below 3 respectively (Hair et al., 2006, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Therefore, multi-collinearity was not considered to be an issue.

8.3.2 Data input and Estimation technique

IBM SPSS AMOS 22 (an add-on of IBM SPSS version 22) was used for data input as it provided suitable functionality for completing the SEM analysis with the variables included within this research. The data file used comprised of 16 variables and 556 observations, and was uploaded from SPSS to AMOS as the input data. This enabled the researcher to advance to the next stage of model specification.

Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggest estimation techniques suitable for assessment of a measurement model. Estimation techniques are utilised after model specification to estimate population parameters, which aims to minimise the difference between observed and estimated covariance matrices (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The types of estimation technique include, but are not limited to Unweighted Least Squares estimation (ULS), Generalised Least Squares (GLS) and Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE), of which the latter is the most commonly used (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). MLE is recommended for research with medium size samples, and has also been found to be a more lenient technique for data with possible departures from normality (Blunch, 2013, Hu et al., 1992, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Thus, MLE was selected as the estimation technique employed within this research.

8.3.3 Model specification

The CFA measurement model was specified according to the parcelled factors created during the EFA (Section 8.3.1). Model identification is an important assumption in model assessment, and requires the number of estimated parameters to be less than the number of observations (Byrne, 2010). Blunch (2013) suggests that the three indicator rule assists in ensuring model identification. He also highlights the importance of error residuals being uncorrelated. Brown (2015) further identifies the importance of metrics used for variables, and suggests that the researcher should specify the units of

measurement. Typically, the most common method in achieving this is by 'fixing' the first item in each latent variable to 1.0 (Blunch, 2013).

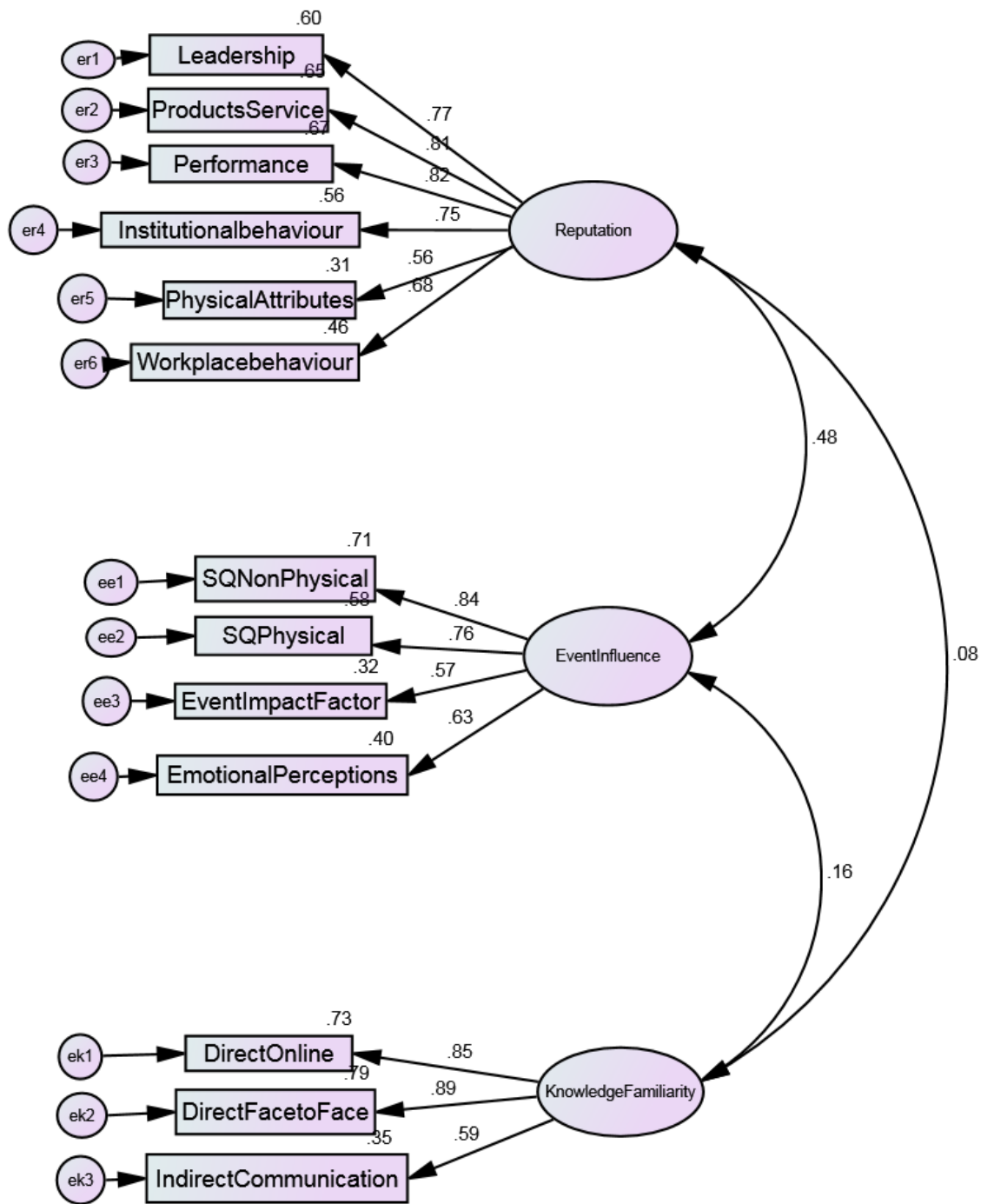
Following these recommendations, the model was specified in the following ways, with the graphical representation of the model shown in Figure 8.2:

- The model generally adheres to the three item rule (all items with the exception of physical attributes had a minimum of 3 items, all latent variables consist of three parcelled factors).
- Items were only set to load on their intended constructs, with no items cross loading.
- All error terms were uncorrelated
- The first item on each factor was set to 1.0³¹.

The measurement model estimates the loadings of each factor, the variances and error residuals of each factor, and the covariance between factors (Brown, 2015). Larger values, close to ± 1.0 indicate stronger relationships whereas smaller values are indicative of weaker relationship. These relationships and the overall measurement model will be assessed in the following sections.

³¹ The model shown is displaying the standardised estimates for the model following analysis. Prior to this, the regression weights from reputation → leadership, Event Influence → SQnon-physical, and KnowledgeFamiliarity → Direct Online were all set to 1.0.

Figure 8.2 Initial Measurement Model



8.3.4 Model assessment (First trial measurement model)

Byrne (2010) provides guidelines for assessing a measurement model to determine adequate model fit, or how accurately the data fits the hypothesised model. As part of this process she suggests reviewing specific results from the model (Table 8.13), which will be used as a guide for the remainder of this section.

Table 8.13 Reviewing model results (adapted from Byrne (2010))

| Model results | Results to check |
|---------------------|---|
| Model summary | |
| Parameter Estimates | Feasibility of parameter estimates |
| | Appropriateness of standard errors |
| | Statistical significance of parameter estimates |
| Model as a whole | Model fitting process |
| | Modification indices |

8.3.4.1 Model summary and Parameter estimates

Model summary

A summary of the variables and parameters included in the model can be viewed in Table 8.14. This shows that 13 observed/ measured variables, and 16 unobserved/ latent variables are included.

Table 8.14 Variable summary of initial model

| Observed, endogenous variables | Unobserved, exogenous variables |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Workplacebehaviour | Reputation |
| PhysicalAttributes | er6 |
| Institutionalbehaviour | er5 |

| Observed, endogenous variables | Unobserved, exogenous variables |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| EventImpactFactor | er4 |
| IndirectCommunication | EventInfluence |
| Performance | ee3 |
| ProductsService | ek3 |
| Leadership | er3 |
| SQPhysical | er2 |
| SQNonPhysical | er1 |
| DirectFacetoFace | ee2 |
| DirectOnline | ee1 |
| EmotionalPerceptions | KnowledgeFamiliarity |
| | ek2 |
| | ek1 |
| | ee4 |

Model identification

Model identification is an important first step in assessing a measurement model. Hair et al. (2006) suggest that a SEM should be over-identified, which can be established based on computation of the degrees of freedom (df), where $df > 0$ indicates an over-identified model (Hair et al., 2006). The df was calculated as 62, thus signifying an over-identified model, and one that is acceptable to proceed with the analysis.

In addition to df, AMOS 22 specifies if the 'minimum was achieved' to continue analysis; this too is indication of model identification, with the results shown in Table 8.15. This indicates that AMOS was 'successful in estimating all model parameters, resulting in a convergent solution' (Byrne, 2010, p. 102). Table 8.15 also identified the Chi-Square (χ^2) statistic, and probability level for the model. A probability level of $p < 0.05$ signifies possible issues relating to model fit, however Hair et al. (2006) suggests this is a common issue and other goodness-of-fit measures should be utilised in order to fully assess model fit, this is completed in Section 8.3.4.3.

Table 8.15 Model identification results

| |
|--------------------------|
| Minimum was achieved |
| Chi-square = 298.379 |
| Degrees of freedom = 62 |
| Probability level = .000 |

Model parameter estimates

Feasibility of parameter estimates

Checking the feasibility of parameter estimates is an initial step in assessing the fit of individual parameters. Byrne (2010) suggests that parameter estimates should show the correct sign and be of adequate size. Negative variances, covariance and correlation matrices that are not a positive definite, and correlations excessively >1.0 are considered to be unreasonable and indicate errors in the model. The parameter estimates (shown in Appendix 19) are all positive, and considered to be of adequate size.

Appropriateness of standard errors

Standard errors (SE) demonstrate how well a parameter has been estimated, with small values suggesting accurate estimation (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). However, no definitive criteria for what constitutes a small or a large SE have been established, due to SEs being calculated based on units of measurement for observed variables (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993). The tables in Appendix 19 show that no SE values indicate a cause for concern.

Statistical significance of standard estimates

Statistical significance of the parameter estimates is assessed using the critical ratio (CR), which is calculated by dividing the parameter estimate with the standard error (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The CR needs to be $>\pm 1.96$ before the hypothesis can be rejected at the $p < 0.05$ level. While all CR are > 1.96 , the covariance between Reputation and KnowledgeFamiliarity is not significant with $p = 0.086$. This covariance will be monitored during the modification process to determine if it remains insignificant following modifications.

8.3.4.2 Construct validity and reliability of measurement model

Testing validity within SEM involves an evaluation of the measurement model. Construct validity, or the validity of the model, determines if the variables being measured are 'consistent with theoretically derived hypotheses concerning the concepts (or constructs) that are being measured' (Zeller and Carmines, 1980, p. 81). Construct validity is assessed using convergent validity and discriminant validity (discussed in Section 5.4.7) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981a, Hair et al., 2006, Kline, 1998). Blunch (2013) identifies that, it is not sufficient for a measuring instrument to only be reliable, it must also be valid. Therefore, both the reliability and validity of the model will be assessed.

Construct reliability is measured in two ways; the first is through achieving a Cronbach alpha value of > 0.7 (completed in Section 8.2.2.1), and the second is to achieve a $(CR) > 0.7$ from the measurement model estimates of parameters (Fornell and Larcker, 1981b). Construct reliability was shown in Section 8.2.2.1 with an overall Cronbach alpha of 0.920, furthermore, all CR from the estimates of parameters are > 0.7 . Therefore, the model is recognised to have construct reliability.

Construct validity is calculated by assessing both **convergent and discriminant validity** (Blunch, 2013, Campbell and Fiske, 1959).

To meet convergent validity, two conditions need to be met:

- CR > AVE
- AVE > 0.5

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is calculated as the average squared factor loading, and should be >0.5 (Hair et al., 2006). These conditions must be met prior to checks on discriminant validity. Table 8.16 shows that these conditions were met, with all Cronbach alpha scores >0.7 and all AVE scores >0.5. Furthermore, the CR for all variables are >AVE (shown in Appendix 19). Thus, checks for discriminant validity can take place.

Table 8.16 Convergent Validity assessment (Initial model)

| Construct | Construct reliability (Cronbach alpha >0.7) | AVE calculation | Convergent validity (AVE >0.5) |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Reputation | 0.859 | $(0.77^2 + 0.81^2 + 0.56^2 + 0.75^2 + 0.68^2 + 0.82^2)/6$ | 0.543 |
| Event influence | 0.726 | $(0.63^2 + 0.57^2 + 0.76^2 + 0.84^2)/4$ | 0.501 |
| KnowledgeFamiliarity | 0.816 | $(0.59^2 + 0.89^2 + 0.85^2)/3$ | 0.621 |

To meet discriminant validity, the following conditions must be met:

- Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) < AVE
- Average Shared Variance (ASV) < AVE

The checks for discriminant validity, shown in Table 8.17, revealed that the model has acceptable validity as both the MSV and ASV values for each of the constructs is lower than the AVE of the same construct. Therefore, construct validity has been achieved through both convergent and discriminant validity, indicating the next stage of model assessment, evaluation of the goodness-of-fit, can take place.

Table 8.17 Discriminant Validity assessment (initial model)

| Construct | MSV Calculation | MSV | ASE Calculation | ASV |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
| Reputation | 0.48^2 | 0.230 | $(0.48^2 + 0.08^2)/2$ | 0.118 |
| Event influence | 0.48^2 | 0.230 | $(0.48^2 + 0.16^2)/2$ | 0.128 |
| Communication | 0.16^2 | 0.023 | $(0.16^2 + 0.08^2)/2$ | 0.016 |

8.3.4.3 Model fitting process (Goodness-of-fit)

The goodness-of-fit indicates the extent that the specified model/ theory is a reflection of reality as demonstrated by the data (Hair et al., 2006). This is achieved by comparing the estimated covariance matrix to the observed covariance matrix. Model fit is demonstrated by values within these two matrices being close together (Hair et al., 2006). A combination of goodness-of-fit models should be considered (discussed in Section 5.4.7.2), as they vary statistically depending on model complexity and sample size (Garver and Mentzer, 1999, Jaccard and Wan, 1995, Marsh et al., 1996). The goodness-of-fit indices that have been considered for this research are identified in Table 8.18. Reviewing these fit indices against their acceptable fit values, shows evidence of an ill-fitting model as both the p value and RMSEA are out of range. Therefore, model modifications need to be considered, to improve the fit of the proposed model.

Table 8.18 Goodness-of-fit (initial model)

| Fit index | Acceptable fit | Fit of data |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| χ^2 | | 298.379 |
| df | | 62 |
| p | >0.05 | 0.000 |
| χ^2/df | ≤ 2 to 5 | 4.813 |
| TLI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.907 |
| CFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.926 |
| IFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.926 |
| RMSEA | ≤ 0.05 to 0.08 | 0.083 |

Model modification

When a model possesses issues of validity and reliability, or an unacceptable fit, modification indexes can be considered to improve the specified model (discussed in Section 5.4.7.4) (Byrne, 2010, Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). The initial model presented an unacceptable fit thus, modifications were considered, however (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993) recommends that modifications should only be adopted based on conceptual justifications. Table 8.19 and Table 8.20 below show the modifications suggested for the model. In Table 8.19, the highest modification is a regression weight from reputation to emotional perceptions. While this is a plausible alteration due to emotion variables originally being attributed to reputation (Fombrun et al., 2015, Ponzi et al., 2011), when this solution was adopted, a greater modification index value presented between EI and emotional perceptions. Thus, emotional perceptions remained a factor contributing to event influence.

Table 8.19 Modification indices - regression weights (initial mode)

| | M.I. | Par Change |
|--|--------|------------|
| EmotionalPerceptions <--- Reputation | 52.533 | .423 |
| EmotionalPerceptions <--- KnowledgeFamiliarity | 4.184 | .089 |
| DirectFacetoFace <--- EventInfluence | 4.330 | -.211 |

| | | M.I. | Par Change |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------|------------|
| DirectFacetoFace | <--- Reputation | 8.284 | -.114 |
| SQNonPhysical | <--- Reputation | 8.842 | -.095 |
| SQNonPhysical | <--- KnowledgeFamiliarity | 5.590 | .057 |
| SQPhysical | <--- Reputation | 8.394 | -.059 |
| Leadership | <--- KnowledgeFamiliarity | 21.167 | -.130 |
| Leadership | <--- DirectFacetoFace | 4.155 | -.021 |
| IndirectCommunication | <--- EventInfluence | 15.570 | .534 |
| IndirectCommunication | <--- Reputation | 6.902 | .139 |
| EventImpactFactor | <--- KnowledgeFamiliarity | 18.000 | -.087 |
| PhysicalAttributes | <--- KnowledgeFamiliarity | 4.543 | .035 |

Table 8.20 Modification indices - Covariance (initial model)

| | M.I. | Par Change |
|-------------------------------|--------|------------|
| ee4 <--> EventInfluence | 19.800 | -.584 |
| ee4 <--> Reputation | 73.081 | 2.736 |
| ek1 <--> ee4 | 9.895 | 1.050 |
| ek2 <--> Reputation | 5.140 | -.496 |
| ee1 <--> Reputation | 12.268 | -.608 |
| ee1 <--> KnowledgeFamiliarity | 5.920 | .632 |
| ee1 <--> ee4 | 8.980 | -.683 |
| ee1 <--> ek2 | 4.918 | .357 |
| ee2 <--> Reputation | 11.544 | -.377 |
| ee2 <--> ee4 | 7.656 | -.408 |
| ee2 <--> ee1 | 15.381 | .297 |
| er1 <--> EventInfluence | 6.055 | .212 |
| er1 <--> KnowledgeFamiliarity | 23.992 | -1.505 |
| er1 <--> ek2 | 14.902 | -.735 |
| er2 <--> ek2 | 4.647 | .310 |
| er3 <--> ee4 | 4.770 | .359 |
| ek3 <--> EventInfluence | 10.322 | .389 |
| ee3 <--> KnowledgeFamiliarity | 18.719 | -.963 |
| ee3 <--> ee4 | 10.153 | .642 |
| ee3 <--> ek2 | 7.611 | -.381 |

| | M.I. | Par Change |
|--------------|--------|------------|
| ee3 <--> er1 | 10.912 | .434 |
| ee3 <--> ek3 | 6.866 | .482 |
| er4 <--> ek1 | 4.353 | .510 |
| er5 <--> ek1 | 4.041 | .255 |
| er5 <--> er1 | 8.543 | -.308 |
| er5 <--> er2 | 14.172 | -.300 |
| er5 <--> er4 | 23.996 | .584 |
| er6 <--> ee2 | 10.778 | -.233 |
| er6 <--> er3 | 5.089 | -.173 |
| er6 <--> er4 | 10.789 | .487 |
| er6 <--> er5 | 5.723 | .185 |

A total of six modifications were made to the model (Table 8.21). The variable event impact was removed from the model as it presented issues of cross loading between Reputation and EI. The service quality variables were parcelled to form a single Service Quality variable (SQTotal). This was due to a low convergent validity on EI, which was improved by combining the factors. The covariance between reputation and KF was found to be insignificant with $p=0.136$, and was removed from the model. The covariance between the error variables er4, er5, and er6 is expected, as these variables are closely related. The final model assessment is presented in Section 8.3.5 below.

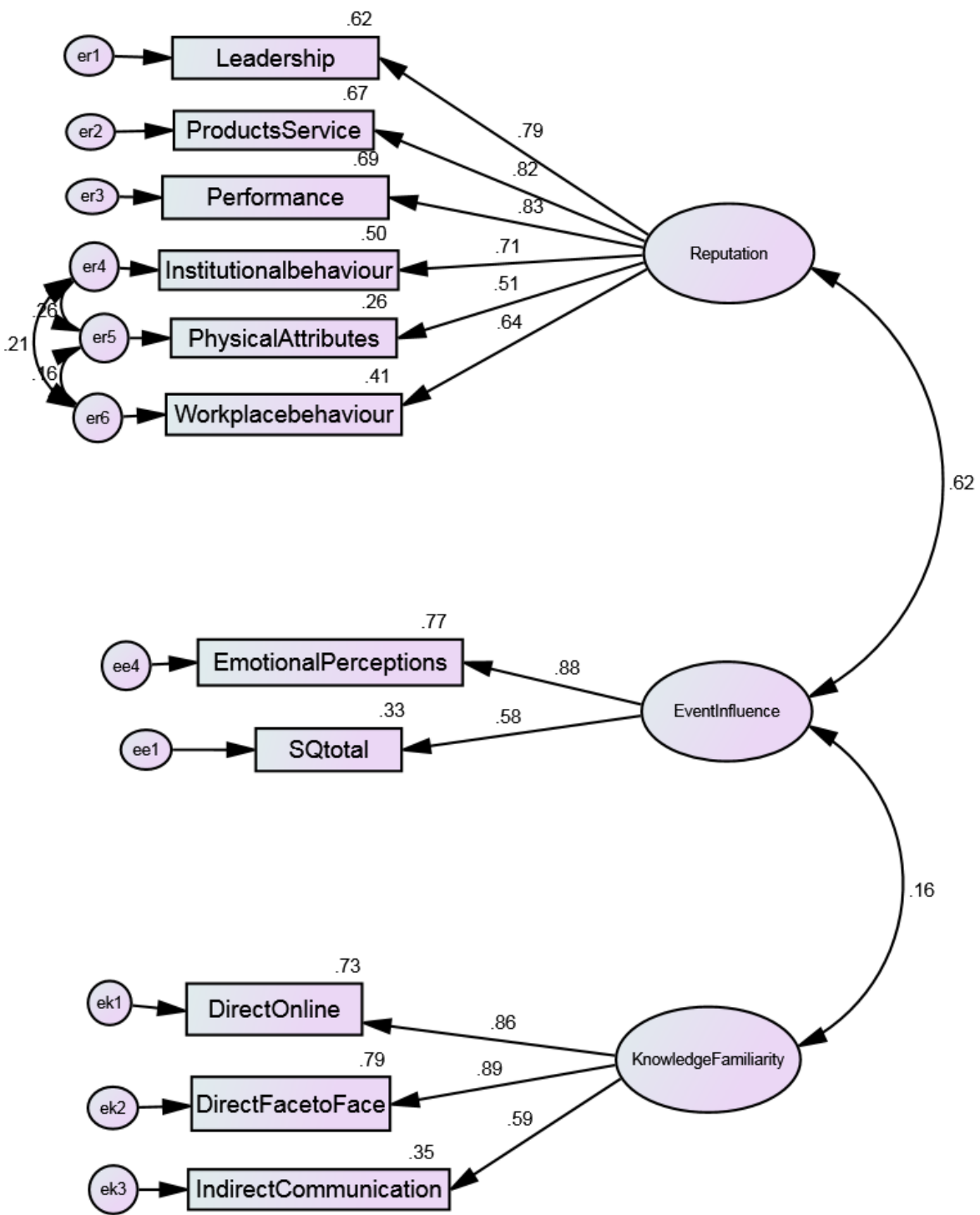
Table 8.21 Modifications made to measurement model

| Variable1 | | Variable 2 | M.I. | Par Change |
|------------------------------|-------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| er5 | <--> | er4 | 23.996 | 0.584 |
| er6 | <--> | er4 | 10.684 | 0.479 |
| er6 | <--> | er5 | 10.699 | 0.248 |
| Reputation | <---> | KnowledgeFamiliarity | removed: non-significant ($p>0.05$) | |
| SQphysical and SQnonphysical | | | Combined to increase validity | |
| Event Impact | | | removed: cross loading | |

8.3.5 Final measurement model

Following the modifications made in Section 8.3.4.3, the final measurement model is shown in Figure 8.3. Sections 8.3.5.1 to 8.3.5.3 discuss this model, assessing parameter estimates, validity and reliability of the model, and the goodness-of-fit. By accomplishing an acceptable measurement model, step 4 from the scale development (Table 5.5) can take place (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988, Blunch, 2013, Schumacker and Lomax, 2004).

Figure 8.3 Final Measurement Model



8.3.5.1 Model summary and Parameter estimates

A summary of the variables and parameters included in the final measurement model can be viewed in Table 8.22. This shows that 11 observed/ measured variables, and 14 unobserved/ latent variables are included.

Model summary

Table 8.22 Variable summary of final model

| Observed, endogenous variables | Unobserved, exogenous variables |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Workplacebehaviour | er6 |
| PhysicalAttributes | Reputation |
| Institutionalbehaviour | er5 |
| IndirectCommunication | er4 |
| EmotionalPerceptions | ek3 |
| Performance | EventInfluence |
| DirectOnline | ee4 |
| DirectFacetoFace | KnowledgeFamiliarity |
| SQtotal | er3 |
| ProductsService | er2 |
| Leadership | er1 |
| | ee1 |
| | ek2 |
| | ek1 |

Model identification

Table 8.23 shows the df to be 39, thus signifying an over-identified model, and one that is acceptable to proceed with the analysis. Additionally, this table shows that the 'minimum was achieved'. The X^2 statistic has remained at 0.000, however other goodness-of-fit indices are recognised to be acceptable (discussed in Section 5.4.7.2). Thus, this model is considered adequate to continue with model assessment.

Table 8.23 Final model identification results

| |
|--------------------------|
| Minimum was achieved |
| Chi-square = 95.335 |
| Degrees of freedom = 39 |
| Probability level = .000 |

Parameters and estimation

The parameter estimates are all positive, and are within an appropriate range. No standard errors values indicate a cause for concern, and all CR are >1.96 (Appendix 20). Therefore, the initial assessment recognises the model to be acceptable.

8.3.5.2 Construct validity and reliability of measurement model (Final model)

The construct reliability and validity were assessed for the final model, with the results presented in Table 8.24 and Table 8.25. Although the reliability for EI is 0.684 rather than >0.7, Garson (2008) and Hair et al. (2006) have suggested a more lenient cut off of between 0.6 and 0.7 to be acceptable for Cronbach alpha. As the overall Cronbach alpha value for the model is 0.793, the slightly lower value for EI was considered to be acceptable. All convergent validity values were >0.5, and discriminant validity values were <AVE. Therefore, construct validity has been achieved through both convergent and discriminant validity, indicating evaluation of the goodness-of-fit can take place.

Table 8.24 Convergent Validity assessment (Final model)

| Construct | Construct reliability (Cronbach alpha >0.7) | AVE calculation | Convergent validity (AVE>0.5) |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| Reputation | 0.859 | $(0.79^2 + 0.82^2 + 0.83^2 + 0.71^2 + 0.51^2 + 0.64^2)/6$ | 0.527 |
| Event influence | 0.684 | $(0.88^2 + 0.58^2)/2$ | 0.555 |
| Communication | 0.816 | $(0.86^2 + 0.89^2 + 0.59^2)/3$ | 0.623 |

Table 8.25 Discriminant Validity assessment (Final model)

| Construct | MSV Calculation | MSV | ASE Calculation | ASV |
|--|-------------------|-------|--|-------|
| Reputation | 0.62 ² | 0.384 | 0.62 ² | 0.384 |
| Event influence | 0.62 ² | 0.384 | (0.62 ² + 0.16 ²)/2 | 0.205 |
| Communication | 0.16 ² | 0.026 | 0.16 ² | 0.026 |
| MSV and AVE were the same for Reputation and Knowledge Familiarity due to these variables only having one covariance leading to/from them. | | | | |

8.3.5.3 Goodness-of-fit

The goodness-of-fit indices are identified in Table 8.26. Although $p=0.000$, Hair et al. (2006) suggests that a p value of 0.000 is acceptable, in the condition that other fit indices are satisfactory. Therefore, the measurement model is recognised to be acceptable, and assessment of the structural model can take place.

Table 8.26 Goodness-of-fit (Final model)

| Fit index | Acceptable fit | Fit of data |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| χ^2 | | 93.144 |
| df | | 39 |
| p | >0.05 | 0.000 |
| χ^2/df | ≤ 2 to 5 | 2.451 |
| TLI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.970 |
| CFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.979 |
| IFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.979 |
| RMSEA | ≤ 0.05 to 0.08 | 0.051 |

8.4 The structural Model

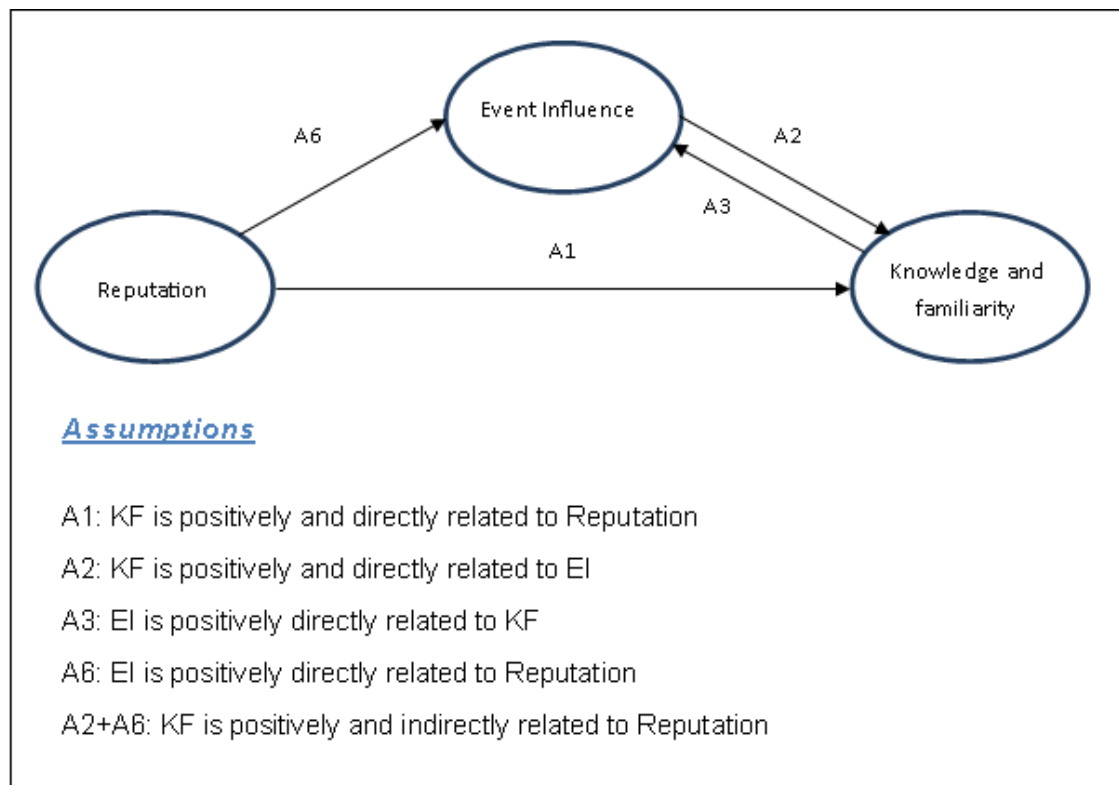
Specification of the structural model can take place once the validity and goodness-of-fit of the measurement model has been confirmed (Hair et al., 2006). This is achieved by assigning relationships from one construct to another based on the proposed

structural model (Figure 4.1) (Hair et al., 2006). Assessment of the structural model follows a similar process of assessment to the measurement model, which should focus on the overall fit of the model, and the 'size, direction and significance of the structural parameter estimates' (Hair et al., 2006, p. 847). These are shown with single-headed arrows.

The originally proposed structural model (Figure 4.1) suggested six relationship assumptions. However, due to changes in the factor structure (discussed in Section 8.2.2.1), the structural model required modification. The revised structural model is shown in Figure 8.4, and is accompanied by the four associated assumptions. It is acknowledged that the assumptions no longer included within the model (A4, A5) can be rejected. Furthermore, as A1 was found to be insignificant ($p=0.136$), this assumption was rejected, and as such, it has been removed from the structural model for the remaining of the analysis. In addition to the four assumptions presented within Figure 8.4, an indirect relationship (discussed in Section 4.3 and 8.4.2) is represented by A2+A6. The full structural model and assumptions remaining within the model are assessed below.

The sample of respondents is also split into internal and external stakeholders for the university. The responses for each group, presented within separate models, enables a comparison between these groups. This follows Chun's (2005) Relational School that suggests that reputation is an amalgamation of perspectives from internal and external respondents (discussed in Section 2.3.3). Therefore, identifying how each group contributes to reputation could provide insight to areas of strength and weakness of an organisation.

Figure 8.4 Revised conceptual model



8.4.1 Model assessment

Similarly to the measurement model, the structural model needs to be identified, with adequate parameter estimates (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Hair et al. (2006), highlight that these should be similar in both models, as big changes could indicate a poorly fitting model. The proposed structural model (Figure 8.5), has $df=38$, a X^2 of 93.144, and $p=0.000$, thus indicating an over-identified model.

All parameter estimates were of an acceptable value. Inspection of the SE and CR revealed issues between the regression weights for $KF \leftarrow EI$ and $EI \leftarrow KF$ (A2 and A3 respectively). Both of the CR for these regressions were <1.96 and have $p>0.05$, and are therefore insignificant (Table 8.27). However, when each of these regressions is included separately within the model, their CR is >1.96 , and $p<0.05$ (

Table 8.28). Therefore, two separate models representing each of the regressions will be presented.

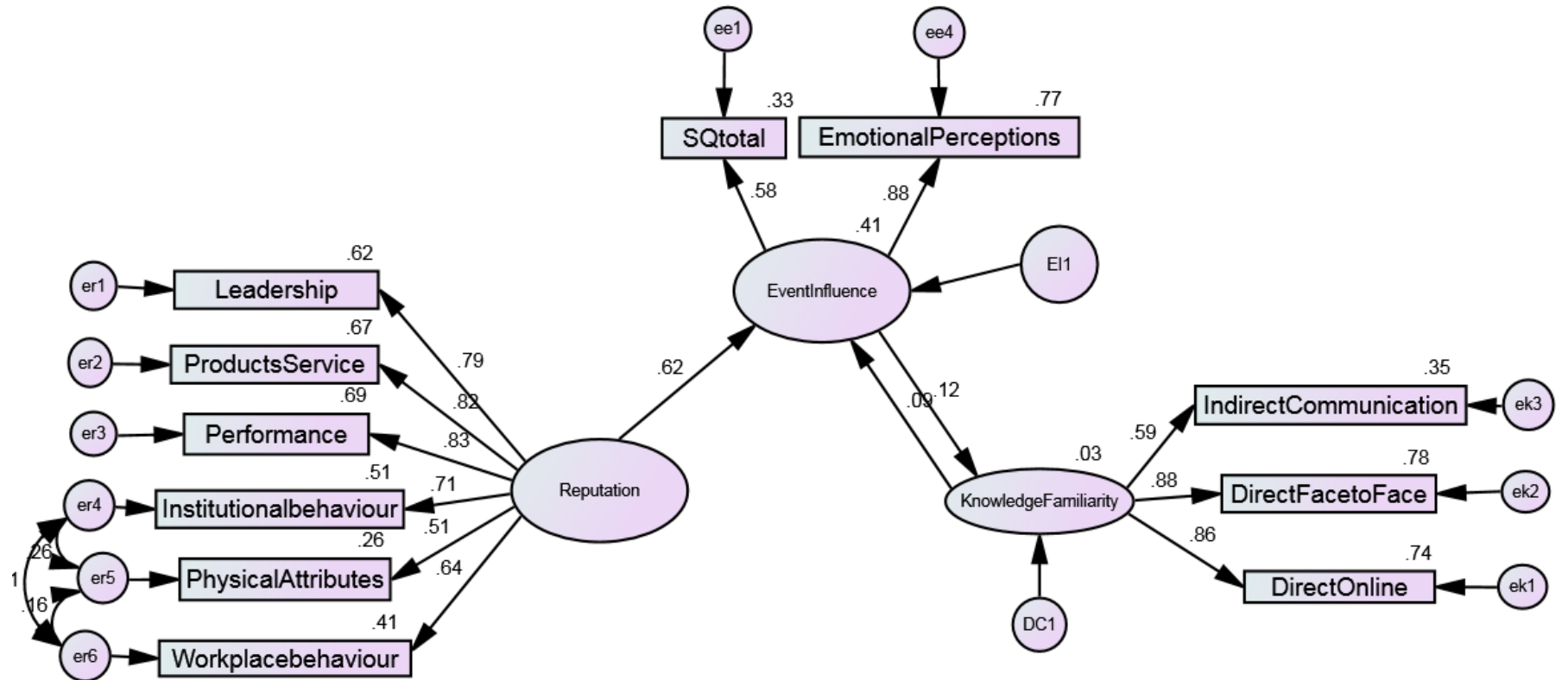
Table 8.27 Model assessment SEM model (insignificant regression weights)

| | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P |
|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Event Influence | <--- | Knowledge Familiarity | 0.089 | 0.069 | 1.297 | 0.195 |
| Knowledge Familiarity | <--- | Event Influence | 0.113 | 0.075 | 1.517 | 0.129 |

Table 8.28 Model Assessment (regressions included separately)

| | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P |
|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Event Influence | <--- | Knowledge Familiarity | 0.166 | 0.044 | 3.725 | P<0.001 |
| Knowledge Familiarity | <--- | Event Influence | 0.183 | 0.050 | 3.677 | P<0.001 |

Figure 8.5 Full Structural Model

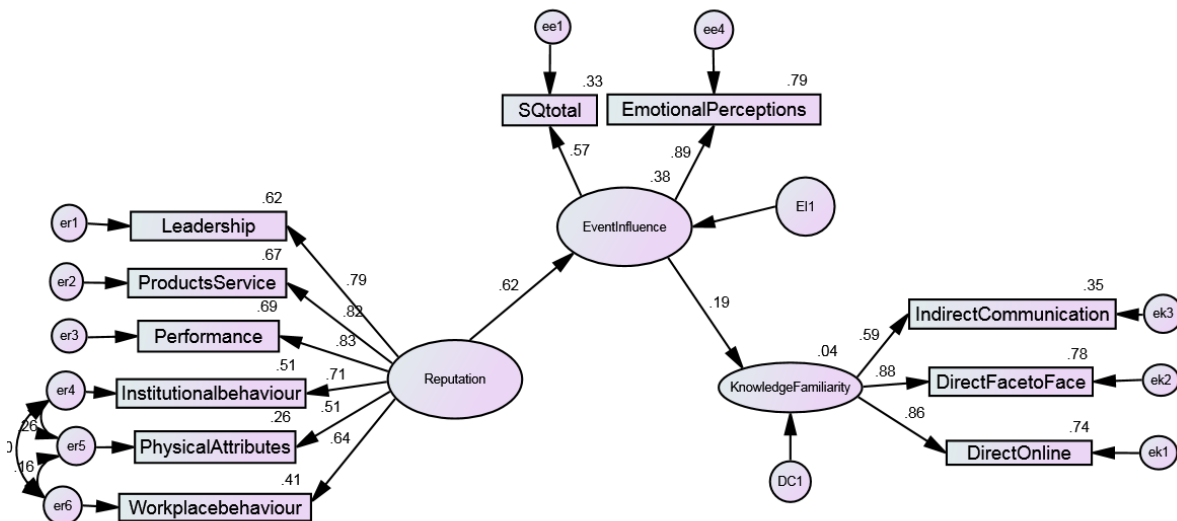


8.4.2 Model 1 (Knowledge Familiarity ← Event Influence)

Model summary and parameters

Model 1 (Figure 8.6), which comprised of assumption A2 (KF ← EI) and A6, and the indirect relationship A2+A6, was over-identified with $df=39$, a X^2 of 94.673 and $p=0.000$. All parameter estimates and SE were acceptable. Additionally, all CR were >1.96 and $p<0.000$ indicating that the next stage of model assessment could take place (all values shown in Appendix 21).

Figure 8.6 Structural Model (Model 1)



8.4.2.1 Goodness-of-fit

A comparison of the goodness-of-fit indices between the final measurement model and the structural model - Model 1 are shown in Table 8.29. This indicates that the model is of acceptable fit, with all fit indices, with the exception of p , being within the specified range. Furthermore, little change between the fit indices for the measurement model

and structural model are evident, which Hair et al. (2006) suggests as being beneficial, as big differences between these values indicate possible issues of fit.

Table 8.29 Goodness-of-fit (Structural model – Model 1)

| Fit index | Acceptable fit | Fit of data (measurement model) | Fit of Data (Structural model – model 1) |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| χ^2 | | 93.144 | 94.673 |
| df | | 39 | 39 |
| p | >0.05 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| χ^2/df | ≤ 2 to 5 | 2.451 | 2.428 |
| TLI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.970 | 0.970 |
| CFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.979 | 0.979 |
| IFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.979 | 0.979 |
| RMSEA | ≤ 0.05 to 0.08 | 0.051 | 0.051 |

8.4.2.2 Model 1 (Knowledge Familiarity \leftarrow Event Influence): Internal VS External stakeholder's perceptions

The internal and external stakeholder perspectives for Model 1 are shown in Figure 8.7 and Figure 8.8 respectively. Table 8.30 provides an assessment of each model and shows that the parameter estimates and SE were considered acceptable, and CR were >1.96 and $p < 0.05$ for both versions of Model 1. Furthermore, it demonstrates that model goodness-of-fit for both models was acceptable, with both showing an improvement compared to the full model. Thus, suggesting the possibility that the conceptual model provides a better fit for an organisation's image and identity which make up the university's reputation, rather than simply the reputation as a whole.

Table 8.30 Goodness-of-fit (Structural model – Model 1) Internal VS External

| Fit index | Criteria | Fit of Data (Structural model – model 1) | Model 1: Internal stakeholders | Model 1: External stakeholders |
|--------------------------|----------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Parameter estimates & SE | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| CR | >1.96 & p<0.05 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| x ² | | 94.673 | 40.988 | 66.844 |
| df | | 39 | 39 | 39 |
| p | >0.05 | 0.000 | 0.383 | 0.004 |
| x ² /df | ≤2 to 5 | 2.428 | 1.051 | 1.714 |
| TLI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.970 | 0.997 | 0.976 |
| CFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.979 | 0.998 | 0.983 |
| IFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.979 | 0.998 | 0.983 |
| RMSEA | ≤0.05 to 0.08 | 0.051 | 0.014 | 0.048 |

Figure 8.7 Structural Model (Model 1): Internal

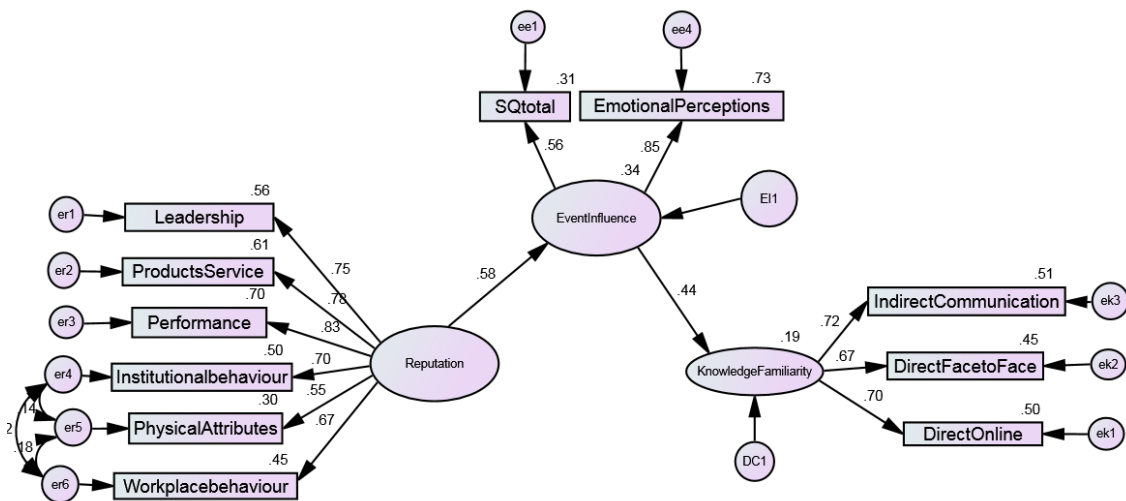
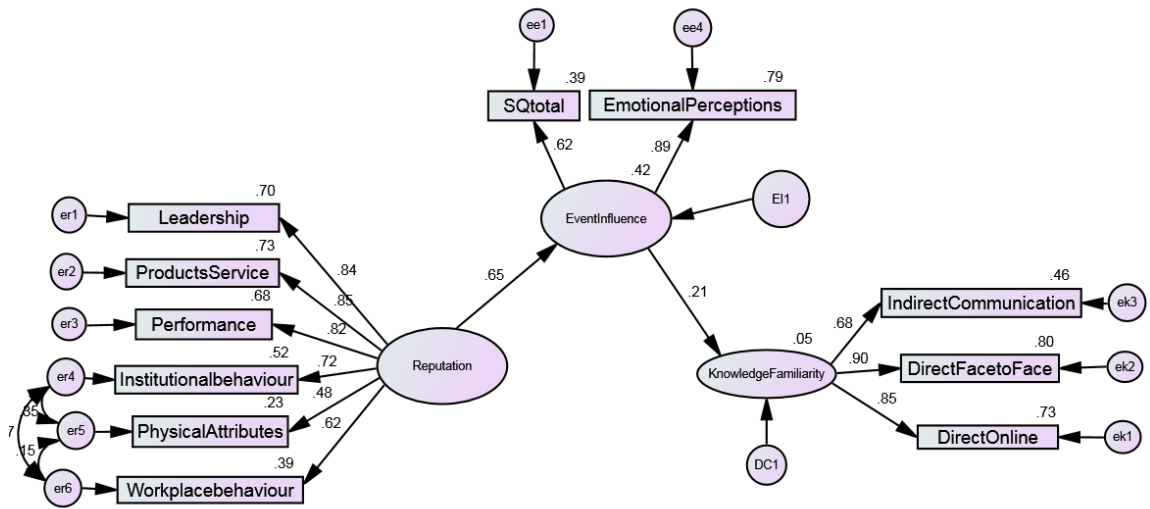


Figure 8.8 Structural Model (Model 1): External



8.4.2.3 Research Assumptions

Based on Model 1, the research assumptions are shown below. These recognise the direct relationships between KF and EI (A2) and EI and Reputation (A6). Direct effects are shown with a single arrow from one latent variable to another, pointing in one direction (Kline, 1998, p. 52). The direct relationship between KF and Reputation was found to be insignificant and consequently removed from the model (A1) (discussed in Section 8.4). Indirect effects are illustrated with a series of arrows (Kline, 1998, p. 52), and therefore an indirect effect between KF and Reputation may exist, with EI as the mediating factor (represented as A2+A6). This too will be tested, using the assumption stated below.

- A2: KF is positively directly related to Event Influence
- A6: EI is positively directly related to Reputation
- A2 + A6: KF is positively and indirectly related to reputation

The direct and indirect effects of the model can be requested as an output in the AMOS file and are presented in Table 8.31 below. The direct effects are based on the standardised regression weights of the model. The indirect effect of KF on Reputation can be calculated using the formula below:

Indirect effect (A2+A6) = direct effect of KF on EI (A2) * direct effect of EI on Reputation (A6)

For the overall model, this is shown numerically as **0.19 * 0.615 = 0.117**³²

³² When reputation goes up by 1 standard deviation, KF goes up by 0.117

Table 8.31 Direct and Indirect effects (Model 1)

| Standardized Effects | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| | Overall model 1 | | | Internal Stakeholders | | | External Stakeholders | | |
| Standardized Total Effects | | | | | | | | | |
| | Reputation | Event Influence | Knowledge and Familiarity | Reputation | Event Influence | Knowledge and Familiarity | Reputation | Event Influence | Knowledge and Familiarity |
| Event Influence | 0.615 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.585 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.648 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Knowledge Familiarity | 0.117 | 0.19 | 0.00 | 0.255 | 0.436 | 0.00 | 0.139 | 0.215 | 0.00 |
| Standardized Direct Effects | | | | | | | | | |
| Event Influence | 0.615 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.585 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.648 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Knowledge Familiarity | 0.00 | 0.19 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.436 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.215 | 0.00 |
| Standardized Indirect Effects | | | | | | | | | |
| Event Influence | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Knowledge Familiarity | 0.117 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.255 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.139 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Evaluation of Assumptions

Table 8.32 presents an evaluation of the effects in relation to the proposed assumptions. The effects from the overall model show that positive relationships exist between the latent variables. A strong relationship is evident between EI and reputation with a value of 0.615, while weaker relationships exist between KF and EI, and KF and reputation, with values of 0.19 and 0.117 respectively. This signifies positive relationships between these latent variables, and thus, assumptions A2, A6 and A2+A6 can be accepted.

An assessment of the effects from the internal and external perceptions of Model 1 shows that stakeholder's KF of the university has a greater direct influence on internal perceptions of EI than external perceptions. The EI has a greater influence on reputation for external stakeholders than internal stakeholders. Finally, stakeholder's KF of the university has a greater indirect influence on internal perspectives of reputation.

Table 8.32 Evaluation of Model 1 Assumptions

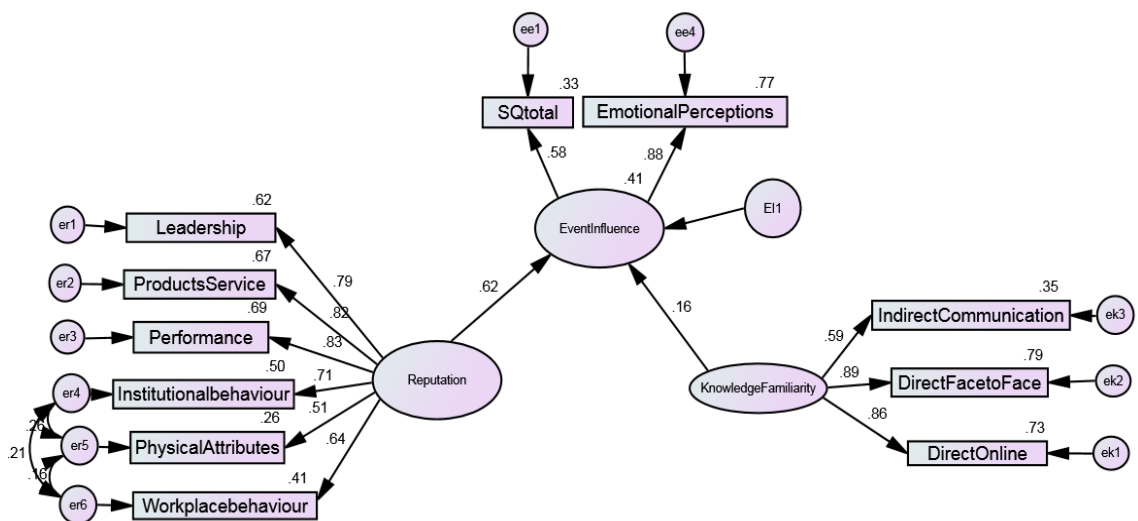
| | A: | Assumption statement | Relationship type | Overall Effect | Internal Effect | External Effect |
|-----------------|-----------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Direct effect | A2 | KF is positively and directly related to Event influence | positive | 0.19 | 0.436 | 0.215 |
| Direct effect | A6 | EI is positively directly related to Reputation | positive | 0.615 | 0.585 | 0.648 |
| Indirect effect | A2+A6 | KF is positively and indirectly related to reputation | positive | 0.117 | 0.255 | 0.139 |

8.4.3 Model 2 (Event Influence ← Knowledge Familiarity)

Model summary and parameters

Model 2 (Figure 8.9), comprised of assumption A3 (Event Influence ← Knowledge Familiarity) and A6, was over-identified with $df=39$, a X^2 of 95.335 and $p=0.000$. All parameter estimates and SE were acceptable. In addition, all CR were >1.96 and $p<0.000$ indicating that the next stage of model assessment could take place (all values shown in Appendix 22).

Figure 8.9 Structural Model (Model 2)



8.4.3.1 Goodness-of-fit

A comparison of the goodness-of-fit indices between the final measurement model and the structural model - Model 2 are shown in Table 8.33. This indicates that the model is of acceptable fit, with all fit indices, with the exception of p , being within the specified range. Furthermore, it is recognised that there has been little change between the fit

indices for the measurement model, model 1 or model 2. Therefore, both model 1 and model 2 are considered to have a good model fit.

Table 8.33 Goodness-of-fit (Structural model – Model 2)

| Fit index | Acceptable fit | Fit of data (measurement model) | Fit of Data (Structural model – model 1) | Fit of Data (Structural model – model 2) |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| χ^2 | | 93.144 | 94.673 | 95.335 |
| df | | 39 | 39 | 39 |
| p | >0.05 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| χ^2/df | ≤ 2 to 5 | 2.451 | 2.428 | 2.444 |
| TLI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.970 | 0.970 | 0.970 |
| CFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.979 | 0.979 | 0.979 |
| IFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.979 | 0.979 | 0.979 |
| RMSEA | ≤ 0.05 to 0.08 | 0.051 | 0.051 | 0.051 |

8.4.3.2 Model 2 (Event Influence \leftarrow Knowledge Familiarity) Internal VS External stakeholder’s perceptions

The internal and external perspectives of reputation for Model 2 are shown in

Figure 8.10 and Figure 8.11 respectively. Table 8.34 provides an assessment of each model and shows that the parameter estimates and SE were acceptable, CR were >1.96, and $p < 0.05$ for both versions of Model 2. Similarly to Model 1, the internal and external perspectives of Model 2 show an improved goodness-of-fit in comparison to the overall Model 2.

Table 8.34 Goodness-of-fit (Structural model – Model 2) Internal VS External

| Fit index | Criteria | Fit of Data (Structural model – model 2) | Model 2: Internal stakeholders | Model 2: External stakeholders |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Parameter Estimates & SE | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| CR | >1.96 & p<0.05 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| χ^2 | | 95.335 | 48.806 | 63.889 |
| df | | 39 | 39 | 39 |
| p | >0.05 | 0.000 | 0.135 | 0.007 |
| χ^2/df | ≤ 2 to 5 | 2.444 | 1.251 | 1.638 |
| TLI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.970 | .985 | .979 |
| CFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.979 | .989 | .985 |
| IFI | ≥ 0.9 | 0.979 | .990 | .985 |
| RMSEA | ≤ 0.05 to 0.08 | 0.051 | .032 | .045 |

Figure 8.10 Structural Model (Model 2): Internal

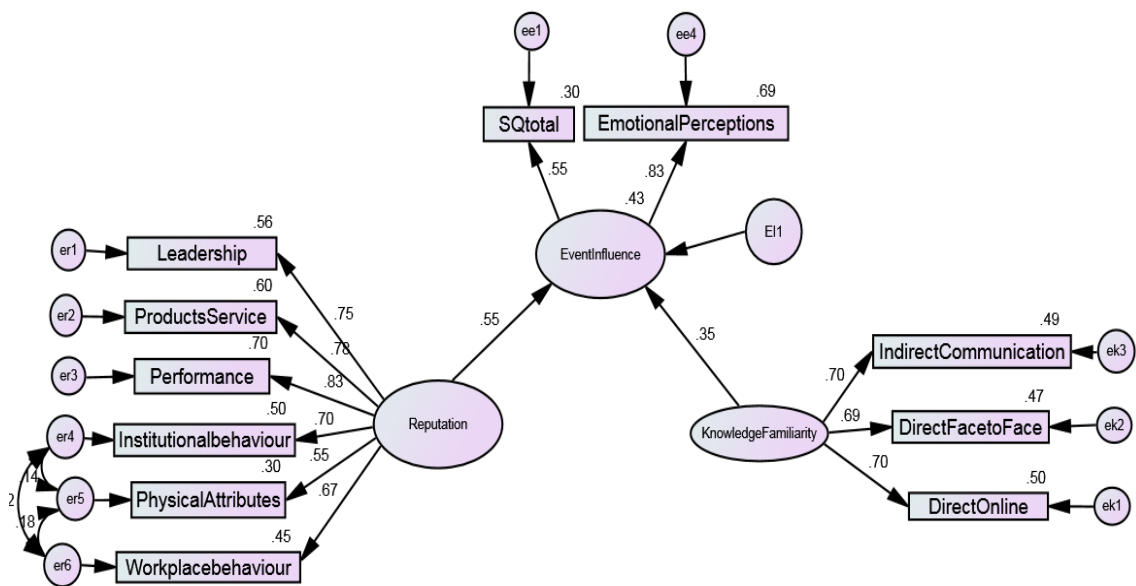
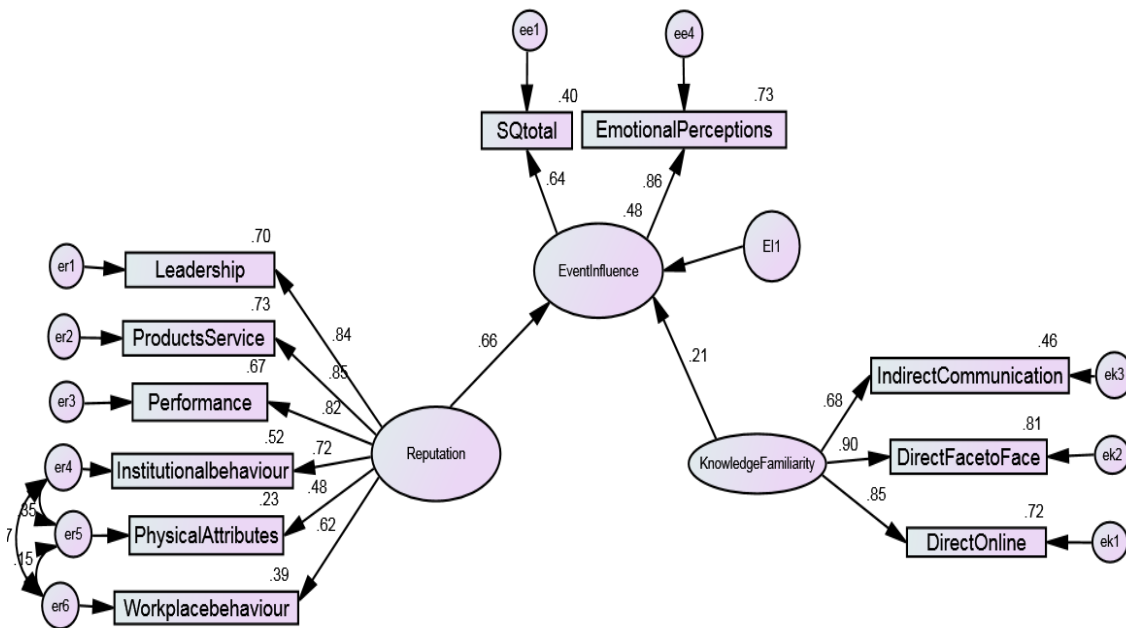


Figure 8.11 Structural Model (Model 2): External



8.4.3.3 Research Assumptions

The research assumptions based on Model 2 are shown below. These recognise the direct relationships between EI and KF (A3) and EI and Reputation (A6). There are no indirect relationships within this model as both regression weights from Reputation and KF are pointed towards EI (Kline, 1998). This suggests that there is no relationship (direct or indirect) between KF and Reputation. The relationships are shown in Table 8.35, which confirms that no indirect effects exist, as all values are 0.000.

- A3: EI is positively directly related to Knowledge and Familiarity
- A6: EI is positively directly related to Reputation

Table 8.35 Direct and Indirect effects (model 2) Internal VS External

| Standardized Effects | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| | Overall Model 2 | | | Internal Stakeholders | | | External Stakeholders | | |
| Standardized Total Effects | | | | | | | | | |
| | Reputation | Knowledge and Familiarity | Event Influence | Reputation | Knowledge and Familiarity | Event Influence | Reputation | Knowledge and Familiarity | Event Influence |
| Event Influence | 0.618 | 0.162 | 0.00 | 0.552 | 0.355 | 0.00 | 0.659 | 0.215 | 0.00 |
| Standardized Direct Effects | | | | | | | | | |
| Event Influence | 0.618 | 0.162 | 0.00 | 0.552 | 0.355 | 0.00 | 0.659 | 0.215 | 0.00 |
| Standardized Indirect Effects | | | | | | | | | |
| Event Influence | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Evaluation of Assumptions

An evaluation of the direct and indirect effects is presented in Table 8.36. The effects from the overall model show that positive relationships exist between the latent variables. Similarly to Model 1, a strong relationship is evident between EI and reputation with a value of 0.618. However, a weaker relationship exists between KF and EI, with a value of 0.162. This signifies positive relationships between these latent variables, and thus, assumptions A3 and A6 can be accepted within model 2.

Assessment of the Internal and External perceptions of Model 2 indicate that EI more positively influences internal stakeholder's KF of the university, than external stakeholders. Furthermore, EI has a more positive influence on external stakeholder's perceptions of reputation than internal stakeholders, as is the case with Model 1.

Table 8.36 Evaluation of Model 2 Assumptions

| Effect type | A: | Assumption statement | Relationship type | Overall Effect | Internal Effect | External Effect |
|---------------|----|--|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Direct effect | A3 | EI is positively directly related to Knowledge and Familiarity | positive | 0.162 | 0.355 | 0.215 |
| Direct effect | A6 | EI is positively directly related to Reputation | positive | 0.618 | 0.552 | 0.659 |

8.5 Operationalisation of main findings

Following confirmation of the assumptions, these can now be operationalised within the research context. The relationships between Reputation, EI and KF can be assessed to establish the causality between them. As these variables are all latent factors, it is also important to assess the measured variables that contribute to the overall structure of these constructs. Therefore, operationalising the main findings includes assessment of the measurement model results, and explanation of regression weights within the structural model (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Only minor differences exist between the overall measurement models for both Model 1 and Model 2, nevertheless, these changes do not alter the order of importance of the contributing factors. The order of importance does change between the internal and external perceptions of the models; however, this order remains the same between model 1 and model 2. These differences and similarities are discussed below.

8.5.1 Knowledge and Familiarity

The overall measurement models show that KF is comprised of three measured variables 1) Direct Comms Face-to-face, 2) Direct Comms Online, and 3) Indirect Comms. The standardised regression weights for these variables show that when KF increases by 1 standard deviation, the effect on the three measured variables is a corresponding increase of 0.88/0.89³³, 0.86, and 0.59 standard deviations respectively. This indicates that the most important contributing variable to KF is face-to-face communication (0.88/0.89), closely followed by direct online communication (0.86), and lastly indirect communication (0.59). This suggests that overall, respondents of the

³³ Where two values are given the first represents Model 1 and the second Model 2.

survey view direct face-to-face communication more highly than indirect communication from third party sources (discussed in Section 7.3.4.1 and 9.4).

This order of importance changes however, between the internal and external models. The external stakeholder's models are similar to the overall model in that direct face-to-face communication is considered the most important and indirect communication from third party sources is considered least important. However, for internal stakeholders, the direct face-to-face communication was viewed to be the least important contributor to KF. Furthermore, in Model 1 indirect communication from third party sources was viewed to be the most important contributor to KF, while Model 2 viewed this factor to be of equal value to direct online communication.

8.5.2 Event Influence

Event influence encompasses Emotional Perceptions and Service Quality as measured variables. The standardised regression weights show that when EI increases by 1 standard deviation, the measured variables increase by 0.89/0.88 and 0.57/0.58 standard deviations respectively. Therefore, the most important measured variable to EI is emotional perceptions (0.89/0.88), followed by service quality characteristics of the event (0.57/0.58). As a result, respondents' emotional perceptions of the organisation were viewed to be more important than the service quality provided at events. This was found to be true in Model 1 and Model 2, and for both the internal and external stakeholder's perceptions (discussed in Section 9.5).

8.5.3 Reputation

The latent variable Reputation was comprised of six measured variables including 1) Leadership, 2) Products and services, 3) Performance, 4) Institutional behaviour, 5) Physical attributes, and 6) Workplace behaviour. The standardised regression weights

show that when Reputation increases by 1 standard deviation, the measured variables increase in the following ways: Leadership (.79), Products and Services (.82), Performance (.83), Institutional behaviour (.71), Physical attributes (.51), Workplace behaviour (.64). This highlights that performance of the institution which comprised of academic/research performance and financial performance, was viewed to be the most important, closely followed by Products and Services (0.82), which comprised of the potential courses the institutions offers (products and services). The physical attributes (0.51) of the institution (location and campus and facilities), were considered the least important by respondents of the survey when assessing reputation.

Assessment of the internal and external models showed that the order of importance for the top three factors differs between stakeholder's perceptions. Internal stakeholders, similarly to the overall model, view performance to be the most important, followed by products and services and then leadership. However, external stakeholders view products and services to be the most important, followed by leadership and then performance. This was true for Model 1 and 2, and is discussed in Section 9.3.

8.5.4 Contextualisation of assumptions

The summary of results in Table 8.37 shows the total effects of the structural model for assumptions A2, A3, A2+A6 and A6 for Model 1 and Model 2. The effect, which is also the standardised regression weight between the three latent variables, shows the relationship between these constructs. Model 1 and 2 differ due to the two reversed regressions between KF and EI. When included within the same model, these regressions were not significant with $p > 0.05$, however included separately produces significant relationships between KF and EI in both directions. Thus, while these regressions are both significant and the assumptions have been accepted, this is on the condition that only one assumption is included in each model. The assumptions of

the overall models are operationalised below, with greater discussions relating to these relationships, and the internal and external stakeholder's perspectives of these models discussed in Chapter 9.

8.5.4.1 Model 1

A2: Knowledge and Familiarity is positively and directly related to Event Influence

The arrow between KF and EI in Model 1 shows the standard regression weight to be 0.19, which is significant at $p < 0.000$. This indicates that the regression weight for EI predicting KF is significantly different to 0. The standard regression weight of 0.19 indicates the increase that KF will undergo if EI is to increase by 1 standard deviation. Although this is a weak relationship, it indicates that respondents' knowledge and familiarity of an organisation directly influences their perceptions of EI.

A6: Event Influence is positively directly related to Reputation

A strong relationship exists with EI as a predictor of Reputation. The standard regression weight for this relationship is 0.615, purporting that for every 1 standard deviation increase in Reputation, an increase of 0.615 standard deviations is needed for EI. This relationship is significant with $p < 0.000$. This is indication that respondents' perceptions following attendance at an event are significantly and positively related to their evaluation of the organisation's reputation.

A2+A6: Knowledge and Familiarity is positively and indirectly related to reputation

The indirect relationship between KF and Reputation has a standard regression weight of 0.117, with EI as a mediating factor. Therefore, to increase reputation by 1 standard deviation, an increase of 0.117 for KF is required. This indirect relationship indicates

that without the presence of EI, respondents' KF would have no significant relationship with their perceptions of the institution's reputation.

8.5.4.2 Model 2

A3: EI is positively directly related to Knowledge and Familiarity

Model 2 shows a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) between EI and KF, with KF as a predictor of EI. The standardised regression weight between these two latent variables indicates that for every 1 standard deviation increase in KF, EI will increase by 0.162. Therefore, it can be suggested that attending an event (EI) positively increases respondents' KF of the institution.

A6: Event Influence is positively directly related to Reputation

Similarly to model 1, a strong relationship exists with EI as a predictor of Reputation in Model 2. The standard regression weight for this relationship is 0.618, indicating that for every 1 standard deviation increase in Reputation, EI will also increase by 0.618 standard deviations. This relationship is significant with $p < 0.000$. Thus, respondents' perceptions following attendance at an event are significantly and positively related to their evaluation of the organisation's reputation when this model is utilised.

Table 8.37 Summary of Assumption outcomes

| | Assumption | Assumption statement | Assumption outcome | Relationship type | Effect | Effect type |
|---------------------|------------|--|--------------------|--|--------|-----------------|
| Assumptions removed | A4 | EI is positively and directly related to stakeholders' future intentions | Rejected | Future Intentions not included in measurement model due to factor structure resulting from EFA | | |
| | A5 | Reputation positively and directly related to future intentions | Rejected | Future Intentions not included in measurement model due to factor structure resulting from EFA | | |
| | A1 | KF is positively and directly related to Reputation | Rejected | not significant p=0.136 | | |
| Model 1 | A2 | KF is positively and directly related to Event influence | Accepted | positive | 0.19 | Direct effect |
| | A6 | EI is positively directly related to Reputation | Accepted | positive | 0.615 | Direct effect |
| | A2+A6 | KF is positively and indirectly related to reputation | Accepted | positive | 0.117 | Indirect effect |
| Model 2 | A3 | EI is positively directly related to Knowledge and Familiarity | Accepted | positive | 0.162 | Direct effect |
| | A6 | EI is positively directly related to Reputation | Accepted | positive | 0.618 | Direct effect |

8.6 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has developed the SEM model to measure the effect of stakeholder Knowledge and Familiarity, and Events Influence on a university's reputation. The pre-analysis of the data, prior to model development, identified errors within the descriptive data and found that missing data occurred across 300 cases within the dataset. A missing data analysis was conducted and missing data MAR, was replaced using Expectation Maximisation. Nevertheless, 245 cases still remained with missing data, and therefore case and variable deletion was conducted. Univariate normality of the data was considered by assessing the skewness and kurtosis of the variables (Hair et al., 2006, Kline, 1998, Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007), which found the data within this dataset to be considered normal. Furthermore, the dataset was assessed for outliers, with 16 cases removed. The factor analysis was conducted using the remaining 67 variables and 556 cases.

A PCA with a Varimax rotation was completed during the EFA phase of scale development. Throughout the iterative process, 12 variables were removed from the factor solution (Table 8.8). The remaining variables grouped into ten factors, which contributed to three latent variables (Reputation, Knowledge and Familiarity (KF) and Event Influence (EI)). The factors extracted during the EFA were parcelled, and then subjected to a CFA using IBM SPSS AMOS 22. Assessment of the measurement model was an iterative process, and during this process, six modifications were made to improve the construct validity and reliability, and the goodness-of-fit of the model.

Relationships were assigned in the form of regression weights between latent variables, which represented the assumptions of the conceptual model, and together formed the structural model. A revised version of the structural model was presented, representing four assumptions, due to changes in the final factor structure. Due to this change, assumptions A4 and A5 were rejected. Assumption A1, was also rejected as it was found to be not significant with $p > 0.05$.

Two models were identified within this stage as the reversed regression weights between KF and EI were found to be insignificant ($p > 0.05$) when presented together. However, when presented separately both A2 and A3 were found to be significant. Both models were found to have acceptable parameters, SE, CR and goodness-of-fit, and are therefore both considered to be plausible. Assumptions A2 and A6 were both accepted for Model 1, with both having positive relationships between the variables. In addition to this, an indirect effect between KF and reputation was found, and was represented as A2+A6. This too was found to be a positive effect. Assumptions A3 and A6 were found to have positive relationships between the latent variables in Model 2, and as such were also both accepted.

The dataset was divided into internal and external respondents, in line with proposed definitions of reputation from the Relational School (Chun, 2005), and assessed for both models. Several key differences between the perceptions of internal and external stakeholders became apparent. These are identified in the operationalisation of the main findings (Section 8.5), and discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

The main findings from Model 1 show that stakeholder's KF of the university has a greater direct influence on internal stakeholder's perceptions of EI than external stakeholder's perceptions. The EI has a greater influence on reputation for external stakeholders than it does for internal stakeholders. Finally, stakeholder's KF of the university has a greater indirect influence on internal perspectives of reputation. Findings from Model 2 indicate that EI more positively influences internal stakeholder's KF of the university, while EI has a more positive influence on external stakeholder's perceptions of reputation, as is the case with Model 1.

Assessment of the latent variables identified two key differences between internal and external perceptions. Firstly, with both models, external stakeholder's perceptions identify direct face-to-face communication to be the most important contributor to KF, and indirect communication from third party sources was considered least important.

However, for internal stakeholders, the opposite was found to be true, with direct face-to-face communication viewed to be the least important contributor to KF.

The second key difference occurred within the latent variable Reputation. Assessment of the internal and external models showed that the order of importance for the top three factors differs between stakeholder groups. This found that internal stakeholders view performance to be the most important, followed by products and services and then leadership. However, external stakeholders view products and services to be the most important, followed by leadership and then performance. This was found to be true for Model 1 and Model 2.

The findings from Model 1 and Model 2 are operationalised in Chapter 9, including both the internal and external views of each of these models. This is completed, in an attempt to isolate the perspectives of the university's reputation, by these different stakeholder groups. Through identifying these different perspectives enables the practical contributions to be made, as university managers are able to adjust their communication strategy to better suit the target audience. Furthermore, the impact of EI and KF are discussed to identify their impact on reputation. As such, each of these variables and their relationship to other variables within the models, are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

9 The impact of Events on Reputation: SEM Discussion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter starts by highlighting some general points of interest from the research, and more specifically addressing the importance of the variables excluded from the final models. These variables were viewed to be of importance to this research as they provided significant associations within Chapter 7, and as a result provided insight to the sample's respondents and their associated perceptions.

The chapter continues by discussing each of the latent variables within the model (Reputation, Knowledge and Familiarity and, Event Influence). This is achieved by confirming characteristics used to measure reputation (objective 2), and identifying how this differs between internal and external audiences. Knowledge and Familiarity is discussed, highlighting the influence of 'rich' mediums on stakeholders' overall Knowledge and Familiarity of The University. Furthermore, the relationship this has with Event Influence and reputation is confirmed (objective 3). Finally, the effect of Event Influence is argued, emphasising the differences between internal and external audiences, and the impact this has on Knowledge and Familiarity, as well as overall perceptions of reputation (objective 4).

In particular, the purpose of this chapter is to address objectives 2 – 6 of this research (Table 5.1), through confirming or rejecting the research assumptions. These objectives and their associated assumptions were drawn from the literature to construct the conceptual model (Chapter 4). This was done in the context of measuring event attendees' perceptions at university events, to determine the impact the event had on their perceptions of The University's reputation. The main findings of this research are discussed below in terms of the latent variables from the structural model, and how these achieve each objective.

9.2 Variables excluded from the model

Several variables included in the conceptual model were found not to be valid for the final structural model. However, they are still considered to have some importance within this research context, as they were found to have significant correlations (discussed in Chapter 7), or are considered important within existing literature. These variables are discussed below, highlighting their contribution to this research, and thus acknowledging their importance within the research context.

The communication medium 'word-of-mouth from staff and students' was not included within the final model and was removed during the EFA due to low factor loading (completed in Section 8.2.2). Nevertheless, this is still viewed to be a variable of importance, as it was the most selected medium chosen for gaining information about The University from respondents (discussed in Section 7.3.4, Table 7.18). Furthermore, it was found to have significance with familiarity of respondents, as those that used this form of communication more frequently, were suggested to have an increased familiarity with The University (Section 7.3.4). However, the inclusion of 'meetings and events' to gain information within the model, suggests that respondents do receive information from staff and students directly. Therefore, while 'word-of-mouth from staff and students' was not included as a separate variable, it is still recognised that stakeholders receive this type of communication through other sources.

Expectations and Event Impact are not included in final model, however they are shown to have significant relationships with Gender, Education, Employment status, Stakeholder groups and the number of events respondents had attended at The University (discussed in Section 7.4.2 and 7.4.3). These significant relationships provide information relating to the respondents of this research, and as such provide a practical contribution to event managers at The University to improve future events. Therefore, while these variables are not considered relevant to the overall model, it is apparent that they form separate relationships and as such contribute to this research.

Measuring satisfaction using overall expectations is commonly used within research in events and the service industry (Cronin Jr, 2003, Mason and Paggiaro, 2012, O'Neill et al., 1999, Theodorakis et al., 2013). Therefore, the exclusion of this variable, which took place during the EFA due to low factor loading (completed in Section 8.2.2), is contrary to existing literature measuring satisfaction at events. Thus, suggesting that measuring satisfaction at university events is different to measuring satisfaction at other event types.

Event Impact, while remaining within the scale during the EFA process, was found to be cross loading between Event Influence and Reputation (Section 8.3.4, Table 8.21); consequently, this was removed. The future intention item 'know more' was factored within this variable, which suggests that a consequence of attending an event is increased knowledge of the organisation. This is supported by the literature, which recognised events as a communication tool (Crowther, 2010a), and thus contribute to an organisation's 'constructed reality' (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998), which informs perceptions. However, this could not be confirmed statistically as the Chi-square test between these two variables was found to be invalid³⁴.

A consequence of satisfaction at events is suggested to lead to positive future intentions from the event attendee (Chang et al., 2016, Kim et al., 2014, Lee and Beeler, 2009, Lee et al., 2017, O'Neill et al., 1999). This included intentions such as repeat visits and speaking positively about the event (discussed in Section 3.5.2). These future intentions are also suggested in the literature to be consequences of a positive reputation (discussed in Section 2.7.5). However, the latent variable for future intention was found not to be valid within the final scale, and only two significant associations were found with future intentions variables (stakeholders: interval/external

³⁴ % of cells with count less than 5 = 46.7%, minimum expected count 0.11, Pearson Chi-Square (Asymp. Sig (2-sided) = 0.000

* think better; Gender * know more). Previous research for NPOs has explored reputations impact on potential donors (future intentions to donate) (Bastedo and Bowman, 2010, Grewal et al., 2008, Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001a, Sarstedt and Schloderer, 2010, Schloderer et al., 2014). While this was not an objective of this research, it provides scope for future studies to explore if any future intentions exist following attendance at a university event. Nevertheless, this research has found that there are limited future intentions outcomes derived from university events, thus achieving **objective 5 and 6**.

Three visibility measurement variables were found to be valid (local, national and international visibility) following the EFA (Section 8.2.2). This supported suggestions that an organisation's visibility increases the Knowledge and Familiarity of an organisation, and as a result the organisation will have an increased reputation (discussed in Section 2.7.2) (Brammer and Millington, 2005, Fombrun et al., 2000). However, the suggestion by the interviewees of including the field of research within the visibility measurement (Section 6.6.2) has been rejected, as it was removed during the factor analysis phase (Section 8.2.2). Nevertheless, the parcelled variable for visibility was removed prior to the measurement model specification due to a low reliability and factor score once parcelled (Section 8.3.4). Thus suggesting that visibility does not influence perceptions of a university's reputation by event attendees.

9.3 SEM Variable: Reputation

Measuring university reputation has previously been done through league tables (discussed in Section 2.6). However, these are based on mainly a single stakeholder point of view, and focussed only on academic/research performance or student recruitment (Alessandri et al., 2006, Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001a, Sung and Yang, 2008, Yang et al., 2008). There is, to the authors knowledge, no current literature measuring general perceptions of a university across multiple stakeholder groups.

Thus, an objective of this research was to determine the validity of existing for-profit reputation measurement characteristics (objective 2). This was achieved through an EFA and CFA resulting in the latent variable 'Reputation' within the final structural model (discussed in Section 8.2 -8.4); the results of which are discussed below.

The latent variable Reputation is made up of six factors that were parcelled from 22 valid variables (Table 8.11). These variables were based on measurement items used within the RepTrak System, which is used to measure the reputation of FPOs (discussed in Section 2.5.2) (Fombrun et al., 2015, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007, p. 254). This differs from the original RepTrak System, which consisted of 23 items within seven groups (shown in Figure 2.2) and the proposed measurement model in the conceptual framework (shown in Figure 4.2), which consisted of 29 items within nine groups. Furthermore, it is different to the results found by Vidaver-Cohen (2007), who also applied the RepTrak System to a university setting.

By achieving a valid and reliable model, with an acceptable goodness-of-fit (Section 8.4.2 and 8.4.3), confirms the variables used to measure a university's reputation, and therefore achieves **objective 2** of this research. While this model has some similarities to the original RepTrak System, the structure of the scale is different, which could be due to the fundamental differences between FPOs and NPOs (discussed in Chapter 1). These similarities and differences between the original RepTrak System, and the newly proposed model are identified below.

- a. The latent variable 'Leadership' from the original RepTrak System has remained unchanged in the new model for measuring university reputation. With the exception that the suggested split of 'excellent management' into two variables (management and leadership) (discussed in Section 6.6.1), was confirmed as both were found to be valid within the EFA. This suggests that although differences of governance between FPOs and NPOs exist (Hull and Lio, 2006), the principles and functions of the senior team within these organisations are viewed to be the same

by their stakeholders. This supports the suggestion by Melewar and Akel (2005) that Boards of Governors are thought to be equivalent to a board of directors within a FPO.

- b. Variables from the Innovation and Citizenship latent variable were found to be factored together and were renamed 'Institutional Behaviour' within the new scale (Table 8.11). Within this latent variable, enterprising and sustainability (originally first to market and environmentally friendly), were confirmed as valid measurement variables. The new variable, 'recognises and takes advantage of opportunities' (discussed in Section 6.7) was also grouped within this latent variable, alongside other innovation characteristics, which confirms the innovative traits of this variable (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2013, George et al., 2015).

'Supports good causes' was the only variable within this section, which was not valid for measuring university reputation. Ben-Ner and Van Hooymissen (1991, p. 521) and Baruch and Ramalho (2006) suggest a primary purpose of NPOs relates to performing public tasks, and community and support roles. Thus, 'supports good causes' not being included within the measurement scale, highlights the possibility that university stakeholders view the function of a university to be different to traditional NPOs.

- c. The Workplace latent variable from the RepTrak System was renamed as Workplace Behaviour within the new scale. This was made up of three variables, one of which, 'employment opportunities', was amended from 'equal opportunities' in the original scale. This change, suggested by interviewees in Section 6.6.1, can therefore be confirmed as a valid measurement variable.
- d. The latent variable Performance also comprised of three measured variables. 'Financial performance', originally profitability was confirmed as valid. As NPOs primary goal is achieving a social mission rather than making a profit (Henderson,

Chase, & Woodson, 2002, cited in Baruch and Ramalho, 2006), the change in wording for this variable was viewed to be necessary (Section 6.6.1).

Additionally, the inclusion of 'academic and research performance' within this group was confirmed (discussed in Section 6.7). A purpose of universities is to advance knowledge and understanding through teaching and research (HEFCE, 2012, Plewa et al., 2016). Thus, measuring performance on these key functions of universities is considered to be in line with existing university ranking and reputation measurement scales (discussed in Section 2.6). Therefore, university performance is suggested to be measured on growth prospects (from the original RepTrak System), financial performance and, academic achievement and research output.

- e. The physical surroundings and location of an FPO contribute to stakeholder's perceptions of the organisation (Melewar and Jenkins, 2002), and as a consequence have the ability to influence perceptions of reputation of the organisation. These characteristics have previously been included in measuring university image and reputation (Arpan et al., 2003, Theus, 1993, Treadwell and Harrison, 1994). This is also found to be true within the context of this research, as the location, and campus and facilities of The University ('Physical Attributes') were found to be relevant measurement indicators.
- f. The 'Products and Services' latent variable consisted of the same four measured variables as presented in the RepTrak System. Authors have previously compared students at HEI's to customers of commercial organisations (Conway et al., 1994, Melewar and Sibel, 2005, Trim, 2003, Weaver, 1976). The recognition that university stakeholder's assess the products and services offered by a university (The University courses), in the same way as an FPO, suggests that they too recognise this link. Thus, while universities prefer to use the term 'partners' when referring to their students, their stakeholders view them the same as customers.

- g. The suggestion of including student specific measurement variables within The University reputation measurement scale was rejected as neither 'high quality students' or 'student achievement' were retained. This is in contrast to existing measurement scales, which include these measured variables (Alessandri et al., 2006, Arpan et al., 2003, Bryant et al., 1996, Verčič et al., 2016).
- h. Emotional appeal and the overall reputation latent variables suggested in the conceptual framework, while found to be valid within the overall structural model, were not measures contributing towards the reputation latent variable. This is in contrast to the original RepTrak System and the suggestion that emotional appeal attributes help to elicit participant's perceptions of corporate reputation (Highhouse et al., 2009). Nevertheless, they were found to be a determinant of reputation as part of the Event Influence variable (discussed in Section 9.5.2 below).
- i. Governance variables were also removed during the early stages of analysis due to high item non-response. This is thought to be a limitation of the new scale as these variables were removed prior to the factor analysis.

Hence, a new measure of university reputation is created. This is formed from 22 measurement variables, which are factored into six groups: Leadership, Institutional Behaviour, Workplace Behaviour, Performance, Physical Attributes, and Products and Services. Subsequently, a contribution to existing literature is made, by confirming existing reputation measurement variables, and validating new measurement variables. This is done within a new research context of a NPO, and specifically a UK university.

9.3.1 Internal and external perspectives

Following the premise that reputation is made up of the perceptions of both internal and external stakeholders, the sample was divided to determine the contribution of each of

these stakeholder groups in measuring reputation (represented in Model 1 and Model 2, as internal or external). The internal responses reflect the organisation's identity (Abratt, 1989, Alessandri, 2001, Gray and Balmer, 1998, Margulies, 1977, van Riel and Balmer, 1997), whereas, external views represent an organisation's image (Bromley, 1993, Chun, 2005, Cornelissen and Thorpe, 2002, Davies and Miles, 1998, Grunig, 1993, Hatch and Schultz, 1997, Williams and Moffitt, 1997). Through communication, the identity of an organisation is suggested to inform the image, and together reflect the reputation of an organisation as a whole (Alessandri, 2001). Thus, reviewing the perceptions of internal and external stakeholders is considered a means to interpret The University's reputation.

University performance is viewed to be the most important characteristic in measuring reputation, by internal respondents, for both models (Figure 8.7 and

Figure 8.10). This could be due to the existing reputation measurement scales for universities, which place performance as a key characteristic (Alessandri et al., 2006, Ivy, 2001, Times Higher Education, 2012). Positive performance is important, as it provides justification for positive feelings of association by internal respondents (Bastedo and Bowman, 2010, Grewal et al., 2008, Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001a). Similarly, as internal respondents, and specifically students, could be thought of as 'buying' a service in terms of their university course, it is thought that they would want to buy one of quality. Furthermore, the staff at The University may see it to be important to deliver good quality products and services, as it is imperative to attracting more students to attend The University (Bastedo and Bowman, 2010, Grewal et al., 2008, Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001a). Thus, providing a justification of why university performance is viewed as an important reputation measurement characteristic by internal respondents.

External stakeholders may view products and services offered as synonymous with performance, as Walsh et al. (2009a) argue that good products and services result in positive performance outcomes. Furthermore, quality products and services are a common means of assessing FPOs (Andreassen and Lanseng, 1997, Caruana and Chircop, 2000, Fombrun et al., 2000, Helm, 2005, Markham, 1972) and therefore, could be viewed as important to measure the success of an NPO too.

The physical attributes of The University were considered to be the least important characteristic in measuring university reputation (Figure 8.6 and Figure 8.9). This, which was true for both models, and both internal and external audiences, is in contrast to existing research that suggests that location and facilities form a key determinant in establishing an organisation's reputation (Arpan et al., 2003, Ivy, 2001, Melewar and Jenkins, 2002, Theus, 1993). Nevertheless, while it was viewed to be the least important, it was still included within the final measurement scale. Thus, the suggestion to include physical attributes by the interviewees, is accepted as valid.

9.4 SEM Variable: Knowledge and Familiarity

Familiarity, which was originally identified as a separate variable within the Knowledge and Familiarity variable, was found to be incorrect. This was originally made up of attendees' overall perceptions of their own familiarity and the number of events they had previously attended (discussed in Section 4.3.2, Figure 4.3). However, the 'number of events' measurement variable was removed during the EFA. The measured variable 'familiarity' was factored with Direct (online) Communication, suggesting that respondents possibly base their familiarity of The University on communications they have received through online mediums. This is supported through significant associations between familiarity and the Direct (online) Communication channels (shown in Appendix 15), with all results showing that more respondents than expected, who use the channels 'all the time', know The University 'very well'. Therefore, while

face-to-face communication is viewed to be the most important (discussed in Section 7.3.4), familiarity is also gained through direct (online) communication, and thus, information delivered using these mediums are still considered important. This further contributes to the Media Richness Theory, by providing a hierarchy of communication channels for stakeholder familiarity with a university.

All communication methods were accepted as contributing to event attendees' Knowledge and Familiarity of The University, with the exception of 'word-of-mouth from staff and students'. This is in contrast with findings in Section 7.3.4, as statistical significance was found (Appendix 15), and it was the most commonly selected method to gain information about The University. However, respondents do receive information from staff and students directly by attending 'meetings and events', and therefore, it is thought stakeholders receive this type of communication through other sources (discussed in Section 9.2).

The latent variables that the communication methods were factored into, were in line with those suggested in the conceptual framework (Section 4.3.2), and were Direct Communication (online and face-to-face), and Indirect Communication. Additionally, as mentioned above, overall familiarity was also factored within the Direct (online) Communication latent variable. Cornelissen (2008) suggests that the order of importance these variables have in communicating a message, is based on their richness of data, with direct face-to-face contact being the most important, and indirect communication being the least important. This is discussed below, to determine the validity of this proposed importance, with the differences between internal and external respondents' perceptions discussed.

External respondents viewed face-to-face communication to be the most important in determining their Knowledge and Familiarity of The University (Figure 8.8 and Figure 8.11). This is in line with the Media Richness Theory that recognises face-to-face communication to be the most important means for people to gain information, and that

it was the preferred method in doing so, due to the richness of the data on offer (Daft and Lengel, 1986, Fill, 2009).

However, the internal models identified that face-to-face communication was found to be the least important means of gaining information about The University (Figure 8.7). This could be an explanation of why internal respondents did not view events to be a valid source of gaining additional information, as their preferred means of gaining information about The University was through indirect sources. Furthermore, due to internal audiences being less reliant on events to gain information about The University, they place less importance on them, than their external counterparts. This is in direct contrast to the media richness theory (Daft and Lengel, 1986), suggesting that internal stakeholders view the importance of communication they receive, differently to external stakeholders. An explanation for this finding is suggested to be due to external audiences having fewer sources and opportunities to gain information, events provide a suitable opportunity to gain information. Furthermore, it could explain why once a 'threshold level' of familiarity is reached (as is the case with internal respondents) little is to be gained by holding events.

9.4.1 The impact Knowledge and Familiarity has on Event Influence

Knowledge and Familiarity of The University is recognised to have the biggest impact on Event Influence for internal audiences ($EI \rightarrow KF = 0.44$). This suggests that an increased Knowledge and Familiarity of The University, positively influences respondents' perceptions of service quality characteristics at events, and their emotional perceptions of The University (both of which make up Event Influence). Satisfaction, assessed through service quality, is based on personal expectation and experience (Lee and Beeler, 2009, Oliver et al., 1997, Petrick et al., 2013). Therefore, having a greater Knowledge and Familiarity of The University, formed through communication and personal experience, enables stakeholders to have more accurate

expectations of what is being delivered. Thus, as internal stakeholders are more familiar with the organisation their expectations are thought to be in line with what is delivered, and are therefore more likely to be satisfied by their experiences, as their expectations will be met.

This is also true for external stakeholders, however to a lesser extent ($EI \rightarrow KF = 0.21$).

This suggests that while some familiarity with The University exists (Section 7.3.4), the reduced Knowledge and Familiarity does not greatly affect perceptions of Event Influence. Therefore, through increasing stakeholder's Knowledge and Familiarity of The University, the influence that it has on their event perceptions (Event Influence) increases, which could be due to their expectations becoming aligned with the reality of what is being delivered by The University.

9.4.2 The impact this has on reputation (link to objective 3)

The original model in the conceptual framework proposed that event attendees' Knowledge and Familiarity had a direct influence on their perceptions of reputation (Figure 4.1 and Assumption 1). However, this proposed assumption was found to be insignificant ($p > 0.05$) and consequently rejected, recognising that Knowledge and Familiarity had no direct influence on perceptions of reputation. Nevertheless, Knowledge and Familiarity was found to have an indirect influence on perceptions of reputation, with Event Influence as a mediating factor between the two latent variables (A2+A6). This indirect relationship indicates that without the presence of Event Influence, respondents' Knowledge and Familiarity would have no significant relationship with their perceptions of the institution's reputation.

While these relationships are weak in all the models, due to the increased influence Knowledge and Familiarity has on Event Influence for the internal models, internal respondent's Knowledge and Familiarity has an increased impact on their perceptions

of reputation (0.24, in comparison to 0.14 – Figure 8.7 and Figure 8.10 respectively, and Table 8.31). This suggests that both internal and external audiences' Knowledge and Familiarity of an organisation does not directly influence their perceptions of The University's reputation, proposing that they either do not consciously have a perception of The University's reputation, or that they require the direct face-to-face contact that events provide, in order to make this judgement.

While this research focused on communication events for The University, it is possible that other events such as lectures held at The University (this would be classed as an event based on the definition provided in Chapter 3 (Raj et al., 2013, Silvers, 2008)) are needed in order to make accurate assessments of The University's reputation. This would not only apply to students, but staff as well due to them being a part of lectures/meetings, which they may run or attend. This reinforces the importance that direct face-to-face communication has on perceptions of an organisation's reputation.

Furthermore, the need for 'emotional perceptions' to be a part of the judgement of Event Influence, may also be a cause for the need of Event Influence as a mediating factor. This is due to authors suggesting that satisfaction is an emotional response to products and services (Almeida et al., 2015, Deng et al., 2013), but that emotional appeal is also important for assessing reputation (Fombrun et al., 2000, Ponzi et al., 2011), and therefore, Event Influence is needed to achieve the emotional appeal necessary for forming perceptions of reputation. Thus, **objective 3** (Analyse to what extent stakeholders' knowledge and familiarity of the organisation, influences their perceptions of the organisation's reputation) has been achieved.

9.5 SEM Variable: Event Influence

Measuring the success of an event in achieving its objectives has previously been done in a number of ways. These include, assessing an event on a set of pre-determined objectives (Goldblatt and Supovitz, 1999, Williams and Bowdin, 2007),

achieving audience motivations for attending (Devesa et al., 2010, Yoon and Uysal, 2005), and customer satisfaction measured through service quality characteristics (Getz et al., 2001, O'Neill et al., 1999). Customer satisfaction has been recognised as impacting future decisions in previous studies (Chang et al., 2016, Lee and Beeler, 2009, Lee et al., 2017, Pettersson and Getz, 2009, Yoon and Uysal, 2005) and as a result was suggested through this research to influence attendees' future perceptions of an organisation's reputation. Thus, determining the impact of customer satisfaction, and consequently attending an event, on an organisation's reputation was proposed for this research (Chapter 4, Objective 4, Assumption 6). However, through the EFA, it was identified that service quality characteristics were factored with emotional appeal characteristics of an organisation and hence, **objective 4** is amended to determine an events influence (rather than solely satisfaction) on perceptions of The University's reputation.

- **Objective 4 (revised):** to ascertain the impact that Event Influence (made up of emotional appeal and service quality) has on attendees' perceptions of the organisation's reputation

These variables ('(SQ) total' and Emotional Perceptions) are discussed below.

9.5.1 Service quality for university events

Service quality characteristics, which were divided into physical and non-physical characteristics (discussed in Section 3.5.1), were originally factored into these two latent variables (Section 8.3.1). While existing research suggests these service quality characteristics are assessed as physical and non-physical factors (Getz, 2005, O'Neill et al., 1999, Theodorakis et al., 2013, Theodorakis et al., 2015), this research demonstrates that for university events, these measured items are grouped into one latent variable ('SQ total'). This was due to model validity, as when they were

presented separately, the validity and reliability of the model was unacceptable (completed in Section 8.4).

The physical service quality characteristics found to be valid for measuring satisfaction at university events were the venue, seating during the event, and food and drink provision at the event. These are recognised to be 'dissatisfiers' (O'Neill et al., 1999), as they themselves were not considered to be the primary source of satisfaction for attendees (Table 7.26). Furthermore, the food and drink provision at events was recognised to be the second most selected option that needs improving, in order to improve attendees' perceptions (Table 7.27). Therefore, the suggestion that physical service quality characteristics are in line with Herzberg's maintenance factors (Jackson and Schmader, 1990 cited in Getz, 1997, Love and Crompton, 1996) was found to be true. Therefore, while these variables do not cause satisfaction on their own, improving attendees' perceptions of them, may result in an increased overall satisfaction of the event.

All non-physical items were confirmed to measure satisfaction, with the exception of 'overall expectations' (discussed in Section 9.2). The non-physical characteristics were assumed to be satisfiers (Crompton and Love, 1995), which was also recognised to be true within this research. This is due to non-physical characteristics being selected more frequently by attendees whose perceptions were more favourable (Table 7.26), and selected the least by attendees suggesting reasons for the event needing to improve (Table 7.27).

The squared multiple correlations on these variables shows that a high proportion of the variance of 'SQ total' is accounted for by the error variable (' ϵ_1 ') (60-70%³⁵) (Figure 8.6 to Figure 8.11). This suggests that there are measurement characteristics

³⁵ The squared multiple correlation on all models presented for SQ total ranges from .30 to .40 suggesting that the error variance is accounting for 60% to 70% of the variance for the latent variable.

missing from this variable, which could account for the reason why it is of lesser significance than 'emotional perceptions'. Therefore, while 'SQ total' is viewed to be a valid and reliable variable, in future studies, further investigation to service quality characteristics for university events could be explored.

9.5.2 Emotional perceptions for university events

The latent variable, 'Emotional Perceptions', being a part of the Event Influence factor, is the biggest change within the model, as it originally formed part of the measurement characteristics for reputation. It is made up of five measurement characteristics (suggested by interviewees in Section 6.6.1), the variable measuring overall and prior perceptions of reputation and the item 'speak positively', which was originally identified as a 'future intentions' characteristic. It is unsurprising that questions relating to overall perceptions of reputation are grouped with emotional appeal items, as emotional appeal characteristics have previously been used as a short-form measure of an organisation's reputation (Ponzi et al., 2011).

Emotional perceptions forming a latent variable for Event Influence, suggests that the emotional appeal of a university is formed as a result of direct communication. Previous researchers, have suggested that emotions towards an organisation are formed as a product of experiential marketing, and specifically through events, as they focus on human senses, and create an emotional response (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014, Grönroos, 1994, Masterman and Wood, 2006, McCole, 2004, Pine and Gilmore, 1999, Vila-López and Rodríguez-Molina, 2013, Wood and Moss, 2015). However, Cornelissen (2008) suggests that a purpose of PR communication is to build goodwill (an emotional response) with the organisation's key publics. This recognises an overlap between marketing and PR, such is the case with MPR events. Thus, it is purported that the emotional appeal of universities is formed through the use of MPR

events (direct communication), as these provide an opportunity for stakeholders to develop an emotional connection with The University due to event's experiential nature.

The future intention measured variable 'speak positively', is also factored within this latent variable. As emotional appeal has previously been used to elicit overall perceptions of reputation (Highhouse et al., 2009), it advocates that emotional appeal is associated with future perceptions (as reputation is suggested to be a future judgement) (discussed in Section 2.3). This supports a link between emotional appeal of an organisation and their future intentions, with findings from this research proposing that stakeholders will speak positively about an organisation, are a result of opinions formed from emotional perceptions.

9.5.3 The impact of Event Influence on Knowledge and Familiarity

One of the purposes of events, and specifically PR events, is to provide information (Crowther, 2010a, Shamma, 2012). A consequence of providing information about an organisation is that it educates stakeholders about products and services an organisation offers, and about the organisation as a whole (Cornelissen, 2008, Kotler, 2003, Ries and Ries, 2002). Thus, suggesting an increased Knowledge and Familiarity with the organisation. This principle is supported by this research as Event Influence was found to have a positive effect on stakeholder's Knowledge and Familiarity (Figure 8.9). Furthermore, the measured variables 'meetings' and 'events' that were parcelled into the direct (face-to-face) communication variable, also support the idea that attending events influence stakeholder's Knowledge and Familiarity of an organisation.

While direct (face-to-face) communication is not seen as the most important communication channel for internal audiences (Section 9.4.1), Event Influence has a greater impact on Knowledge and Familiarity for internal audiences than it does for external audiences. This suggests that events do in fact increase Knowledge and Familiarity of internal stakeholders, even though it was identified in Chapter 7 (Section

7.3.4) that events do not increase their familiarity. Nevertheless, as this relationship is formed within Model 2, an increase in Knowledge and Familiarity has no significant relationship with perceptions of reputation. Thus, increasing Knowledge and Familiarity based on Event Influence, does not increase reputation.

9.5.4 The impact Event Influence has on reputation (link to objective 4)

A purpose of corporate communication, including events, is to manipulate opinions favourably towards the organisation (Botan and Hazleton, 2010, McKie and Munshi, 2007, Romenti, 2010, Shamma, 2012), with authors recognising it to be an important strategic activity due to its influence on the organisation's reputation (Grunig, 2006, Hutton, 1999). Nevertheless, limited research has been done to assess the impact of events on an organisation's reputation, and consequently there has been little evidence to support this. This is also true in the case of university events, and their impact on The University's reputation.

This research supports other researchers' suggestion that corporate communication positively influences stakeholder's perceptions of reputation, by providing evidence that a strong relationship exists between Event Influence and Reputation (Section 8.5, Figure 8.6 to Figure 8.11). This is an indication that respondents' perceptions following attendance at an event are significantly and positively related to their evaluation of the organisation's reputation. This was found to be true for internal and external respondents in Model 1 and Model 2.

In both models however, Event Influence had a greater influence on reputation for external stakeholders (Figure 8.8 and Figure 8.11). Section 7.3.4 highlights that first time event attendees' perceptions were more highly influenced by attending the event, in comparison to respondents who had attended multiple events. As the majority of these respondents were external stakeholder, this could provide an explanation of why

the Event Influence has a greater influence on external stakeholder's perceptions.

Thus, **objective 4 (revised)** (to ascertain the impact that Event Influence (made up of emotional appeal and service quality) has on attendees' perceptions of the organisation's reputation) has been achieved.

9.6 Chapter Summary

To summarise, important variables not included in the final model were identified as 'Word-of-mouth Staff and Students', 'expectations', 'event impact' and all 'visibility' variables. Nevertheless, positive correlations between these variables, and socio-demographic variables such as Gender, Education, Employment status, and Stakeholder group were found in Chapter 7. The latent variable 'future intentions', as suggested in the conceptual framework (Section 4.3.2), was found to be invalid, and therefore limited future intentions deriving from university events exist (**objective 5**). Consequently, no relationship was found between Reputation and 'future intentions' either (**objective 6**). Thus, while these variables were not considered important within the final models, they still contributed to research by providing insights about the university event attendees.

Characteristics used to measure reputation were confirmed (**objective 2**), with findings suggesting a different formation of parcelled variables in comparison to the original RepTrak System. The Reputation variable consisted of six factors that were parcelled from 22 valid variables (Table 8.11). The variables recognised to have the greatest influence on reputation were performance and products and services.

Knowledge and Familiarity of an organisation was found to be constructed of three parcelled variables (direct (face-to-face and online) communication and indirect communication). The overall models and external stakeholder's perceptions adhered to concepts purported by the Media Richness Theory, with direct (face-to-face)

communication being the greatest influence to Knowledge and Familiarity. However, internal stakeholders' Knowledge and Familiarity was more heavily influenced by indirect communication. This was found to have a direct positive relationship with Event Influence, and an indirect positive relationship with Reputation. However, no direct relationship between Knowledge and Familiarity and Reputation was found (**objective 3**).

Finally, the latent variable Event Influence was discussed, highlighting possible reasons why emotional perceptions were included within this variable as opposed to reputation, as originally suggested. Due to this, a **revised objective 4** was proposed to take into account the change in structure of the latent variable. Valid service quality characteristics were identified, however, it was suggested that future research is needed to investigate additional characteristics to be included within this variable, due to a high proportion of variance being accounted for by Event Influence's error variable.

The impact Event Influence has on Knowledge and Familiarity was discussed, and it was recognised that although Event Influence positively influences Knowledge and Familiarity in Model 2, this did not result in an increased perception of reputation.

Lastly, the strong relationship between Event Influence and Reputation was acknowledged, recognising the impact attendance at an event has on stakeholders' perceptions of reputation (**objective 4**).

These findings contribute knowledge and understanding of the reputation construct within the higher education sector. They also provide a means to assess the impact that events, which are held for the purpose of communication, have on the organisation. This research contributes a number of theoretical, methodological and practical contributions, which are discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 10).

Finally, areas for future research are proposed, in order to further enhance the knowledge and understanding within these areas.

10 Conclusion

This thesis has sought to evaluate the impact of events on attendees' perceptions of the host organisation's reputation. Reputation has become increasingly important to Universities, with universities facing increased competition in attracting students and gaining funding globally. University reputation has traditionally been measured through league tables, however, this too has been criticised by researchers, due to their measured characteristics and target audience (Bowden, 2000, Marginson, 2014). Nevertheless, no universally accepted university reputation measurement scale that assesses an institution's overall reputation, rather than academic reputation, exists. Thus, a gap in the literature was presented, for a university reputation measurement scale, which assesses the perceptions of multiple stakeholder groups.

Perceptions of reputation are partly formed from communication originating from the organisation, with face-to-face communication recognised to be of increasing importance due to its 'rich' nature. Thus, events have become an important communication tool for many organisations (Bowdin et al., 2006, Crowther, 2010a, Men, 2014), as they provide a platform for face-to-face communication to take place, and enable organisations to positively shape their stakeholder's experience (Akyildiz et al., 2013, Yazıcı et al., 2016). However, the impact of events (as a form of communication) on an organisation's reputation has not previously be assessed.

To address the aim of this research, six research objectives were presented (Chapter 4). A summary of the research objectives and how they were achieved is shown in Table 10.1, and the evaluation of these discussed in Section 10.2. The first objective was to determine the strategic purpose of events as a form of communication for the case study institution. This was achieved through five interviews with senior managers at The University. These interviews also aimed to inform the second phase of the research by confirming reputation measurement characteristics, and identifying the population and sample.

Table 10.1 Research Objectives Summary

| Research objective | Discussion chapter: | Objective achieved |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| 1. To determine the role of university events as a strategic communication tool | Chapter 6 | Yes –recognised events as a ‘vital’ communication tool for The University |
| 2. Determine the validity of existing for-profit reputation measurement characteristics, by measuring a university’s reputation | Chapter 8 & 9 | Yes – Many similar variables confirmed to be valid for measuring university reputation |
| 3. Analyse to what degree stakeholders’ knowledge and familiarity, of the organisation, has on their perceptions of the organisation’s reputation | Chapter 7, 8 & 9 | Yes – Knowledge and Familiarity have a positive and indirect impact on Reputation for Model 1, and no impact in Model 2. Furthermore, significant associations found between the number of events attended and perceptions of reputation in Chapter 7. |
| 4. (Revised) To ascertain the impact that Event Influence has on attendees’ perceptions of the organisation’s reputation | Chapter 8 & 9 | Yes – Event influence has a positive impact on perceptions of reputation in both models |
| 5. To analyse the impact event satisfaction has on future intentions | Chapter 7, 8 & 9 | Yes – no impact found in SEM model, as the future intentions variable was found not to be valid. However, significant associations between ‘expectations’ and future intentions variables ‘know more’ and ‘think better’ found in Chapter 7 |
| 6. To analyse the impact of an organisation’s reputation on stakeholders’ future intentions | Chapter 8 & 9 | Yes – no impact found as the future intentions variable was found not to be valid |

A conceptual framework derived from objectives 2 to 6 was proposed in Chapter 4, and a modified conceptual framework presented in Chapter 6. This identified four latent variables (Reputation, Knowledge and Familiarity, Event Influence, and Future Intentions). The relationships between these latent variables was represented by six assumptions in the structural model (Figure 4.1). Phase 2 of the research aimed to confirm these assumptions by utilising a quantitative questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to attendees at 23 events, from which 594 completed questionnaire responses were collected. Following data screening procedures, 556 usable cases

remained. These were used to conduct the primary data analysis, structural equation modelling, thus, hoping to achieve the overall aim of this research.

The results of the structural equation modelling found two valid models, as the reversed regression weights between Knowledge and Familiarity and Event Influence were found to be insignificant ($p > 0.05$) when presented together. However, when presented separately, both regression weights were found to be significant, and consequently, both models were considered to be plausible. Model 1 was found to have direct and positive relationships between Knowledge and Familiarity, and Event Influence, and Event Influence and Reputation. An indirect relationship between Knowledge and Familiarity and Reputation was also recognised. Model 2 had direct and positive relationships between Event Influence and Reputation, and Event Influence and Knowledge and Familiarity. However, no direct relationship was found between Knowledge and Familiarity and Reputation in either model. This suggests that stakeholders do not judge The University's reputation based on their existing Knowledge and Familiarity, without any direct experience. Thus, a direct experience, such as attending an event, acts as a cue to draw on stakeholders' existing Knowledge and Familiarity of the organisation, to make an informed judgement.

The study's main conclusions are presented below, however, first, the research's limitations and recommendations for future research are recognised. As with all research, practical and methodological limitations are inherent within this study, which could potentially restrict the application of the findings. These limitations are reflected upon in Section 10.1, to demonstrate the complexity of the research, and to guide other researchers who may undertake research in a similar field. The study's main conclusions are then discussed in Section 10.2. This summarises how each of the six research objectives has been achieved. Finally, the contributions to existing literature, as well as the practical and methodological contributions made by this thesis, are presented in Section 10.3. These findings highlight the original contribution made by

this thesis, and thus, contributes to knowledge and understanding within the fields of reputation measurement, communication and events.

10.1 Limitations and recommendations for further research

This research's limitations are discussed throughout this thesis, and specifically in Chapters 6 – 9. Nevertheless, it is necessary to summarise these limitations again, as a means of offering insights to others conducting research within this field. Three limitations for this research have been recognised, and consequently, form points for recommended future research. The first is the use of a single case study university (discussed in Section 5.2.2), as it restricts the ability to generalise the findings. This approach could also pose as a limitation if access to research participants is denied. While this was not the case for this research, with the exception of recruitment events (discussed below), it is a consideration for others conducting research in a similar way. An avenue for further research would be to collect data from event attendees from different institutions, to test the findings of this research. This research could involve different types (including Million + and Russell Group Universities) and sizes of institution, in an attempt to generalise the findings across the UK higher education sector. Once a set of generalised findings is confirmed, a tool to assess reputation, providing a reputation 'score', can be created. Thus, providing a tool for universities to assess changes to their reputation over time, as well as a comparison against other institutions.

The second limitation of this research, the exclusion of seven reputation variables, was a consequence of high percentages of missing data (discussed in Section 7.3.3 and 8.2.1). The majority of this missing data resulted from the events where face-to-face data collection was undertaken using iPads. It is thought that these questions were not shown on the initial question page, and as such, were missed when participants

scrolled to the 'next' button. As no question validation³⁶ was in place on the online questionnaire, respondents were able to progress to the next question without fully completing a response. Thus, the use of question validation when using online surveys, is recommended to be included in future research's missing data approach, as a means to reduce high amounts of missing data.

The missing data resulted in the removal of seven variables (Visibility Not Known, Visibility Field, Gov Business, Gov Open, Gov Ethical, Citizenship Support, and Events Attended) prior to the EFA, four of which were variables included within the RepTrak System. Thus, further research of the measurement instrument would be needed to determine if these removed variables contribute to a university's reputation, in the same way as they do in for-profit organisations (Fombrun et al., 2015, Ponzi et al., 2011). Furthermore, characteristics suggested by event attendees as contributing to university reputation could also be tested to determine their validity in measuring university reputation.

Thirdly, recruitment events were recognised to be significantly important to The University, as students are the primary source of income for the university (discussed in Chapter 6). Yet, recruitment events were not included within this research, as the student recruitment team already carry out research amongst this stakeholder group, and to avoid questionnaire fatigue by respondents, access to these events was denied. Thus, this becomes a limitation of this research, as perceptions of a key stakeholder group (potential students), was not included.

Only two Future Intentions variables (Speak Positively and Know More) were found to be valid following the EFA (Section 8.2.2), with only Speak Positively included in the final SEM models. Significant associations between 'expectations' and Future

³⁶ A question validation in online surveys prevents respondents from progressing to the next page without answering all of the questions.

Intentions variables 'Know More' and 'Think Better' were also found in Chapter 7. Nevertheless, these variables did not form a specific Future Intentions latent variable as predicted within the conceptual framework. This signifies that future intentions are not a consequence of satisfaction or a positive reputation within this research. Thus, a recommendation for further research, would be to explore additional future intentions that result from attendance at an event and a positive reputation. Similarly, further research into event impact and expectations is needed, to confirm significance, and how these variables contribute to attendees' future intentions (Section 7.3.4). This would provide a practical contribution to event and communication practitioners, in understanding the outcomes from holding events.

The use of additional service quality characteristics to assess university event attendee satisfaction could be explored. While those used within this research were found to be valid (discussed in Section 9.5.1), a high error variance presented on the error variable for the latent variable SQ total. This signifies that the factors used to measure SQ total do not account for the whole construct. Thus, further research to identify additional service quality variables could further contribute to existing literature on measuring event satisfaction.

The two most commonly selected motivations for attending The University events were 'acquiring information', and 'spending time with family and friends' (Section 7.3.1).

While this provides insight into reasons for attending, it was noted that these responses predominantly came from attendees at the Graduation ceremonies, as these made up a high percentage of responses for this research. Therefore, additional research, gaining a more even perspective of different event types held by universities is needed, to confirm if these are the primary motivations for attending university events.

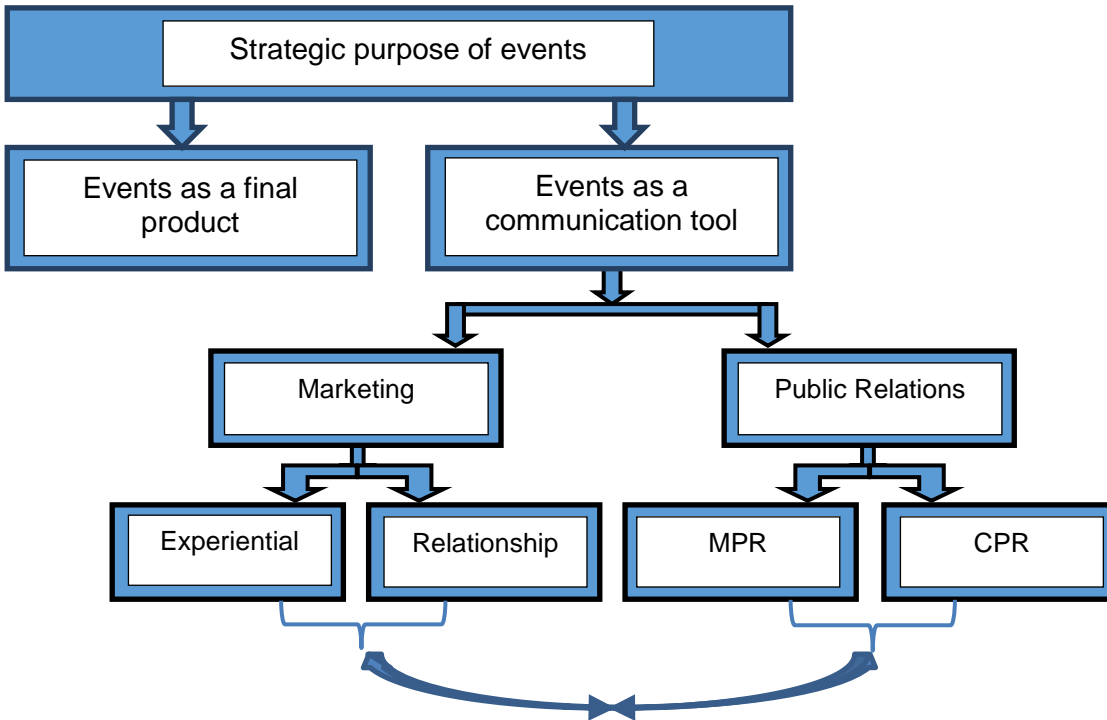
Furthermore, this research did not identify if attendee motivations for attending were achieved. Therefore, this could also be determined, as it has been found in previous research, that this can influence attendee satisfaction.

A significant correlation was found between respondent gender and their familiarity with The University (Section 7.3.4). This found that male respondents were perceived as being more familiar with The University, however, the reasons for this was unknown. Thus, further research is proposed to identify the reasons for this outcome, as this could provide a practical contribution for how information is communicated within a university setting.

10.2 The study's main conclusions

This research proposed a new typology of the strategic purpose of events (Figure 3.1 and Figure 10.1). This recognises that events can be a final product, with the primary purpose of generating a profit (discussed in Section 3.4.1), or used as a strategic communication tool for both marketing and public relations; the latter of which has been the focus for this thesis. An overlap and connection between marketing and PR events has become evident, specifically with MPR events adopting an experiential nature, and consequently providing the opportunity for relationships to develop. These events, have been used by organisations, as a way of staging experiences and delivering messages to their stakeholders to positively influence their perceptions (Botan and Hazleton, 2010, McKie and Munshi, 2007, Romenti, 2010, Shamma, 2012). Through staging planned events, organisations are able to convey desired messages about their vision and values to their desired stakeholders. This creates the opportunity for an 'experiencescape' whereby the organisation can tailor the event experience to their audiences' needs, while providing an intended experience from the organisation (Akyıldız et al., 2013, O'Dell and Billing, 2005, Ritchie and Hudson, 2009, Yazıcı et al., 2016). As a result, organisations are able to increase the possibility of attendee satisfaction at their events.

Figure 10.1 Strategic purpose of events



Note: MPR = marketing public relations, CPR = Corporate public relations

Five interviews were held with senior management at the case study institution to determine the role of events as a strategic communication tool for The University (objective 1). They recognised events as a ‘vital’ communication tool, due to their ‘richness’ of being able to communicate specific messages to their desired audiences. By providing the platform for audience engagement while at events, The University is able to stage a desired experience to positively influence the attendees, which was suggested as a means for The University to achieve wider objectives. These objectives include, relationship building with key stakeholders, increasing stakeholders’ familiarity with, and the visibility of The University and ultimately improving The University’s reputation. This confirms that the strategic purpose of holding events at The University, is in line with existing literature, and thus **Objective 1** is achieved.

All interviewees unanimously agreed that reputation is important to The University’s success (Section 6.5.1). Nonetheless, the means The University uses to measure its reputation was unclear, as all interviewees gave varying responses to this question

(Section 6.5.4). Interviewees discussed the use of league tables, as a popular means of measuring university performance. However, questionnaire respondents disagreed with this, as personal experience and word-of-mouth from staff and students were identified as the most commonly used methods on which their judgements were made (Section 7.3.2). This identified a gap within the higher education industry within the United Kingdom, as no clear measure of university reputation, which is valid across stakeholder groups, exists. Thus, a means to assess a university's reputation was needed, prior to determining the impact of an event on the institution. This research achieved this, through adapting the RepTrak System to a university context.

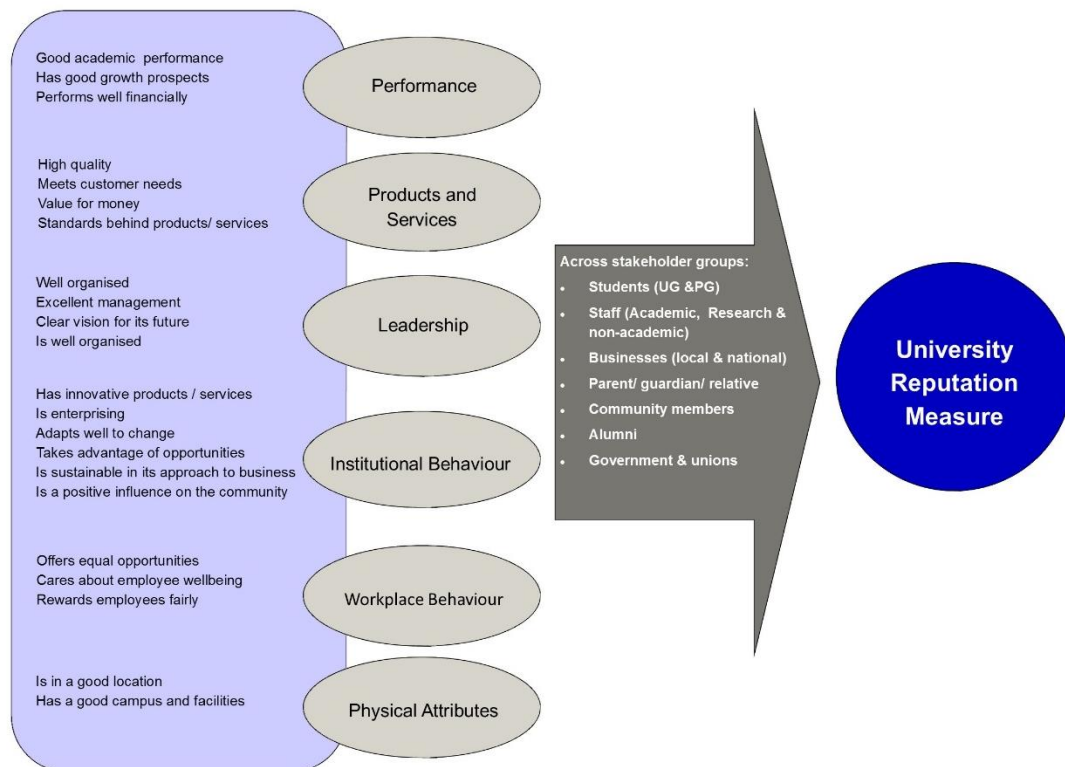
Seven challenges were suggested when measuring reputation (discussed in Section 5.4.1, Table 5.4) (Dowling and Gardberg, 2012), including the need to determine the sampling frame, research context and measurement dimensions. Recommendations were also made by Dowling and Gardberg (2012) to address these challenges, in order to develop an effective reputation measurement scale. The way this research addresses these recommendations was considered during the development of this new model, and is identified in Table 5.4.

The use of multiple stakeholders, and the ability to judge an organisation based on different criteria, were also suggested as recommendations (Fombrun, 1998). As such, groups of potential stakeholders for The University were identified using the framework suggested by Chapleo and Simms (2010) (Figure 1.1), guiding the selection of the sample population by interviewees. This allowed for responses across different stakeholder groups of The University, and across different nationalities due to the diverse nature of the case study university. As such, the model developed can be considered valid across different stakeholder groups of The University, which incorporates different nationalities, through international staff, students, alumni and community members.

The inclusion of conceptually relevant criteria for measuring university reputation was suggested as being key (Dowling, 2016, Fombrun, 1998, Walker, 2010). Adopting existing reputation measurement items, and identification of other potential measurement criteria for reputation, was achieved through in-depth qualitative interviews. These measurement items considered different areas of The University including leadership, performance and physical attributes, and thus adheres to Fombrun's (1998) recommendation that different criteria should be used. Consequently, through acknowledging existing challenges and adopting recommendations from leading authors within the field, this research has aimed to create a valid and true measure of reputation.

This study found that university reputation is measured by 22 variables, parcelled into six factors (Table 8.11). These variables were based on measurement items used within the RepTrak System, which is used to measure the reputation of FPOs (Fombrun et al., 2015, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007, p. 254). This structure differs from the original RepTrak System, which consisted of 23 items within seven groups (shown in Figure 2.2) (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007, p. 254), and from research of a similar nature presented by Vidaver-Cohen (2007) and Verčič et al. (2016). It also differs from the proposed measurement model in the conceptual framework (shown in Figure 4.2), which consisted of 29 items within nine groups. By achieving a valid and reliable model, with an acceptable goodness-of-fit (Section 8.4.2 and 8.4.3), confirms the variables used to measure The University's reputation, and therefore achieves **objective 2** of this research. Thus, a University Reputation Measurement model for measuring a university's overall reputation, across multiple stakeholder groups, including local and international stakeholders, is presented in Figure 10.2.

Figure 10.2 University Reputation Measure



The variable recognised to have the greatest influence on reputation is Performance, while Physical Attributes has the least impact. This differs from existing research using the RepTrak system (Fombrun et al., 2015), which tests the model in five separate studies. The results from these studies found leadership (top in 2 cases), products and services (top in 2 cases), and governance (top in 1 case) to have the greatest impact on reputation. Performance was found in four of the cases to be within the bottom three factors to contribute to reputation (Fombrun et al., 2015). A cause for this difference could be due to the purpose of a non-profit organisation being to perform public tasks (Ben-Ner and Van Hoomissen, 1991, Hall, 1987). Thus, suggesting a difference exists in how stakeholders assess reputation of profit and non-profit organisations.

Performance as the most important variable was found to be true for the overall models for both Model 1 and Model 2. However, the order of importance for the top three variables of the internal and external models, for Model 1 and Model 2, was different.

This found that internal stakeholders view Performance to be the most important, followed by Products and Services and then Leadership. However, external stakeholders view Products and Services to be the most important, followed by Leadership and then Performance. Therefore, the management of, and communication to these different stakeholders should be tailored to address these key areas.

While reputation can be measured and assessed based these characteristics, research has also identified a number of determinants that influence a person's perceptions of reputation (discussed in Section 2.7). These include the familiarity a person has with an organisation (Bromley, 1993, Brooks et al., 2003, Christou, 2003, Dowling, 1986, Gefen, 2000, Mariconda and Lurati, 2015, Turban, 2001), and the visibility of that organisation (Brammer and Millington, 2005, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Fombrun et al., 2015, Rhee and Valdez, 2009). Stakeholder perceptions of reputation are recognised to be formed, partly based on communication they receive about the organisation (Antonides and Van Raaij, 1998, Bromley, 2000), suggesting that communication has the ability to influence perceptions (Carroll, 2016, Hawabhay et al., 2009, Key and Czaplewski, 2017). These concepts as determinants of reputation were grouped and renamed 'Knowledge and Familiarity'.

Existing research suggests that stakeholders' Knowledge and Familiarity of an organisation can have both positive and negative effects on an organisation's reputation (Chapter 2) (Artigas et al., 2015, Brooks et al., 2003, Christou, 2003, Gefen, 2000). This research found that it had a positive influence on reputation, thus supporting authors who view this to be a positive correlation (Bromley, 1993, Dowling, 1986, Turban, 2001). Nevertheless, this effect was found to be insignificant as a direct effect, and was only significant with Event Influence as a mediating factor. This indirect relationship indicates that without the presence of Event Influence, respondents' Knowledge and Familiarity would have no significant relationship with their perceptions of the institution's reputation. Thus, **objective 3** (to analyse to what extent

stakeholders' knowledge and familiarity of the organisation, influences their perceptions of the organisation's reputation) was achieved.

Service quality and satisfaction during stakeholders' experience with an organisation are also viewed to be important. This is demonstrated through previous research that has found positive correlations between satisfaction and reputation (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993, Andreassen, 1994, Andreassen and Lindestad, 1998, Bontis et al., 2007, Carroll, 2016, Davies et al., 2004, Helm, 2006, Saeidi et al., 2015). This variable was originally only comprised of service quality and event impact characteristics. However, results from this investigation identified 'Emotional Appeal' characteristics to be factored with service quality characteristics.

Attendee satisfaction has been used in previous research to determine the success of events (Getz et al., 2001, O'Neill et al., 1999). This is assessed through service quality characteristics to determine if expectations have been met or exceeded (Cronin Jr and Taylor, 1992, Drummond and Anderson, 2004, Getz et al., 2001, Ko and Pastore, 2004, O'Neill et al., 1999). Customer satisfaction has been recognised as impacting future decisions in previous studies (Chang et al., 2016, Lee and Beeler, 2009, Lee et al., 2017, Pettersson and Getz, 2009, Yoon and Uysal, 2005) and as a result, was suggested through this research to influence attendees' future perceptions of an organisation's reputation (discussed in Section 4.2.4). Thus, determining the impact of customer satisfaction, and consequently attending an event, on an organisation's reputation was proposed for this research (Chapter 4, Objective 4, Assumption 6). However, Objective 4 was revised to determine an events influence (rather than solely satisfaction), following results from the EFA, which factored emotional appeal characteristics with service quality characteristics. This factor structure is supported by existing research that recognises the importance of emotional appeal in forming satisfaction (Almeida et al., 2015, Cronin Jr, 2003, Mason and Paggiaro, 2012). Thus,

when assessing both service quality and reputation simultaneously, emotional characteristics are more strongly linked to service quality than reputation.

Event Influence was found to be a determinant of both Reputation and Knowledge and Familiarity, however, this occurred in two separate models. A purpose of events, is to provide information (Crowther, 2010a), and a consequence of this is, is that it increases stakeholders' knowledge of the organisation. This was found to be true only in Model 2 (Figure 8.9), with attendance at an event positively increasing stakeholders' Knowledge and Familiarity of the organisation. However, Model 2 also identified that when Event Influence is used as a determinant of Knowledge and Familiarity, Knowledge and Familiarity, had no significant relationship (direct or indirect) to reputation. This suggests, that Model 2 may only be applicable to stakeholders who have very little or no prior knowledge of the organisation, as this previous Knowledge and Familiarity does not influence their perceptions of reputation. Consequently, their judgements of the university's reputation are based solely on the event that they have attended.

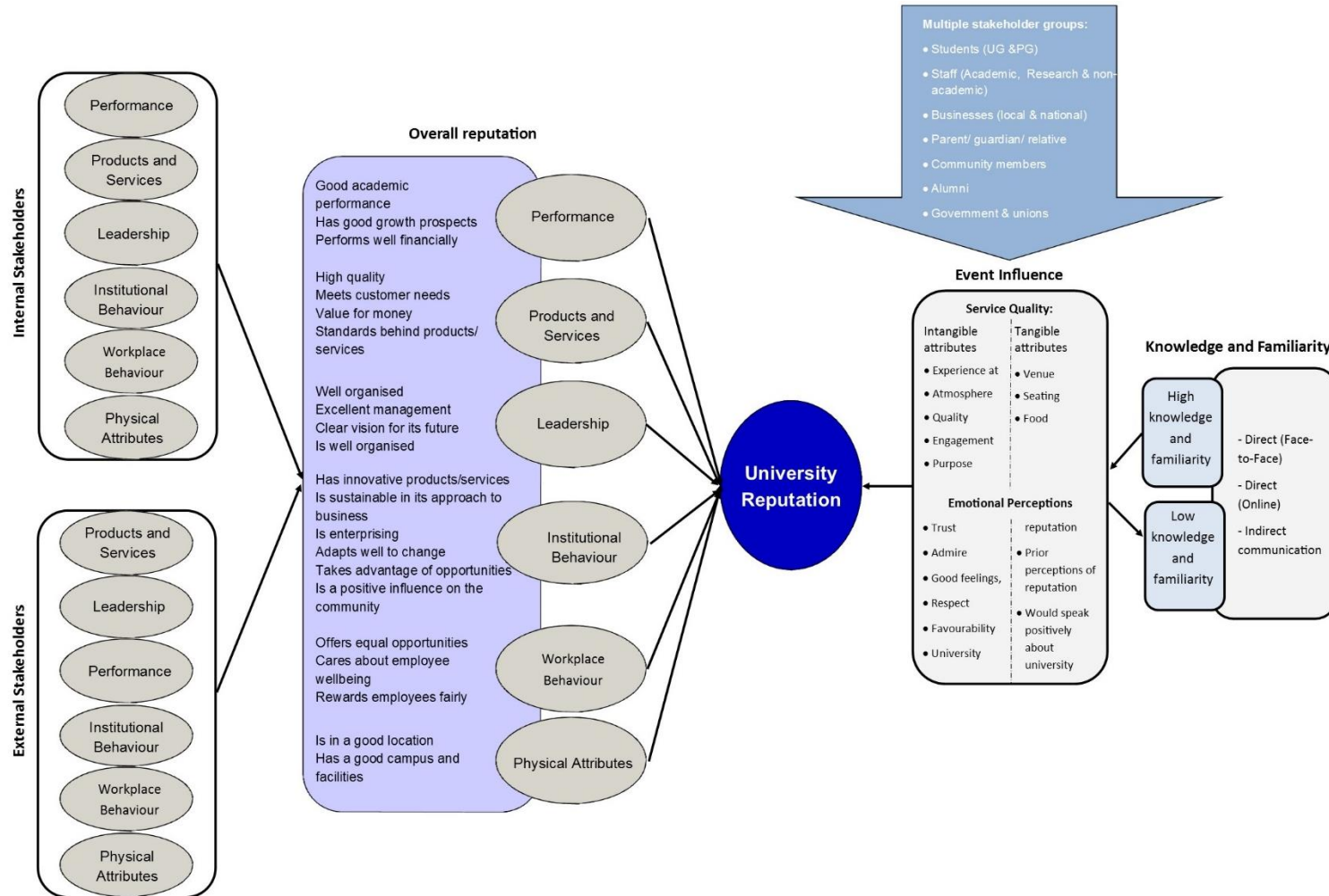
A further purpose of events is, as a communication tool, to manipulate opinions favourably towards the organisation (Botan and Hazleton, 2010, McKie and Munshi, 2007, Shamma, 2012), and consequently, positively influence perceptions of the organisation's reputation (Grunig, 2006, Hutton, 1999). However, limited research has been done to assess the impact of events on an organisation's reputation, and consequently there has been little evidence to support this. This research supports other researchers' suggestion that corporate communication positively influences stakeholder's perceptions of reputation (Carroll, 2016, Hawabhay et al., 2009), by providing evidence that a strong relationship exists between Event Influence and Reputation in both Model 1 and Model 2 (Section 8.4). This is indication that respondents' perceptions following attendance at an event are significantly and positively related to their evaluation of the organisation's reputation. Thus, **objective 4**

(revised) (to ascertain the impact that Event Influence has on attendees' perceptions of the organisation's reputation) has been achieved.

A consequence of satisfaction at events, and of a positive reputation, is suggested by previous research to be positive future intentions towards the organisation (Kim et al., 2014, Lee and Beeler, 2009, Lee et al., 2017, O'Neill et al., 1999). This includes intentions such as repeat visits and speaking positively about the event. However, the latent variable for future intention was found not to be valid within the measurement or structural model, and only two significant associations were found with future intentions variables (stakeholders: interval/external * think better; Gender * know more) (discussed in Chapter 7). Consequently, this research has found that there are limited future intentions outcomes derived from university events, or from a positive reputation. Thus, **objectives 5 and 6** are achieved by showing that no impact is present between Event Influence, Reputation and Future Intentions. However, this has been identified as an area to explore in future research.

An overview of these findings are shown in Figure 10.3. This demonstrates that internal and external perceptions differ when assessing the importance of characteristics that make up an organisation's overall reputation. It also recognises that the internal perspective is more in line with the overall reputation, thus suggesting that staff and students' perceptions are important for a university's reputation. Findings also show that satisfaction from service quality attributes, and the emotional appeal of the organisation experienced while at events, does influence stakeholder's perceptions of the organisation's reputation. Furthermore, it has been purported that previous experience of those with a high knowledge and familiarity of the university contributes towards their overall perceptions. While the event experience improves the knowledge and familiarity of those with limited previous experience. Finally, this research gained the perspectives of multiple stakeholders who attended the university's events. Thus, addressing the weakness of many other reputation measures.

Figure 10.3 The impact of events on university reputation



10.3 Research contributions

Several important contributions to research have been made during the process of completing this thesis. The significance found between the research variables, and confirmation of the assumptions from the structural model have enabled contributions to be made to existing literature. These theoretical contributions have been in the form of new findings, as well as findings confirming existing research presented in a new context. A methodological contribution is made, with the interviewees in the first phase of research asked to select the sample population of respondents for the second phase of research. Finally, practical contributions are also made by this research, providing insight into university event attendee perceptions. These contributions can be used to inform practice within this setting, as a means to enhance the organisation's reputation, through improved stakeholder perceptions. These contributions are discussed in the following sections.

10.3.1 Theoretical contributions

10.3.1.1 *Defining and measuring reputation*

Defining reputation

The definition of reputation has been discussed extensively within the management literature, with numerous definitions existing (Bromley, 1993, Dutton et al., 1994, Lippman, 1922 cited in Fombrun and Riel, 1997, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Friedman, 2009, Kotha et al., 2001). A leading author in the reputation field recently identified a key criticism of existing reputation measurement research (Dowling, 2016). This recognised the disparity between researchers' definitions of the concept of reputation and the concept measured, suggesting that much research 'defines A, and measures B' (Dowling, 2016). As such, a definition specifically relating this this research was proposed as:

Reputation is

- An overall perception of the organisation (based on multiple characteristics)
- By event attendees (made up of both internal and external stakeholders)
- In comparison to their previous perceptions of the organisation

Developing a specific definition for this study and measuring reputation in line with this definition, is an important step for reputation research. This demonstrates the ability for accurate measurement to take place, and consequently supports the criticisms of previous research that 'defines A and measures B'. Thus, a vital contribution to reputation research is made, by demonstrating the process that is necessary to measure the complex construct of reputation.

An additional contribution that this research makes to reputational definitions is how the definitions are categorised. A framework for categorising reputation definitions was suggested by Gotsi and Wilson (2001b) that encompassed many of the different variations of the definition. However, Chun (2005) has more recently suggested a reputation paradigm, including an additional three schools, to further help define reputation. These additional schools focus on the stakeholder group and area concerned with the formation of reputation, rather than the differences between image and reputation. Thus, the framework by Chun (2005) provides a more in depth means of classifying reputation definitions, and has been adopted within this study.

This research adds to her framework, by proposing an additional two categories into the Relational School (Section 7.3.1) (Chun, 2005). These categories are defining reputation as '*good and/or bad perceptions of an organisation*', and that reputation was '*what an organisation is known for/ how well it is known*'. These categories are similar to suggestions by other researchers (Lange et al., 2011, Rindova et al., 2005);

however, they have not attempted to expand the work by Chun. As a result, an important contribution to reputation definition literature is made (Table 10.2), by including additional categories in which reputation definitions can be classified.

Through including these additional definition categories, a timely practical contribution is also made, as it takes into account how university stakeholders define reputation.

Therefore, attempting to reduce the gap between theory and practice when measuring reputation within the UK Higher Education Industry.

Table 10.2 Reputation Paradigm: the amended Relational School of thought (Adapted from Chun (2005, p. 95))

| Approaches | Key audience | Key focus | Example authors |
|---|---|--|--|
| The Relational School: Reputation involving gaps between internal/ external stakeholders' views | Comparison of multiple stakeholder view (Mainly internal stakeholders' vs. external stakeholders' view) | Multiple stakeholders in general | Fombrun (1996); Post and Griffin (1997) |
| | | Linking internal views (identity) and external views (image) of corporate reputation | Hatch and Schultz (2001); Davies and Chun (2002); Chun and Davies (2006) |
| | | Linking reputation (external view) and identity (internal view) | Fiol and Kovoov-Misra (1997) |
| | | Good and bad perceptions of an organisation | Author's contribution |
| | | What organisation is known for/ how well it is known | Author's contribution |

Measuring Reputation

The scope and nature of reputation measurement characteristics is vast, and varies dependent on different situations and organisation type. This research applied modified measurement characteristics from the RepTrak System (Fombrun et al., 2015, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007) to a University, to determine if they applied to a non-profit organisation. This found that the majority of the RepTrak System's characteristics were valid in measuring university reputation. However, the factor structure for the latent variables was different from the original RepTrak System. Consequently, while many of

the same characteristics are used, it is thought that the measurement of for-profit and non-profit organisation's reputation is different.

The interviewees in phase one of this research made several suggestions to adapt the RepTrak System to a university setting. This was achieved through amending the wording of existing characteristics, and the addition of new characteristics. Ten of their suggestions were accepted, and two were rejected by this research due to low factor loadings (Section 8.2.2); these variables are identified in Table 10.3 and Table 10.4 below. While these are not new variables in reputation research, the combination and wording used, has been developed for the specific context of UK HEIs. This contribution adds to existing reputation measurement literature through providing measurement variables that contribute to the new University Reputation Measurement model (Figure 10.2). Thus, the proposed model will be a useful tool for universities to determine effectiveness of their events to be able to determine if their events are providing a positive ROI. Universities are also able implement this model over a period of time to determine if any reputational changes are taking place within their institution. This could be particularly useful in assessing reputational change, if for example new university strategies, branding or communication activities are implemented.

Table 10.3 Reputation measurement characteristics used in measurement scale

| Suggested reputation characteristics | Characteristic used in measurement scale | Accepted/rejected |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Creating opportunities | Recognises and takes advantage of opportunities | Accepted |
| Taking Opportunities | | |
| Campus | Has an attractive campus with good facilities | Accepted |
| Facilities | | |
| Location | Is in a good location | Accepted |
| Research | Has a strong academic and research performance | Accepted |
| Performance | | |
| Teaching and academic | | |
| Good quality students | Attracts good quality students | Rejected |

| Suggested reputation characteristics | Characteristic used in measurement scale | Accepted/rejected |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| High achieving students | Has high achieving students | Rejected |

Table 10.4 Reputation Characteristics changed for new measurement scale

| Original reputation characteristics from RepTrak System | Characteristic changed to be used in measurement scale | Accepted/rejected |
|---|--|-------------------|
| First to market | Is enterprising in its approach to doing business | Accepted |
| Environmentally responsible | Acts sustainably in the way it does business | Accepted |
| Offers equal opportunities | Has good employment opportunities | Accepted |
| Excellent management | Is well managed | Accepted |
| | Has excellent leadership | Accepted |
| Profitability | Performs well financially | Accepted |

The principles of the RepTrak Pulse (Ponzi et al., 2011), a short form measure of reputation using Emotional Appeal characteristics, was confirmed by this research. This found that positive responses to Emotional Appeal characteristics were echoed, by positive responses to perceptions of Overall Reputation. Thus, Emotional Appeal characteristics are able to provide a useful insight into stakeholder's perceptions of a university's reputation, and can be used as a short-form measure of university reputation.

Furthermore, a significant change between the RepTrak System structure and results from this research was the factor loading of Emotional Appeal. While it was originally proposed as a latent variable for reputation (Fombrun et al., 2000, Ponzi et al., 2011, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007), findings suggested it had a higher factor loading to the Event Influence variable (discussed in Section 10.3.1.4 below). This recognises the importance of using a face-to-face communication tool such as events as they provide an opportunity for stakeholders to form an emotional connection to the institution. This

emotional connection, which can be positively shaped through creating a positive 'eventscape', is essential as it leads to perceptions of a good reputation.

10.3.1.2 Determinants and consequences of reputation

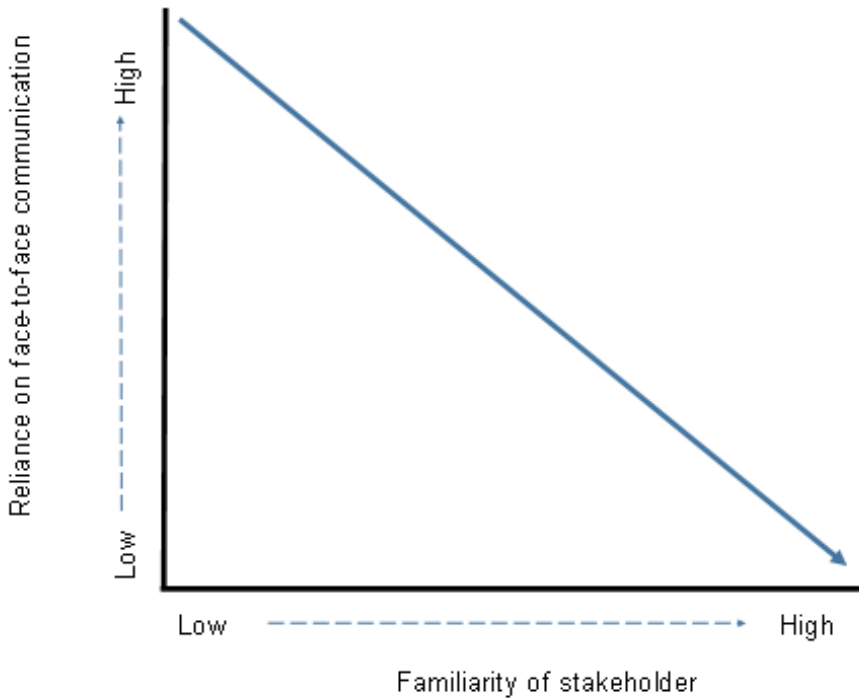
As with previous research, this research confirmed Knowledge and Familiarity, Service Quality (satisfaction), and Emotional Appeal as determinants of reputation. However, contrary to previous research (Brammer and Millington, 2005, Fombrun and Shanley, 1990, Peteraf and Shanley, 1997), The University's visibility (measured by local, national and international visibility), was found to have no effect on attendees' perceptions of reputation. Furthermore, no consequences of a positive reputation were recognised, as the Future Intentions latent variable was found to be invalid. It is unclear why these results occurred, and these are both areas where further research should be carried out, as discussed in Section 10.1.

Respondents' familiarity of the organisation was found to directly correlate with their overall perceptions of reputation, and the frequency of using face-to-face communication (Section 7.3.4). This found that those using face-to-face communication more frequently, have an increased familiarity with The University. Similarly, those with an increased familiarity were found to have better perceptions of The University's reputation overall. However, the concept of a 'threshold level' of familiarity was confirmed within this research (Fiske and Taylor, 1991, Pollock and Rindova, 2003, Starbuck and Milliken, 1988), and was found to be most notable with internal stakeholders (Chapter 7). This recognised that once a certain level of familiarity had been achieved, any additional information received from attending the event, did not influence their perceptions of reputation.

10.3.1.3 Media Richness Theory

A contribution to the Media Richness Theory has been made (Daft and Lengel, 1986), by including the use of events as a face-to-face communication channel within the hierarchy. Furthermore, a hierarchy of communication channels, which influence stakeholder's familiarity with a university, is also suggested. Findings from Chapter 7 suggest that face-to-face communication at the events, most influenced those with lower levels of familiarity. Whereas, stakeholders with higher levels of familiarity (such as internal stakeholders), were less reliant on face-to-face communication (discussed in Section 7.3.4, and presented in Figure 10.4). This is supported with findings from the structural models for internal and external stakeholders. While external stakeholders viewed face-to-face communication to be the most important, internal stakeholders viewed it to be the least important. Thus, as familiarity increases, reliance on face-to-face communication decreases. This contribution is of vital importance for the development of an effective communication strategy for universities, as it shows that face-to-face communication is the most effective means of delivering important information. However, alternative methods should also be included within the strategy specifically for communicating with internal stakeholders, as face-to-face communication is less effective with this stakeholder group.

Figure 10.4 Order of Richness - Familiarity and face-to-face communication



Furthermore, the external stakeholder’s model and the overall structural model were found to be consistent with existing Media Richness Theory research. Direct (face-to-face) communication was found to be the most influential, followed by direct (online), and then indirect communication. However, this was not found to be true for internal stakeholders, who viewed direct (online) and indirect communication equally as most important, and direct (face-to-face) least important. This could be due to external audiences having fewer sources of information to base their judgements on. Thus, this research offers a substantial contribution of a hierarchy of communication channels, in the context of a UK university (Table 10.5). Therefore, providing further information and advice for the communication channels to be included within a communication strategy.

Table 10.5 Order of Communication Richness for University Stakeholders

| Order of Richness | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Internal Stakeholders | | External Stakeholders | |
| 1 | Indirect Communication* | 1 | Direct (Face-to-Face, including events) |

| Order of Richness | | | |
|--|---|---|------------------------|
| 2 | Direct (Online)* | 2 | Direct (Online) |
| 3 | Direct (Face-to-Face, including events) | 3 | Indirect Communication |
| *Model 1 (Figure 8.7) results show indirect communication to be the most important, Model 2 (Figure 8.10) results show that indirect communication and direct (online) communication are ranked equally as most important. | | | |

10.3.1.4 Measuring Event Satisfaction

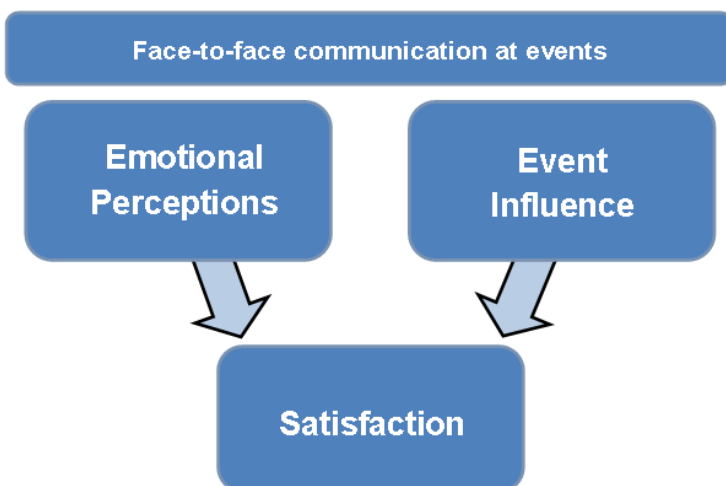
Numerous studies have utilised service quality characteristics as a measure of customer/ attendee satisfaction (Lee and Kang, 2015, Song et al., 2015, Theodorakis et al., 2013, Theodorakis et al., 2015). These characteristics are frequently categorised according to their tangible or intangible nature (see Table 3.1). While this research initially proposed that the service quality characteristics should also adopt this approach, the results found that all service quality characteristics measured, only formed one latent variable. Nevertheless, both tangible and intangible service quality characteristics were confirmed as valid in measuring satisfaction of university event attendees. Therefore, universities should still take into account both tangible and intangible service quality characteristics when planning and staging the event experience for their attendees, as both types of characteristics are important in achieving satisfaction.

Emotional appeal forming part of the Event Influence variable was the biggest change from the proposed model, to the final structural model. The RepTrak System uses four measurement characteristics for emotional appeal (Ponzi et al., 2011, Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007), however the interviewees suggested this be changed to five characteristics. This change was accepted, as all five emotional appeal characteristics were accepted within the final model. A further change within this latent variable was the inclusion of overall reputation, prior reputation, and the future intention

characteristic 'speak positively'. Consequently, the latent variable was renamed as Emotional Perceptions.

The connection between Emotional Perceptions and Event Influence suggests that emotional appeal is formed as a result of face-to-face interaction with an organisation, such as the experience gained during participation at events (Section 9.5.2). Existing literature has discussed the experiential nature of events, and that satisfaction occurs as an emotional response (discussed in Chapter 3) (Cronin Jr, 2003, Mason and Paggiaro, 2012). This provides an explanation of why the Emotional Appeal variable has factored within the Event Influence variable. Furthermore, these results support existing research that satisfaction is formed as an emotional response to stimuli, and provides an additional context in which they are valid. Thus, event attendee satisfaction is formed from a combination of emotional judgements, and an assessment of service quality attributes during face-to-face communication and engagement at an event (Figure 10.5). This further reinforces the point made in Section 10.3.1.1, relating to the importance of face-to-face communication in the form of events, to build an emotional connection to the institution.

Figure 10.5 How satisfaction is formed during event experiences



10.3.2 Methodological contributions

Researchers have expressed the need for new methods of research within events (Bostock et al., 2015, Moss, 2015), and this research contributes to this call. A sequential exploratory research design, has traditionally adopted a mixed philosophical framework, whereby the qualitative phase is constructivist, and the quantitative phase, postpositive (Creswell and Clark, 2011). However, as the qualitative phase was used to identify the sample for the quantitative phase, rather than simply answering a separate objective, and informing the questionnaire (Bryman, 2006, Greene et al., 1989), a pragmatist philosophical perspective was adopted. This is because the research question was viewed to be central to this research (Ansell, 2016, Creswell, 2003, Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006, Mertens, 2014, Rorty, 1982, Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Therefore, the identification of a research sample from the qualitative stage, was regarded as an approach that would address the question.

While the use of mixed methods or an exploratory research design is not new within social science research (discussed in Section 5.2.2), using interviews to determine the population to distribute the research questionnaire to, to the authors knowledge, is. Specifically, this has not been done for research into either event impact or reputation. Thus, a methodological contribution within this field of research is made, in how a research sample and potential population is identified, and the philosophical underpinning, providing justification for this approach, is proposed.

Wood (2009b) recognises that organisations are spending increasing amounts of money on their events, and suggests a need to assess their return on investment. As such, this approach could be used in future research to assess the benefits of events, specifically those that are held for the strategic purpose of communicating a message. Through using this approach the impact that a specific set of events has on an organisation can be measured. Thus, providing a practical contribution to events practitioners.

10.3.3 Practical contributions

In addition to the methodological and theoretical contributions made, this research also provides a number of practical contributions. These contributions aim to bridge the gap between researcher and practitioner, and contribute to the practice of measuring reputation, and delivering events in the UK higher education industry. As a whole, this research has provided insight, for university event managers, into perceptions of university event attendees. Specifically, this has recognised motivations for why attendees go to a university event, and areas of service quality needed to be improved, to further increase attendee satisfaction. The two greatest contributors towards dissatisfaction were 'Information received prior to the event' and the 'food and drinks offering' at the event. Correlations were also found between event attendees' overall perceptions of reputation and their satisfaction with the event. Thus, indicating that event attendee satisfaction could be used as a short-form indicator of The University's overall reputation.

The communication methods most frequently used by university stakeholders were also identified. This found that internal and external stakeholders view the importance of the communication channels differently, recognising that internal audiences do not rely as heavily on face-to-face communication as external stakeholders (Section 9.4.1). This provides a justification for using different communication channels with different audiences, and thus, informing The University's communication strategy.

Communicating positive messages, specifically relating to The University's Performance, Products and Services and Leadership, is thought to have the greatest impact on overall perceptions of reputation. This is due to these variables being recognised as the most important variables in measuring reputation. Thus, emphasising these positive messages among all stakeholders is thought to improve overall reputation.

All the events researched within this thesis were large events, and it was found that these events are useful as a reputation building tool for new stakeholders, or those with limited familiarity. However, this was not the case for stakeholders with increased familiarity, such as internal stakeholders, as attendance at the event had a limited impact on their perceptions. This suggests that large events are not an effective long term relationship management tool, as they do not positively influence stakeholders' perceptions. Thus, while large events are useful for engaging new stakeholders, long term relationships are not developed in this way. As such, a more suitable means of developing these relationships may be through smaller, and more personalised communication methods.

As a result of these findings, the following recommendations are made to university's:

1. *Use multiple forms of communication:* as stakeholders use multiple communication methods, information about the university, and its events should be available in multiple formats. This will enhance the likelihood that stakeholders will receive the messages being communicated.
2. *Increase communication specifically relating to Performance, Products and Services and Leadership:* emphasising positive messages in relation to The University's Performance, Products and Services and Leadership will have the most influence on perceptions of overall reputation. These characteristics have the highest impact on reputation for University stakeholders, and increased positive messages relating to these areas will help to improve perceptions.
3. *Improving satisfaction and emotional appeal of the university at events, through:*
 - a. *Providing more information to attendees prior to an event:* offering accurate information to attendees prior to an event, can shape attendee expectations of the event, and consequently, reduce the likelihood of dissatisfaction.

- b. *Enhancing the emotional perceptions of the university by making events more experiential:* event attendees are active consumers seeking out experiences they cannot get elsewhere. Therefore, captivating attendees using unique experiences, and engaging them in key university activities will assist in enhancing attendees' emotional perceptions of the university.

- 4. *Hold large events for new stakeholders or those with limited familiarity:* these events have been found to positively influence stakeholders with limited familiarity of the University, and are therefore recommended to develop initial relationships.

- 5. *Develop a client relationship management system:* once initial relationships are established, information should be gathered to determine how the relationship could be leveraged to the benefit of the university.

- 6. *Use smaller events to build relationships with existing stakeholders:* while smaller events did not form a part of this research, the literature suggests that smaller events are useful for developing more meaningful, long term, relationships.

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